



LAWMAKERS WANT POLICY U-TURN AFTER ACCIDENT

Two lawmakers urged the gov't to crack down on illegal drivers and suspend the mutual recognition scheme for licenses

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SARs INCLUDED IN NEW FOREIGN INVESTMENT LAW

A new law on foreign investment, which will target investors from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, is expected to be passed during the NPC

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WORLD BRIEFS

AP PHOTO



CHINA Tech company Huawei opened a cybersecurity lab in Brussels, the heart of the European Union, as it tries to win over government leaders and fight back U.S. allegations that its equipment poses a national security risk.

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AP PHOTO



PHILIPPINES The United States is more likely to be involved in a "shooting war" in the disputed South China Sea than the Philippines but the latter would be embroiled in such a conflict just the same because of its 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty with Washington, the Philippine defense chief said yesterday. More on p12

AP PHOTO



EU Germany's vice chancellor is welcoming French President Macron's (pictured) call for reform of the European Union, saying that Europe needs to be strong to avoid being pushed around. Olaf Scholz told the Funke newspaper group yesterday that Macron "has sent a determined signal for cohesion in Europe." He said "it is important that we are sovereign and strong so that we are not pushed around in the world."

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PATRIOTIC SUBSIDIES

Incentives to show 'love for motherland'

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NPC

Beijing sets robust growth target to warm up economy

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Kaohsiung mayor to visit Macau

The recently elected mayor of Kaohsiung, Han Kuo-yu, is reportedly visiting Macau on March 23 and 24, according to reports by Taiwan media. Han is reportedly going to organize a Kaohsiung investment procurement fair in Macau as well as visit several hotels in Cotai. He is also planning to meet with some of Macau's government departments. Besides visiting Macau, he will also visit Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Xiamen between March 22 and 28 for economic and trade purposes.

Sai Van lake water level to lower

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) will lower the water level of Sai Van lake for the construction of the Light Rapid Transit Barra Station, according to a statement released by the IAM. The bureau will oversee the lowering of the water level of Sai Van lake to 1.7 meters at the beginning of March for approximately two weeks. The IAM says that it will closely monitor the water quality and the condition of living organisms in the lake after the descent of the water level. Upon completion of the work, the water level will be restored to the normal level, which varies between 2.4 and 2.5 meters.

Banking sector deposits edge up

The broad money supply continued to grow in January, according to the latest statistics from the Monetary Authority of Macau. The currency in circulation and demand deposits rose 11.1 percent and 1.3 percent respectively. At the same time, resident deposits grew 0.9 percent from the preceding month to MOP640.9 billion and non-resident deposits dropped 0.2 percent to MOP240.1 billion. Public sector deposits decreased 1.8 percent to MOP233.8 billion. As a result, total deposits in the banking sector increased 0.1 percent from a month earlier to MOP1,114.9 billion. The shares of total deposits denominated in MOP, HKD, RMB and USD were 19.4 percent, 50.8 percent, 3.8 percent and 23 percent respectively.

CRIME

Mainlanders scammed out of gambling money



BLOOMBERG

Renato Marques

Two suspects in separate cases mark the latest instances of gambling-related scams in Macau except, this time, they were locals scamming victims from the mainland. According to information provided by the Judiciary Police (PJ), the local residents are suspected of having scammed the mainland residents over gambling money.

In the first case, which occur-

red in August 2017, a 30-year-old male is suspected of using without authorization a sum of HKD10 million for a different purpose than the one intended by its rightful owner.

The money, or more accurately the gambling credit, belonged to a mainland resident who asked the local man to help him to receive one of his friends who was coming to Macau to gamble at a time when he could not be present.

The local man accepted the task, but when meeting the group of VIPs in a casino in Taipa he noticed that the person he was expecting had not yet arrived.

Instead of informing the mainland man, he lied and told him that his friend had arrived and they were about to go gambling.

At the time, the victim allowed the Macau resident to use his account in a VIP room to arrange for his friend a total of HKD5

million in gaming chips.

After gambling and losing all the chips, the local man then called the victim again, saying that his friend needed more credit to play. He thus raised the credit to a total of HKD10 million.

After gambling away the entire amount, the suspect then called the victim and told him the truth. Soon after the victim lost contact with the suspect and decided to press charges against him.

In a separate case, another local man (39) is being accused of a similar scam which occurred in December last year, in which the victim was a woman in her twenties from the mainland.

To the PJ, the woman said the man was responsible for a VIP room in Macau and asked her for some money for a short period of time.

The victim, believing she would benefit from the arrangement, lent him RMB100,000. A few days later, the man asked her for more money in smaller amounts, and she complied over a period of three days, ultimately totaling RMB70,000.

After some time, the woman called for a repayment but following a series of excuses the man refused. She then decided to press charges against him.

The man was detained by police as he was trying to exit Macau on February 28.

Although acknowledging the debt that he had incurred, the man denied having the intention of scamming the victim. Still, the PJ says that there is enough evidence to forward the case to the MP.

Lawmakers urge gov't review of illegal workers after traffic accident

Some lawmakers are urging the local government to crack down on illegal drivers and suspend the mutual recognition scheme of driving licenses issued by the authorities in both mainland China and Macau.

On Friday afternoon, a 22-year-old woman riding a scooter was hit by a car attempting to perform a U-turn in Cotai. The woman died from severe injuries sustained in the traffic accident.

The car, a seven-seater van owned by a local junket operator, was

being driven by a non-resident worker without a relevant work permit for driving the vehicle.

After the accident, both lawmaker Sulu Sou and Leong Sun Iok submitted interpellations to the government regarding illegal drivers.

"In fact, the problems of [illegal] drivers have been repeatedly reported. [...] Local hotels and casinos' VIP rooms have many vehicles used for fetching and dropping off customers, and according to the professional drivers in Macau, it is quite com-

mon for non-locals to [...] work as professional drivers," Leong Sun Iok wrote in his inquiry.

"In 2017, the administration authority punished 154 people for their illegal engagement in driver work, however, only four employers were penalized for the illegal employment of non-local drivers," Leong noted.

Leong requested that the government plan for an amendment of the law concerning illegal workers.

"Is the SAR government willing to actively present

[a] one-way driving license recognition scheme to the Central Government on behalf of residents of the [Macau] SAR?" Sou asked in his interpellation.

Sou pointed out that as of today, the Macau public has not been consulted regarding the scheme.

"It is urgent to stop the bad policy which concerns [people's] lives and safety. [...] When will the SAR government officially launch a public consultation on the driver's license mutual recognition scheme based on

statutory guidelines and scientific research conclusions? Will the public decide whether the policy will be implemented or not?" Sou wrote.

The lawmakers also recalled that last week's incident was not the first instance of a recent accident involving a mainland driver in Macau.

In July 2017, an elderly man was run over by a car driven by a mainland driver. Then in January 2018, a van driven by a mainlander crashed into a pedestrian who was at a zebra crossing. **JZ**

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Daniel Beitler

GAMING | ANALYSIS

MACAU gaming stocks might be in for a disappointing 2019 even after they showed strong signs of a rebound in January and February.

Last year, stocks of Macau-centric casino operators lost 25 percent or more of their value. Even after a double-digit bounce since the start of the year, financial advice website the Motley Fool warns that there are many signs pointing to a weak performance in 2019.

Slowing growth on the mainland is listed as one of the pressures on Macau casino opera-

tors. China lowered its growth forecast for 2019 to between 6 and 6.5 percent, making it the lowest expectation in nearly three decades, and causing some analysts to predict a further deceleration next year.

Other reasons for the gloomy outlook include the emergence of rival gaming jurisdictions in

East and Southeast Asia – such as the Philippines, Cambodia and Japan – and the upcoming gaming license negotiations, which bring a degree of uncertainty to the market. U.S. operators Las Vegas Sands and Wynn Resorts both have high exposure to the Macau SAR, deriving a large proportion of their casino

revenues from the city.

These macroeconomic factors will challenge Macau's ability to return to its once-held status as the fastest-growing gaming jurisdiction in the world.

"The Chinese gambling enclave may have put on a relatively good show in February, but that may be about as good as it gets,"

writes the Motley Fool.

As reported earlier this week, gross gaming revenue for the first two months of the year amounted to MOP50.31 billion, representing a marginal 0.5 percent drop from the same period in 2018. The dual-month posting, which accounts for the variance of the Chinese Lunar New Year, suggests a consolidation in the casino sector's growth recovery.

Macau's gaming sector showed strong growth in 2018, rising 14 percent to reach MOP302.85 billion and taking the full-year tally to about 84 percent of the 2013 peak compared with 74 percent in 2017.

Students on TV not warned about interview

THE Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) has excused the reaction of Macau students on a Portuguese television program, saying they were the result of no advance notification being given.

In February, upon invitation, the SAR government led a group of 70 local students and teachers from secondary schools to participate in a Spring Festival broadcast TV program in Portugal.

During the broadcast, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam was asked whether the local students, who had been invited as dancers, knew any Portuguese words.

Tam said "yes, of cour-

se." However, when the host turned to the students, inviting them to speak some Portuguese, none of them volunteered to speak. One student, eventually pressured to talk on the microphone, was not able to complete a full Portuguese sentence to introduce herself.

During yesterday's TDM Macau forum, one participant expressed concerns regarding the students' performance.

The acting head of DSEJ's Division of School Sports and Youth Activities, Luís Gomes, explained that during their rehearsal the students were only told they were going to dance and that they had not been told about any interview

or communication component. The team had also not assigned a specific student to be interviewed.

According to Luís Gomes, the students were unable to react quickly when they were questioned by the host in front of the camera. Gomes also claimed that this group of students were more focused on studying dance, and as such, not all of them had studied Portuguese, therefore it was understandable that they felt nervous in the face of such questions.

The DSEJ representative additionally remarked that there are 4,400 students studying Portuguese through courses or extension courses. **JZ**

SARs considered in mainland investment law update

A new law on foreign investment, which will target investors from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, is expected to be passed during the National People's Congress.

According to Zhang Yesui, the spokesperson for the annual legislative session, the new bill – which covers the three regions – is expected to be discussed on Saturday.

"Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan are part of China, and at the same time they are also separate customs territories. Therefore, investments from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan are unique in a way [given] that they are not foreign nor domestic investments," said Zhang, according to a report issued by the South China Morning Post.

"In practice, we manage these investments [from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan] by referencing them as foreign investment. This will not change with the new legislation in place," he said.

The draft bill has been out for consultation since December 2018, yet it does not specify whether it would be applicable to the three regions.

The legal status of investments from these regions was also not stated, thus investors expressed concerns that their businesses would be affected by the law.

In response to this Zhang said, "Going forward, this [new] system will continue to be improved along the way to provide a more open

and easier business environment for investors from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan."

The new legislation will replace capital laws including the Law on Sino-Foreign Equity Joint Ventures, the Law on Sino-Foreign Contractual Joint Ventures and the Law on Foreign-Capital Enterprises. These laws came into effect in 1979, 1988 and 1990 respectively.

According to the report, the supplementary "rules for implementation" of the three laws state that investments from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan will "be dealt with by referencing this document", suggesting that these regions would be classified under foreign investments. **LV**

EDUCATION

DSEJ wants to cultivate 'love for motherland'

RENATO MARQUES



Cheong Man Fai (top left), Vong Iat Hang (top right), Sit Weng Tou (bottom left), Wong Chio In

Renato Marques

THE Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) wants to reinforce the teaching of Chinese history and culture. To that end, it has drafted a plan to promote national topics to local students and teaching staff.

The plan also presents subsidies to encourage local schools to promote national symbols, representatives from the DSEJ told the media at a press conference held yesterday after the Non-Tertiary Education Council's first plenary meeting of the year.

The meeting covered several topics including the efforts to promote the teaching of Chinese history and culture. Chief of the Division of Studies and Support to Education Reform of DSEJ, Vong Iat Hang, described the work as seeking to "cultivate in the students a feeling of love for the motherland and for Macau, succeeding the spirit of the Chinese nation and the traditional virtue, as well as in articulation with the position of Macau in the development of the Great Bay Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau area."

He added that this should be achieved by "the creation of a cur-

riculum, training and exchange scheme between teachers, and the organization of students and youngsters to participate in experimental activities."

Questioned on the topic during the press conference, Vong highlighted that the government is interested in sharing more information not only about the ancient history of China but also on China's new initiatives, such as the Greater Bay Area, to provide the younger generation with more information on China's new developments.

He also recalled that the DSEJ previously drafted a plan to achieve this goal which included four main topics, namely the cultivating of knowledge on Chinese culture and history, the transmission of Chinese culture to the younger generation, and other topics related to the roles of Macau in both the Greater Bay Area and the development orientation of 'One Centre' and 'One Platform.'

Vong explained that this goal would be achieved through the implementation of annual activities for both students and teachers, which include visits and training activities on the mainland. For this, the DSEJ has a specific subsidy to allow such programs to be trialed.

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with new school subsidies



Addressing the topic of the national symbols, Vong noted, "regarding the national flag, motto and anthem, the legislative process has already concluded and the DSEJ has been trying to promote knowledge to students on this topic."

"We are going to give some guidelines to the schools about the correct procedure and in the future we are going to launch a [new] financial subsidy for the acquisition of equipment for flag hoisting, so that students can better know the national symbols."

According to Vong, such financial support will be complemen-

ted at a later stage with extra materials provided to schools "in order to help them to promote the protocol, the ethics and the spirit of China."

According to DSEJ officials, the idea is that all schools would be able to perform the flag hoisting ceremony and anthem at least once per week, similar to what happens already in all public schools, and that all schools could display the Chinese national flag on a daily basis.

Questioned on the need to change any of the educational materials, Vong said that the DSEJ would not interfere in such a choice, noting, "schools

have the freedom to decide and choose which materials they find more suitable."

Acting Chief of the Youth Department of the DSEJ Cheong Man Fai said the Bureau has also planned at least three other major initiatives for 2019 that aim to "celebrate the prosperity and strengthening of the nation, as well as the social stability and economic development of Macau."

These activities include the celebratory activities of the 100th anniversary of the "May Fourth Movement" - an anti-imperialist, cultural, and political movement considered the birth of

Chinese communism - as well as celebration of the 70th Anniversary of People's Republic of China and the 20th Anniversary of the Macau handover.

■ The idea is that all schools would hoist the flag and sing the anthem at least once a week

SUBSIDIES RAISED 9 PERCENT

Another of the topics on the agenda of yesterday's meeting of the Non-Tertiary Education Council was related to the increase of subsidies from the DSEJ for the academic year 2019/2020.

During the meeting, DSEJ's Chief of Division, Sit Weng Tou presented the report on the subsidies to both schools and students for the current academic year, as well as the information that the following subsidies would be increased for next year: free education, which ranges between MOP1.01 million to 1.52 million per class; the subsidy for tuition that ranges between MOP20,300 to MOP24,810 per student; and the subsidy for extra curricular activities that is MOP26,500 per class. As noted by Sit, the increase in the subsidies brings the investment from the government to about MOP4 billion, growth of over 9 percent when compared with the budget of 2018/2019.

'BLUE SKY' IN SLOW LANE

One of the hot topics in yesterday's meeting of the Non-tertiary Education Council was the status of the "Blue Sky" project.

The "Blue Sky" project is a 2015 initiative launched by the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, with the aim of relocating schools from residential buildings to individual spaces where they can grow and develop their activities as a campus-based institution.

Before the start of yesterday's meeting, there was a signing ceremony for letters of intention by five new schools that aim to be part of the project.

During the press conference in assessment of the project's status, the Chief of the Division of Education Equipment, Wong Chio In, noted that the project is "running according to expectations."

"We will have it concluded within the 15-year period [that was advertised]," said Wong.

Despite his optimism, Wong revealed that after almost four years of running the project, only three schools have in fact left their locations and mostly have done so on their own initiative.

As for the other 13 institutions, a total of nine (including the five from yesterday) have signed letters of intent to change their location, but are waiting for land to be made available.

Wong noted that the government would arrange land plot concessions for those that do not possess their own locations, including two or three that would relocate to Zone A of the new landfills. Meanwhile, Xin Hua School and Concordia School for Special Education will be included in the refurbishment project of the old Canidrome, as previously announced.

HIGHER EDUCATION

IFT strives to enhance students' interest in GBA

Julie Zhu

THE Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) is striving to raise the interest of local students in furthering their careers in Guangdong's Greater Bay Area (GBA) cities, according to Fanny Vong, president of the education institution.

Yesterday, IFT held its Career Day 2019. During the event, 52 participating organizations from Macau and four companies from mainland China (the GBA and Chengdu) showcased over 2,500 job vacancies to IFT graduating students.

"There have been always companies from the Greater Bay Area attending the fair. This year, the number increased," revealed Vong.

According to IFT statistics, 2.5 percent of last



IFT President Fanny Vong

year's IFT graduates went to work in the Greater Bay Area.

Questioned by the Times, Vong said that some of the mainland students currently enrolled in university have already traveled across the border in pursuit of career development.

Regarding Macau students, in particular their willingness to relocate to Greater Bay Area, Vong noted that "we have been, together with several higher education institutes and the government, pushing it forward, hoping that Macau students will learn more about the

Greater Bay."

Fanny Vong stopped short of asserting that students were interested in working in the Bay area, noting instead "generally, we can say that the students are interested in learning more."

Vong told the Times that the institute will continue to enhance its cooperation with universities in the Greater Bay Area.

Last year, IFT, Sun Yat-Sen University, and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University jointly organized the Greater Bay Area Collaborative Tourism Research Forum.

IFT hopes that students will develop a further interest in working or launching entrepreneurship projects in the Greater Bay after Sun Yat-Sen University organizes a series of

promotional campaigns.

According to Vong, IFT students have always taken internships in Greater Bay Area cities, such as Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and Zhuhai.

Currently, IFT is collaborating with approximately 600 local and non-local organizations, providing various internship opportunities to IFT students.

Interviewed by the Times, an IFT student surnamed Wang, who is from mainland China and currently in his fourth year majoring in tourism, retail and marketing management, attended the fair in order to look for a job in Macau.

"Our lecturer told us that it [the Greater Bay Area] is like the future heart of the world, [...] if there is an opportunity for me, I

will take it," Wang told the Times.

Kate Kwan, a Macau local, who is majoring in tourism business management, told the Times that "there are many opportunities in the Greater Bay Area and mainland China. Sometimes, they [the opportunities] are better than Macau's." Kwan also highlighted that she is more interested in opportunities rather than salaries.

A graduates' employment survey was conducted among 2017/18 graduates six months after they graduated from IFT. According to the survey results, 75 percent of the employed graduates were working in the tourism and hospitality sector with a median salary of MOP15,300.

BLOOMBERG

HONG KONG

Cathay Pacific in talks for budget airline stake



Kyunghee Park

CATHAY Pacific Airways Ltd. is in talks to buy shares in Hong Kong's only budget airline from Chinese conglomerate HNA Group Co., as Asia's biggest international carrier seeks to gain a foothold in the region's booming low-cost travel market.

Cathay is in "active discussions" about an acquisition involving Hong Kong Express Airways Ltd., the marquee carrier said in a sta-

tement yesterday. There can be no certainty that any agreement will be entered into, Cathay said.

The stake purchase would give Cathay a critical foothold in the market for budget-conscious travelers that's eaten into demand for some of its routes as it undertakes a three-year transformation program. Asia Pacific's burgeoning market will probably see the largest increase in air traffic among regions worldwide, with almost 4 billion passenger jour-

neys expected in the next two decades.

"This is part of a very big change in Cathay's strategy," Steven Leung, executive director at UOB Kay Hian (Hong Kong) Ltd., said by phone. "Competitors are developing budget airlines which have challenged its business. I think this deal will benefit the company in the long run."

Cathay rose as much as 3.1 percent in Hong Kong trading, the biggest gain on an intraday basis

since Feb. 21. The stock climbed 1.8 percent to HKD13.26 as of 10:40 a.m.

Bloomberg News was first to report last month that Cathay held preliminary talks with HNA about acquiring minority stakes in Hong Kong Express and Hong Kong Airlines Ltd., another carrier backed by the Chinese conglomerate. Cathay's latest statement didn't say whether Hong Kong Airlines is part of the discussions.

A successful acquisition of Hong

Kong Express would fill a hole in Cathay's product offering, according to Rahul Kapoor and Chris Muckensturm, analysts at Bloomberg Intelligence. Other parties could also be interested in the budget carrier given capacity constraints at Hong Kong's airport, Andrew Lee, an analyst at Jefferies Hong Kong Ltd., wrote in a note.

Cathay's three-year overhaul - which has seen it add destinations and cut at least 600 workers amid efforts to reduce expenses by HKD4 billion (USD510 million) - looks to be bearing fruit. The carrier, scheduled to release results on March 13, said last month that it expects to report a profit for 2018, ending a two-year run of losses.

HNA has been trimming one of China's biggest debt piles by selling dozens of assets from hotels to stakes in aircraft-leasing companies. The conglomerate has also been trying to sell almost a third of its stake in Hong Kong Airlines, a plan that was held up last year after the sudden death of HNA co-Chairman Wang Jian, Bloomberg News reported in August.

Hong Kong Express, which started services in October 2013, operates a fleet of Airbus SE A320 family aircraft. It flies to cities in countries including China, South Korea, Japan and Vietnam. **Bloomberg**

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Reduced residential land supply to support HK home prices

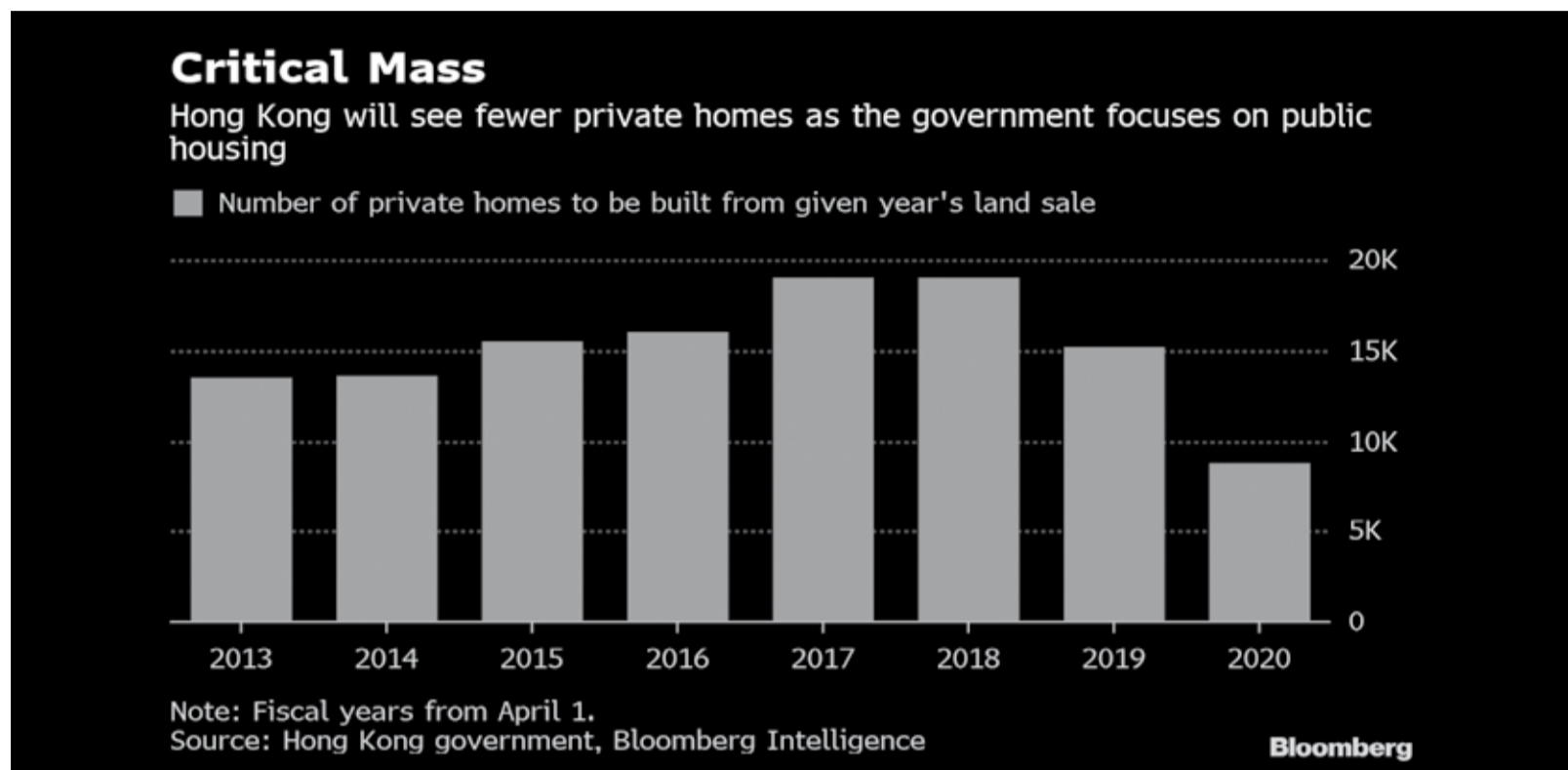
Shawna Kwan

A dwindling supply of land that can accommodate private homes should help put a floor under falling Hong Kong residential property prices.

The government last week unveiled plans to release just 15 residential sites in the fiscal year starting April 1 that could supply around 8,800 private homes. That's 42 percent less than a year ago, Bloomberg Intelligence data show.

For a city in the throes of a crippling housing shortage, that may seem counter-intuitive. But the decrease in private land supply is a result of the government's increasing focus on public housing. In December, the government announced that its land supply allocation quota for private homes would shrink from 40 percent to 30 percent.

Demand for public housing is pervasive in what has become the world's least affordable property market. The average wait time for a government-assisted rental unit is more than double



what it was in 2012, Hong Kong Housing Authority data show.

Reduced land supply for private residences won't have an immediate effect on prices because it takes around five years for a pro-

ject to come to fruition, according to Ryan Ip, the head of land and housing research at pro-government think tank Our Hong Kong Foundation. But he said over the coming three to four years, "de-

velopers will start slowing their home sales" because they'll want to extend the roll-out period for existing projects.

Home prices in Hong Kong have shown signs of stabilizing

after declining about 10 percent since August, Centaline figures show. Market watchers including JPMorgan Chase & Co. say home values may even bottom this quarter. **Bloomberg**

FORUM

MDT/Macauhub

Issuing Portugal's debt in China is 'mutually beneficial'

CHINA expects that issuing Portuguese public debt in yuan to be carried out in a "satisfactory" way and that it will be "mutually beneficial," according to the Chinese ambassador to Portugal.

Cai Run told Portuguese news agency Lusa that for Portugal the debt issue will be "another source of financing" and for China it will mean "popularity" and one way for the country "to be welcomed by the international community."

Speaking about the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Portugal and the People's Republic of China and the visit of the Portuguese President to Beijing in April 2019, Cai Run stressed that if the Portuguese debt issue in the Chinese market is carried out soon Portugal "will be the first country in the euro zone to issue government debt in yuan."

Portugal and China, through Caixa Geral de Depósitos (CGD) and the Bank of Chi-

na, in October 2018 signed an agreement to issue Portuguese public debt in yuan, one of 17 bilateral agreements signed during the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping, to Portugal.

Portugal has had authorization from the People's Bank of China to issue debt in the Chinese market since 2017.

Cai Run said that "financial cooperation is important" as part of bilateral Sino-Portuguese cooperation, highlighting Chinese investments made in the last few years in banking sector.

The ambassador recalled that Chinese investment in Portugal has exceeded 9 billion euros since 2012 and there has been "a stable increase in Portuguese investment in China at the same time."

Portugal is now the fifth largest Chinese investment destination abroad and is, for China, a partner for investments in other European countries and in the other Portuguese-speaking countries, he said.



MACAU-ZHONGSHAN-ZHUHAI

Tourism alliance to promote Sun Yat Sen's life

THE tourism authorities of Zhongshan, Zhuhai and Macau have convened in Zhuhai for their annual meeting to deepen regional cooperation between the three cities, and advance the expansion of their visitor source markets.

At the meeting, the three tourism authorities agreed to carry out joint promotion with the theme of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's life history and cultural heritage, promote their major festive events, as well as to update the Zhongshan, Zhuhai and Macau food guide.

In 2006 Zhongshan, Zhuhai and Macau formed a tourism alliance to carry out joint marketing initiatives under their image as the "Fragrant Hill in the past; Zhongshan, Zhuhai and Macau today." The alliance aims to entice more international visitors to visit the three cities in one trip and brand the Pearl River Delta Region as one travel destination.

The tourism authorities of the participating cities take turns to assume the role as alliance chairman and hold annual meetings to report on progress.

Last weekend, the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) organized a two-day familiarization visit to Zhuhai and Zhongshan for Macau trade partners, so as to promote a wider understanding of the tourism resources in the Greater Bay Area.

In mid-May last year, tourism authorities and industry representatives of the three cities jointly organized tourism promotions in Jinan of Shandong and Quanzhou of Fujian to present their combined tourism offerings.

As part of the promotion strategy, the three tourism bureaus published a food guide in Chinese and English, with the objective of enticing more visitors from both the mainland and abroad. **DB**

Huawei goes on legal warpath with twin North American suits



Meng Wanzhou

HUAWEI Technologies Co., no longer content with defending itself against U.S. accusations of espionage and bank fraud, is taking the initiative with a full-blown legal offensive.

The Chinese technology giant intends to file a lawsuit this week claiming the U.S. government is overstepping by banning Huawei equipment from certain networks, according to people familiar with the matter. That complaint would come just days after finance chief Meng Wanzhou sued Canada's government for allegedly trampling her constitutional rights - an effort to discredit the case against her as she awaits potential extradition to the U.S. for bank fraud.

The long-secretive Huawei began to open up this year with founder Ren Zhengfei giving interviews to foreign media and personally denying accusations his company aids Beijing in espionage. But the legal effort signals a more aggressive assault on its American accusers, who have been trying to persuade other countries to ban Huawei gear from communications networks.

Huawei's lawsuit against the U.S.

is aimed at a law that blocks certain government agencies from using equipment from Huawei and its domestic rival ZTE Corp., the people said. Huawei is likely to argue that it's unconstitutional to single out a person or a group for a penalty without trial, they said. Huawei declined to comment on the lawsuit, which was first reported by the New York Times.

Meng's complaint is more personal. In a civil suit filed Friday, she claims officers failed to immediately arrest her on Dec. 1 in Vancouver on a U.S. extradition request and instead first detained her under the guise of a routine custom check to "unlawfully compel her to provide evidence and information."

Canada's Justice Minister David Lametti will ultimately be the one to sign off on any extradition - Meng's allegations about her arrest could potentially play into that final decision.

According to the complaint, the officers detained Meng on the jetway as she was getting off a flight, took away two phones, an iPad and a computer, then got her to surrender the passwords to those devices. She

was formally arrested only about three hours after her initial detention, the claim says.

The world's top provider of networking gear faces the prospect of being shut out of pivotal infrastructure markets, as it faces criminal charges in the U.S. and an American effort to convince allies not to use its equipment. The clash has complicated negotiations between Washington and Beijing as they try to hammer out a trade deal.

It's not clear how effective Huawei's lawsuits will be. The Justice Department has sued Huawei for alleged theft of trade secrets, separate from its case against Meng. The U.S. is seeking Meng's handover to face fraud charges, alleging she lied to banks to trick them into processing transactions for Huawei that potentially violated Iran trade sanctions.

In the CFO's suit in Canada, she seeks damages for misfeasance of public office by customs officials, breaches of her constitutional rights, and false imprisonment, according to the suit.

While Canada's Charter rights attach to all people, regardless of nationality or immigration status, courts have tended to concur with the government that such rights are more attenuated at the border. One Supreme Court ruling, for example, clearly noted that people don't expect to be able to cross international borders free from scrutiny. **MDT/Bloomberg**

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GAMING

Ponca Tribe fighting two states and a city to keep new casino

Margery A. Beck, Iowa

SOME 150 years after suffering the loss of its homeland at the hands of the U.S. government, the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska is celebrating a triumph with the opening of a casino intended to secure a stream of revenue for the long-struggling tribe.

The only thing standing in its way? An effort by governments in Iowa and Nebraska that seeks to strip it of the casino.

"It's the same fight, all these years after it began," said Ponca Tribal Chairman Larry Wright.

The USD10 million Prairie Flower Casino opened in November with 200 slot-style machines after the National Indian Gaming Commission approved the tribe's casino license a year earlier, some 10 years after the tribe began its effort to open the casino. It's far from a novelty in the area: Three much larger casinos are just a few miles away, also in western Iowa. Yet the casino's location is central to the opposition to it, including lawsuits from the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and the states of Iowa and Nebraska.

Unlike most other tribal casinos, the Prairie Flower wasn't built on a reservation. The Ponca Tribe — forced in the 1870s by the U.S. government to leave its homeland along the Missouri River in Nebraska River — has no reservation. The U.S. government terminated the tribe in the 1960s and took its remaining land as part of a policy that sought to abolish reservations and assimilate Native Americans into mainstream American society. The tribe regained its federal recognition in 1990, and most of its 4,500 members are spread over 15 counties in Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota.



Its casino sits on a 5-acre (2-hectare) lot that the tribe bought 20 years ago in Carter Lake, the only Iowa city on the western side of the Missouri River, which otherwise separates Nebraska and Iowa. Carter Lake had originally been on the east side of the river, but thanks to shifting and flooding in the late 1800s, it's now surrounded by the city of Omaha — the largest city in Nebraska, whose constitution expressly forbids casinos.

"The practical result," Nebraska's lawsuit states, "is that Carter Lake is accessible only by traveling through Nebraska, and more specially, through Omaha, which is Nebraska's most populous and densely populated metropolitan area."

The Prairie Flower is essentially in the heart of Omaha, just blocks from the city's downtown and a mile (1.6 kilometers) from its airport.

The lawsuits fault the National Indian Gaming Commission's

decision to license the Prairie Flower, saying the tribe misrepresented its intentions when it initially announced plans for a health center on the lot.

But the underlying opposition in Iowa isn't hard to track: It comes down to money and a perceived tug-of-war for patrons such as Helen Syfie, 73, of Omaha, who recently stopped in to play the slots at the Prairie Flower. She said she "couldn't wait" for the Carter Lake casino to open, but she also said she'll

still cross the river to go to the Council Bluffs casinos.

"There's plenty of business to go around," she said. "All of them have their own advantages. I really don't think it's going to take anything away from the Council Bluffs casinos."

Iowa officials aren't convinced.

State and local officials don't want to give up any share of the millions in taxes, fees and endowment funds Council Bluffs' three casinos produce. In 2017, that public money came to nearly \$95 million, according to the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, and a large chunk comes from Nebraska residents. A 2013 study ordered by the commission found Nebraska residents spent nearly \$327 million at Iowa casinos, one-quarter of revenues for the state.

"Our early estimates are that the state of Iowa could lose \$30 million in state gaming tax revenue, and we could lose another million in taxes and fees a year locally," said Council Bluffs Mayor Matt Walsch. "Council Bluffs casinos could, eventually, stand to lose 350 jobs."

Pat Loontjer, director of anti-gambling nonprofit Gambling With The Good Life, is among those in Omaha fighting to see the Ponca casino shut down.

"The cost to the state will be in the millions when you consider the bankruptcies, embezzlements, increased crime and families torn apart by gambling addiction," she said.

Wright, the tribe chairman, noted that about 80 of the casino's 100 employees are not tribe members. He also said the tribe is paying \$750,000 annually to Carter Lake to offset any safety and infrastructure costs to the city.

"We feel confident in our position," he said. "Regardless to people's opposition to gaming as a whole, it's doing exactly what it was intended to do: Improve support for our services and our people."

Syfie said she hopes the tribe is allowed to keep the casino.

"They worked so long to get it," she said. "Now they're having to work to keep it." **AP**

corporate bits

SHERATON, THE ST. REGIS AWARD TRAVEL TRADE PARTNERS



Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel, Cotai Central and The St. Regis Macao, Cotai Central have recognized the support of travel partners in Asia with the Travel Trade Partners

Appreciation Awards 2018. The two hotels presented 40 accolades acknowledging travel trade partners from the leisure and MICE segments operating through traditional

and online channels.

The firms received awards under 11 categories.

The winners for the Outstanding Sales Achievement Award — Mainland China Region and Outstanding Sales Achievement Award — Rest of The World were Zhuhai Yang Yang International Travel Service Co. Ltd. and Lion Travel Service Co. Ltd.

"Through these awards, we express our gratitude for their contributions and loyalty, and we're looking forward to continuing our partnerships this year and achieving even greater success," said the managing director of the two resorts, Janet McNab.

MACAU JOCKEY CLUB 30TH ANNIVERSARY CUP PRIZE POOL TOTALS HKD5.46M



Presented by Sociedade de Jogos de Macau, S.A. (SJM), the Macau Jockey Club's (MJC) 30th Anniversary Cup was held at the MJC, the gaming operator announced in a statement.

SJM was also the title sponsor of the Grand Lisboa Palace Cup, Grand Lisboa Cup and Jai Alai Hotel Cup, which were held at the Taipa racecourse.

Other major races included the Macau Hong Kong Trophy and the Chairman's Challenge Cup. The prize pool for the race meeting on Sunday amounted to HKD5.46 million.

The MJC 30th Anniversary Cup attracted ten horses to compete in this 1,500-meter race for a total prize of HKD470,000, and this year's champion was "Sacred Capital."

The Grand Lisboa Palace Cup is a 1,800-meter race with a total prize of HKD295,000.

CONGRESS

Beijing sets robust growth target to shore up cooling economy



President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang

Joe McDonald, Beijing

CHINA'S government announced a robust annual economic growth target and a 7.5 percent rise in military spending yesterday at a legislative session overshadowed by a tariff war with Washington.

In a bid to defuse U.S. and European complaints the Chinese system is rigged against foreign companies, Premier Li Keqiang promised in a speech to the National People's Congress they will be "treated as equals" with Chinese competitors.

Li, the country's top economic official, set this year's growth target at 6 to 6.5 percent, reflecting official determination to shore up a cooling, state-dominated economy and prevent politically dangerous job losses in the face of U.S. tariff hikes and weaker global demand. It is off slightly from last year's 6.6 percent growth, a three-decade low, but would be among the world's strongest if achieved.

The premier promised to "promote China-U.S. trade negotiations," but gave no details of talks aimed at ending the fight with President Donald Trump over Beijing's technology ambitions and complaints it steals or pressures companies to hand over technology.

Li pledged higher spending on technology development the ruling Communist Party sees as a path to prosperity and global influence and more money for

education, social programs and public works construction.

Li warned the second-largest economy faces a "graver and more complicated environment" and risks that "are greater in number and size."

The two-week gathering of the congress's 3,000-plus delegates in the cavernous Great Hall of the People is China's highest-profile event of the year but does little lawmaking work. Instead, it serves as a platform to highlight plans for the year and set the tone for government work.

President Xi Jinping's government is expected to use this year's session to announce measures to support economic growth including tax cuts and more support for entrepreneurs who generate China's new jobs and wealth.

Companies and investors are looking for details of how Beijing will carry out promises to curb the dominance of state industry.

Li said the central government budget deficit would rise from 2.6 percent of total economic output to 2.8 percent

Legislators also are due to endorse a law that aims to ease tensions with Washington and Europe by discouraging officials from pressuring foreign companies to hand over technology.

A gathering of noncommunist groups held at the same time draws tech billionaires, movie stars and ethnic minorities to the Chinese capital.

Government spending plans reflect "emphatic pro-growth efforts" and a "commitment to offset external headwinds," said Vishnu Varathan of Mizuho Bank in a report.

Proposed tax cuts of up to USD300 billion would put "significant spending power" in the hands of consumers and companies and help to buoy sagging demand for autos, household appliances and other goods, said Varathan.

The government wants to "ensure a soft landing," said Varathan.

Li, the No. 2 leader in the ruling party behind Xi, said Beijing will spend more on technology development including artificial intelligence, electric cars, biotechnology and new materials.

China's emergence as a competitor in smartphones, telecom equipment, solar power and other technologies has increased the range of products available to consumers and helped to drive down prices. But it rattles Washington and other governments that worry Chinese competition is a threat to their indus-

tries and employment.

Spending on the Communist Party's military wing, the People's Liberation Army, will rise to \$178 billion, according to a separate report issued by the finance ministry. China's total military outlay, the second-largest behind the United States, is estimated by independent experts to exceed \$220 billion a year when off-budget expenses are added in.

Yue Gang, a military expert and retired Chinese army colonel, said the relatively modest rise in military spending — down from the double-digit percentage increases of past years — reflected the new economic conditions China is facing.

"It is more urgent for China to prepare for a trade war with the U.S., instead of a physical war," Yue said. "The basic reform of China's military structure and system are almost completed and China needs the money to be used for more urgent matters."

Though smaller than last year's increase, the defense budget facilitates a massive naval shipbuilding effort and the purchase of cutting-edge aircraft and other high-tech weaponry that help China shore up its territorial claims in the South China Sea and expand its power abroad.

Li said the central government budget deficit would rise from 2.6 percent of total economic output to 2.8 percent, reflecting higher spending to stimulate the economy.

The tariff fight with Trump over Beijing's technology ambitions has rattled Chinese consumers and investors who also worry about weakening real estate and auto sales. That is prompting some to put off spending, which could add to downward pressure on economic growth.

News reports say Washington and Beijing might be close to an agreement to end the battle. But the chief U.S. envoy, Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, said earlier the two sides still had much work to do.

No agreements have been announced on the core of the dispute: U.S. pressure on Beijing to roll back plans for state-led creation of global competitors in robotics and other technology.

Washington, Europe and other trading partners say those violate China's market-opening obligations. Some American officials worry they might erode U.S. industrial leadership.

It was unclear whether Trump would be mollified by the technology measure, part of law on foreign investment that state media say the congress is due to endorse.

It would bar officials from using "administrative measures" to pressure companies to hand over technology. Foreign business groups welcomed the proposal but said they need to see details of how it will be enforced to know whether it will improve conditions.

Li tried to reassure investors by promising foreign companies will be "treated as equals" with Chinese enterprises in a "fair and impartial market environment."

Foreign business groups and governments complain Beijing routinely violates its commitments under the World Trade Organization to ensure such equality, or "national treatment." They say rules on investment, technology licensing and other facets of business discriminate against foreign companies or shield Chinese enterprises from competition.

Xi and other Chinese leaders have announced changes over the past year including tariff cuts on imported consumer goods and plans to allow full foreign ownership in auto manufacturing. But business groups say those have little impact on operating conditions for foreign companies in China.

Beijing faces a formal WTO challenge filed in July by the European Union against rules on technology licensing the 28-nation trade bloc said improperly hamper the ability of foreign companies to protect and profit from their technology.

Li promised "competitive neutrality," or equal treatment of state-owned and private companies by Chinese regulators. But he gave no details of how far that might extend for foreign competitors.

"Enterprises under all forms of ownership will be treated on an equal footing," the premier said. AP



Xi signals loosening of property curbs

BEIJING signaled it may be open to loosening controls over the housing market, after President Xi Jinping's mantra that property isn't for speculation was omitted from a key report to the National People's Congress.

Xi's famous vow that "houses are built to be inhabited, not for speculation" didn't appear in Premier Li Keqiang's work report delivered yesterday to the annual parliamentary gathering in Beijing. Dropping the wording, which became ubiquitous after Xi used it in a speech in 2017, may spur speculation that the government will tolerate an easing of property curbs as it grapples with a sharp economic slowdown.

"The fact that the 'not for speculation' words aren't included in the key work target report sends a loud signal," said Zhang Dawei, an analyst at property real estate agency Centaline Group. "It shows the

most stringent policies are already behind us."

Local authorities have rolled out a "stealth easing" of property restrictions - such as relaxing age limits on residency permits - in recent months as the housing market cools. Yet they have been reluctant to unwind some of the more stringent measures, such as down-payment thresholds and lending curbs, without the tacit approval of the central government. **Bloomberg**

China deleted any reference to the industrial blueprint that has become a flash point in relations with the U.S. from this year's key economic planning documents, but the ambition to transform itself into an advanced manufacturing economy is still there between the lines.

Reference to industrial plan that US loves to hate deleted

China deleted any reference to the industrial blueprint that has become a flash point in relations with the U.S. from this year's key economic planning documents, but the ambition to transform itself into an advanced manufacturing economy is still there between the lines.

There was no mention of the "Made in China 2025," blueprint to become a globally competitive industrial power in the two main reports from Premier Li Keqiang and the

National Development and Reform Commission released yesterday. The strategy was featured prominently in the 2018 versions of both.

Yet the underlying message - that China will upgrade crucial, technology-intensive industries - hasn't weakened. The government work report said the nation will step up research and development into big data and artificial intelligence, as well as fostering emerging industries such as next-generation information te-

chnology, high-end equipment, bio-medicine, new energy automobiles and new materials - almost a photocopy of the sectors laid down in the plan.

"We will organize a new round of technology transformation and upgrading projects, and harness new technologies like the Internet, big data, and AI," the NDRC said in the report. The nation will "move quickly" to launch commercial 5G, expand a new version of Internet protocols, and promote new infrastructure in AI,

industrial Internet, and the 'Internet of Things.'

Foreign companies and governments have expressed fears that they won't be able to compete in advanced manufacturing against Chinese rivals if they are backed by state support and subsidies.

The omission was due to the word limit of the work report, according to Huang Shouhong, director of the state council research office. He led the drafting of the Premier's report and spoke at a briefing yesterday. **Bloomberg**

KFC dedicates restaurant outlet to memory of Communist hero

FAST-FOOD chain KFC is memorializing a popular Chinese Communist hero with restaurant decor extolling his deeds, in a rare matching of an iconic American brand with Communist propaganda.

The official Xinhua News Agency said the company launched its first "Lei Feng Spirit" restaurant in Lei's home province of Hunan on Sunday, ahead of yesterday's official remembrance day for the soldier who died in 1962 at the age of 21.

Lei's example of selfless service to the Communist Party and his comrades was popularized in 1963 by former leader Mao Zedong and remains a rallying point for party unity and public service. Critics question the facts surrounding his alleged good deeds, saying most were based on accounts in a diary reportedly found after his death.

The KFC restaurant in the provincial capital of Changsha is decorated with Lei's writings and image. The company did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"Lei Feng has been the role model for generations of Chinese. As the KFC [outlet] in his hometown, we will spare no effort to promote his spirit," He Min, general manager for KFC's Hunan region, was quoted as saying by Xinhua.

In addition to opening the themed restaurant, KFC plans to "promote the Lei Feng spirit in its over 250 outlets in the province and encourage its staff to learn from the role model," Xinhua said.

Lei Feng day is marked annually by acts of public service such as clearing garbage and visiting the elderly. Communist leaders revived his memory more than a decade ago in a bid to stir support for the party among the younger generation born after the abandonment of orthodox Marxism in the 1980s and the crushing of pro-democracy protests centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Recent years have seen renewed efforts to update his image, including through television specials and smartphone apps.

KFC in China is run by Yum China, which split from its parent company Yum Brands in 2016. The company's American roots have occasionally made it a target of nationalistic Chinese during times of tension between Beijing and Washington, although it appears unaffected by the current trade war between the two. **AP**





Student protesters shout slogans as they hold a protest in front of the U.S. embassy in Manila yesterday

TERRITORIAL DISPUTE

Philippines worried it may get involved in war at sea for US

Jim Gomez, Manila

THE United States is more likely to be involved in a “shooting war” in the disputed South China Sea than the Philippines but the latter would be embroiled in such a conflict just the same because of its 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty with Washington, the Philippine defense chief said yesterday.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the treaty needed to be re-examined to clear ambiguities that could cause chaos and confusion during a crisis. He cited China’s aggressive seizure in the mid-1990s of a Philippine-claimed reef, saying

“The U.S. did not stop it.”

The Philippine proposal for the treaty’s review was among the key topics when U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with President Rodrigo Duterte and other officials during an overnight visit to Manila last week.

The treaty behind one of the longest-standing security alliances in Asia calls on the U.S. and the Philippines to come to each other’s defense against an external attack. In the past, the Philippines has tried to clarify whether the treaty would apply if its forces come under attack in a disputed region like the South China Sea, where it has been locked in tense territorial conflicts

with China and four other governments.

Pompeo assured the Philippines during his visit that America will come to its defense if its forces, aircraft or ships come under armed attack in the South China Sea, in the first such public U.S. assurance in recent memory.

The top American diplomat assured that the U.S. is committed to ensuring the South China Sea remains open to all kinds of navigation and that “China does not pose a threat” of closing the disputed sea lanes.

Lorenzana said U.S. forces, which have stepped up so-called freedom of navigation patrols in the strategic waterway, would

more likely end up getting involved in an armed conflict than the Philippines, which he foresees would not engage any country in a war in the contested territories.

“The United States, with the increased and frequent passage of its naval vessels in the West Philippine Sea, is more likely to be involved in a shooting war,” Lorenzana said in a statement, using the Philippine name for the South China Sea.

“In such a case and on the basis of the Mutual Defense Treaty, the Philippines will be automatically involved,” Lorenzana said.

“It is not the lack of reassurance that worries me. It is being

involved in a war that we do not seek and do not want,” Lorenzana said.

The long-seething territorial disputes are a key irritant between Washington and Beijing, which has turned several disputed barren reefs into islands with runways and other military facilities. The U.S. has declared that the peaceful resolution of the disputes and freedom of navigation and overflight in the contested areas are in the U.S. national interest.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said yesterday the defense department was checking a report that Chinese vessels have been blocking Filipino fishermen from approaching sandbars near Philippine-occupied Thitu Island, which is called Pag-asa by Filipinos, in the disputed waters.

Philippine officials have said China has deployed surveillance ships and fishing flotillas off three newly emerged sandbars called Sandy Cay near Thitu since 2017 to prevent the Philippines from occupying them.

In addition to China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have overlapping claims in the strategic waters. U.S. Navy ships have sailed close to Chinese-occupied islands to assert freedom of navigation, provoking angry protests from China and tense moments between the rival naval forces.

Lorenzana said yesterday that the treaty would have been reviewed as far back as 1992, when huge U.S. military bases were closed in the country and the Philippines lost its security umbrella.

A few years after American forces left, the Chinese began their aggressive actions in Mischief Reef — “not an armed attack but it was aggression just the same. The U.S. did not stop it,” Lorenzana said.

Lorenzana was referring to the Philippine-claimed reef, which China seized around 1995 in the Spratlys, the most hotly contested territory in the busy South China Sea. AP

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JAPAN

Court OK's Nissan ex-Chairman Ghosn's release on bail

THE Tokyo District Court approved the release of former Nissan Chairman Carlos Ghosn on USD8.9 million bail yesterday, ending nearly four months of detention in Japan.

But his release hinges on the court's decision on an appeal by prosecutors that was filed within hours of the announcement he was going to be granted bail.

The acceptance of Ghosn's request for bail, his third, came a day after one of his lawyers said he was confident the auto executive would gain his release.

The newly hired attorney, Junichiro Hironaka, is famous for winning acquittals in Japan, a nation where the conviction rate is 99 percent.

Hironaka said Monday that he had offered new ways to monitor Ghosn after his release, such as camera surveillance. Hironaka also questioned the grounds for Ghosn's arrest, calling the case "very peculiar," and suggesting it could have been dealt with as an internal company matter.

He welcomed the decision, telling reporters: "It was good we proposed concrete ways showing how he would not tamper with evidence or try to flee."

The \$8.9 million bail set by the court is relatively high but not the highest ever in Japan.

Among the conditions for



In this May 2016 photo, Carlos Ghosn speaks during a press conference in Yokohama

Ghosn's release were restrictions on where he can live, a ban on foreign travel and other promises not to tamper with evidence or try to flee, the court said.

The former head of the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Motors alliance has been detained since he was arrested on Nov. 19. He says he is innocent of charges of falsi-

fying financial information and of breach of trust.

Ghosn's release from the Tokyo Detention Center might come as soon as later in the day.

In Japan, suspects are routinely detained for months, often until their trials start. That's especially true of those who insist on their innocence.

Prosecutors say suspects may tamper with evidence and shouldn't be released. Two previous requests submitted by his legal team were denied. His previous defense lawyer, Motonari Ohtsuru, had said Ghosn's release might not come for months.

Hironaka is among many critics of the Japanese justice system who say such lengthy detentions of suspects are unfair. He referred to the situation as "hostage justice."

Ghosn is charged with falsifying financial reports by under-reporting compensation that he contends was never paid or decided upon. The breach of trust allegations center on a temporary transfer of Ghosn's investment losses to Nissan's books that he says caused no losses to the automaker. They also name payments to a Saudi businessman that he says were for legitimate services.

Ghosn's family had appealed for his release, calling his detention a human rights violation.

Nissan Motor Co. declined comment on the criminal case

but said it was working on strengthening corporate governance. Nissan has dismissed Ghosn as chairman, although he remains on the board pending a decision at a shareholders' meeting.

Ghosn is charged with falsifying financial reports by under-reporting compensation that he contends was never paid or decided upon

"Nissan's internal investigation has uncovered substantial evidence of blatantly unethical conduct," company spokesman Nick Maxfield said. **AP**

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US

FBI stepping up efforts to root out international corruption

Michael Balsamo
& Eric Tucker, Washington

AIMING to crack down on money laundering and bribes to overseas governments, the FBI is stepping up its efforts to root out foreign corruption with a new squad of agents based in Miami.

The squad will focus its efforts not only on Miami but also in South America, a continent that has been home to some of the Justice Department's most significant international corruption prosecutions of the last several years. The Miami squad joins three others based in the FBI's largest field offices — Washington, New York and Los Angeles.

"We're protecting the rule of law," Leslie Backschie, the chief of the FBI's international corruption unit, said in an interview yesterday [local time]. "If there's no rule of law, you'll have certain societies where they feel like their governments are so corrupt, they'll go to other elements that are considered fundamental, that they see as clean or something against the corrupt regime, and that becomes a threat to national security."

The unit aims to identify violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a U.S. law that makes it illegal to bribe foreign officials. The FBI has also been doing outreach to companies in a variety of industries, from oil to pharmaceuticals, to teach them about red flags that could indicate corruption and encourage the companies to "self-report" potentially improper conduct to the bureau.

"One thing when I talk to companies, I'm like, 'When you pay a bribe, do you know where your bribe goes? Is your bribe going to fund terrorism?'" Backschie said.

And so far, the cases the unit has brought have resulted in billions of dollars in settlements.

Last September, for instance, the Brazilian-owned energy company, Petrobras, agreed to pay more than USD853 million to resolve investigations into allegations that executives paid hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes to Brazilian politicians and political parties. And in December 2016, the Brazil-based construction conglomerate Odebrecht and another petrochemical company agreed to pay more than \$3.5 billion to settle

charges they bribed politicians around the world through a web of shell companies and off-the-books transactions.

"We've seen a lot of activity in South America — Odebrecht, Petrobras. South America is a place where [...] we've seen corruption. We've had a lot of work there," Backschie said.

"But not just South America. Miami itself, it's an economic center," she added. "It's a big flow of money in and out of Miami. It's a city where we see individuals hiding their money, through shell companies, through real estate, through boating."

More broadly, special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation has shone a spotlight on international corruption. Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort is being sentenced Thursday in federal court in Virginia on charges that he evaded taxes on millions of dollars in income received through political consulting on behalf of a pro-Russia Ukrainian political party, and that he concealed his money in undisclosed foreign bank accounts.

Prosecutors have scored 34 convictions in cases brought by the international corruption unit from 2016 until 2018. The

cases are often longer-running and more financially complex than other crimes the FBI investigates.

Prosecutors have scored 34 convictions in cases brought by the international corruption unit from 2016 until 2018

Agents also have to be conscious of any potential political ramifications because international corruption cases can have widespread effects that influence elections and economies, Backschie said. In addition to regular conversations about cases, FBI supervisors meet with lawyers at the Justice Department in Washington each quarter to review potential prosecutions and the possible consequences.

"These cases are very politically sensitive, not just in the

U.S. but overseas," she said. "When you're looking at foreign officials in other governments — I mean, look, in Malaysia, the president wasn't re-elected. We saw presidents toppled in Brazil. These are the results of cases like this. When you're looking at high-level government officials, there's a lot of sensitivities."

The agents are working to ensure there's "a place where business can compete fairly," and in most cases other governments are glad to accept the FBI's help in rooting out corruption, Backschie said.

"You can't just have one agent or two agents in a field office addressing it. [...] You can't be working this two hours a week. It's just not going to work. You need full-time dedicated resources," she said.

The unit had been splitting cases involving South American countries between the three other offices before Backschie decided they should refocus their resources and add agents in Miami. The new squad will be comprised of six agents, who will start in their roles later this month, plus a supervisor and a forensic accountant. Unlike other FBI field office squads that focus on violent crime and public corruption and report to local leadership, this one will answer to officials at headquarters in Washington.

"Beverly Hills, New York, Miami — these are cities where we find people hiding their money" in real estate and boating, Backschie said. "They're attractive cities for that." AP

CANADA

Leading minister resigns over scandal that threatens Trudeau

Rob Gillies, Toronto

A leading Cabinet minister in Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government resigned yesterday [local time], becoming the second minister to step down over a scandal that has shaken the government in an election year.

Treasury Board president Jane Philpott, considered a star minister, said in a resignation letter that it was "untenable" for her to continue in the Cabinet because she lost confidence and could not defend the government.

Philpott's friend, former Attorney General and Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, testified last week that Trudeau and senior members of his government inappropriately tried to pressure her to avoid prosecution of a major Canadian engineering company in a case involving allegations of corruption in Libya.

Wilson-Raybould resigned from Cabinet last month after being demoted to veteran affairs minister the month before.

The scandal has rocked Tru-



deau's government. Gerald Butts, his closet adviser and best friend, also resigned last month and is scheduled to testify Wednesday before a Parliament justice committee in Trudeau's defense.

"I know Philpott has felt this way for some time. And while I am disappointed, I understand her decision to step down. I want to thank her for her service," Trudeau said at a campaign-style event.

Trudeau said he takes the con-

cerns very seriously and said the matter has generated an important discussion.

"But at the same time, we need to keep in mind the bigger picture," Trudeau said.

Trudeau has acknowledged raising the issue with Wilson-Raybould, but has said that was appropriate.

"I have concluded that I must resign as a member of Cabinet," Philpott wrote. "Sadly, I have lost confidence in how the government has dealt with this matter

and in how it has responded to the issues raised."

Philpott, a physician, is a former minister of health and minister of indigenous services and was widely viewed as one of Trudeau's most competent Cabinet ministers.

"The evidence of efforts by politicians and/or officials to pressure the former Attorney General to intervene in the criminal case involving SNC-Lavalin, and the evidence as to the content of those efforts have raised serious concerns for me," Philpott wrote.

"I must abide by my core values, my ethical responsibilities and constitutional obligations. There can be a cost to acting on one's principles, but there is a bigger cost to abandoning them."

Philpott said she would continue as a Parliament member for Trudeau's Liberal Party.

Wilson-Raybould said the same last week but declined to say she had confidence in Trudeau. Trudeau said early yesterday he was still deciding whether Wilson-Raybould could remain a member of his party in Parliament.

Trudeau thanked Philpott for

her service in a short statement that said he would have more to say later in Toronto.

The leader of the opposition Conservative Party, Andrew Scheer, said at a news conference that Philpott's resignation demonstrates "a government in total chaos" and called again for Trudeau to resign and for a police investigation of the affair.

Wilson-Raybould testified last week she was pressured to instruct the director of public prosecutions to negotiate a remediation agreement with SNC-Lavalin. The agreement would have allowed the company to pay reparations but avoid a criminal trial on charges of corruption and bribery. But Wilson-Raybould said the pressure was not illegal and said she was not instructed to interfere.

If convicted criminally, the Montreal-based company would be banned from receiving any federal government business for a decade. SNC-Lavalin is an economic force in Canada, with 9,000 employees in the country and about 50,000 worldwide.

"This is a spectacular blow to the government" said Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto. "It has become rare that ministers resign on principle in Canada. And now we've had two in such a short time. It reveals deep division in the Cabinet about how to deal with Jody Wilson-Raybould." AP

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what's ON



NO WHERE THERE – WORKS BY TANG JING
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UNTIL: March 16, 2019
VENUE: 1844 Macau Photography Art Space
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 6311 1390

DISCOVER MACAU: MUSEUM OF TAIPA AND COLOANE HISTORY
TIME: 10am-6pm daily (last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Mondays)
ADDRESS: Rua Correia da Silva, Taipa
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

3RD MACAU PRINTMAKING TRIENNIAL
TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm, closed on Monday)
VENUE: Macau Contemporary Art Center - Navy Yard No.1

Exhibitions Gallery and Nostalgic House of the Taipa Houses
UNTIL: March 16, 2019
VENUE: 1844 Macau Photography Art Space
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6866

Offbeat

GRANNY JELA DRAWS MILLIONS IN SERBIA WITH ONLINE COOKING

AP PHOTO



What to cook today?

Serbs looking for ideas are increasingly turning to the Balkan country's 69-year-old hit chef Granny Jela, who has put her life-long experience to good use and launched an online cooking tutorial.

Her real name is Jelena Petrovic and her YouTube channel and blog dubbed Bakina Kuhinja ("Granny's Kitchen") have had more than 50 million of views and nearly 150,000 subscribers who check in daily for a new recipe of home-made food.

Self-styled and aided by her husband Milan, who is behind the camera and does grocery shopping, Granny Jela has become a local celebrity and an internet sensation, winning an award last year.

"All you need is love, the will and desire to do something," Petrovic told The Associated Press in an interview. "Anything can be done only if you really want to do it."

It all started about a decade ago when Petrovic launched an online forum to share her recipes of home-made dishes – from soups to cooked meals, meat, sweets, home-made bread or pastry.

Slowly at first, the list of followers grew and Petrovic started a blog and began posting videos, made initially with her cellphone and as of recently with a more sophisticated camera.

Along the way, Petrovic conquered online skills.

"I didn't even know how to use a computer mouse at first," she said. "But I Googled a lot and read hundreds of tutorials."

Nowadays, Petrovic's channel is a full-time preoccupation. After a morning tea, the couple gets down to work from grocery shopping to filming, editing and posting, she explained.

"It is exhausting, from early morning to late evening," Petrovic said, explaining mistakes are possible "like in any movie."

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Água de Mar
15:55	Viver é Fácil
16:20	Quem Quer Ser Millionário
17:15	A Entrevista - João Lourenço
17:55	Ministério do Tempo
18:55	TDM Entrevista (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Montra do Lilau
21:50	O Último Reino Sr.1
22:40	LiteraturAqui
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Resumo Liga dos Campeões 2018/2019
00:10	Curso de Cultura Geral - Fim
01:05	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:50	RTPi Directo
04:00	Liga dos Campeões: Porto - Roma (Directo)
06:00	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

04 - 07 Mar

HAPPY DEATH DAY 2U

ROOM 1

2:30, 4:30, 7:30, 9:30pm

Director: Christopher Landon

Starring: Jessica Rothe, Israel Broussard, Phi Vu

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 100min



BEN IS BACK

ROOM 2

2:30, 4:30, 9:30 pm

Director: Peter Hedges

Starring: Julia Roberts, Lucas Hedges, Courtney B. Vance

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 103min

FATE/STAY NIGHT: HEAVEN'S FEEL II

LOST BUTTERFLY

ROOM 1

7:30pm

Director: Tomonori Sudô

Starring: Yu Asakawa, Mai Kadowaki, Hiroshi Kamiya

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 117min



THE WANDERING EARTH

ROOM 3

42:30, 7:15pm

Director: Frant Gwo

Starring: Chuxiao Qu, Jing Wu, Guangjie Li

Language: Chinese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 123min

DRAGON BALL SUPER BROLI

ROOM 3

4:45, 9:30pm

Director: Tatsuya Nagamine

Starring: Masako Nozawa, Aya Hisakawa, Ryô Horikawa

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 100min

this day in history



1993 ANGOLANS DIE IN BATTLE FOR HUAMBO

More than 350 people have died in a battle between Unita rebels and Angolan government forces in the city of Huambo, according to Angolan army reports.

The government of the southern African country also said that up to 1,500 people had been injured in the fighting.

Diplomats say the battle is "vicious", with neither side taking many prisoners.

According to the radio station of Angola's rebel movement Unita, government troops are fleeing from the city and large amounts of arms and ammunition have been seized, including several Russian-built tanks.

The government garrison in the city has been cut off for several weeks and is being supplied by occasional air drops.

Fighting around Huambo has intensified after Unita brought in troop reinforcements from Bie province, which is around 165km away to the east of the city.

Unita radio also reported that its leader, Dr Jonas Savimbi, would address the nation on the search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Since January there has been no running water or electricity in Huambo, which is home to 400,000 people, and many areas have been flattened by artillery shells.

The battle for the key city is seen as more symbolic than strategic.

The fighting in Huambo comes after the breakdown of a 1991 peace agreement which was aimed at ending 16 years of civil war in the former Portuguese colony.

Huambo is home to the Ovimbundu, the people who gave Mr Savimbi's Unita (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) movement its main support.

Earlier, UN officials admitted defeat in their diplomatic attempts to halt renewed civil war in Angola, calling the outcome a "bitter disappointment".

Unita failed to attend UN-sponsored peace talks in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, last week, but proposed fresh talks in Geneva.

Local aid agencies have described the health situation in Angola as "dramatic" - with a child dying every two hours in the paediatric hospital in the capital Luanda.

Most of the main aid agencies have left the country after Unita launched an abortive coup attempt in Luanda last November.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Two days after the gun battle started in Huambo, Unita announced it had seized the country's second city and was in complete control after capturing government positions.

More than 10,000 people are estimated to have died in the two-month battle for Huambo.

The rebel leader of Unita, Jonas Savimbi, died in a gun battle with government forces in February 2002.

Unita went on to become a political party and signed a ceasefire with the Angolan government in April 2002.

In 2003, Unita apologised for its part in Angola's 27-year civil war and asked for forgiveness.

Unita's secretary for political affairs, Abilio Camalata Numa, said his movement took responsibility for the many lives lost but he defended what he called the "political project" which had been the reason for the war.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 When the end of the week rolls around these days, you're less than relieved. In fact, you're not feeling all that great about having two days off. Pack as much as you can into your waking hours.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Catalogues are appealing, especially for things around the home. Don't even turn to page one. Even though there's no human being there, treat the shiny pages with the same caution you would a used car salesman.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Someone is moody and nasty if they don't get what they want. Don't let them intimidate you into coughing up the cash. Go ahead, let them call you cheap. You know they're the ones who are really being selfish.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You may have half the assets you once had, but you have more than double of so many other things that count. You just haven't stopped to take inventory of the things that really matter. Start today.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 A weaker person than you would have given up by now. Your persistence alone should be a matter of pride. Keep on keeping on. If you need inspiration, think of your role model.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 The most important thing you can do for your future self is to get organized today. Make it your priority. Everything else can wait, from family gatherings to socializing with friends.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 With so much to be down about, you need a pick-me-up. On the other hand, too much duality won't help matters, either. Settle for what brings you up into the middle ground, even if it's keeping your head down and toiling.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Having a lot of drive is one way to block out your emotions. Losing money shouldn't make you feel things like horror or despair. Go ahead, slow down long enough to find out just what lurks behind your closed doors.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 If only you could follow your mood! Those days are long over. You have to make hay while the sun shines, just like the rest of the world. It goes without saying your energy level doesn't match the task before you.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 People around you are over reacting. In fact, they're going ballistic. As long as they're not going postal, don't make it your concern. You have enough of your own financial issues to deal with.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Things have not been easy for you. Getting maximum comfort from your routine has served you well. It's time, though, to take it out for a farewell lunch. Give yourself permission to shake things up a bit.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You're experiencing fun, even romance. Are you dreaming? Not at all. You can enjoy life even in the midst of the wreckage, if you continue to allow yourself to.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

5x5 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle with numbers 1-5.

Easy+

5x5 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle with numbers 1-5.

Medium

5x5 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle with numbers 1-5.

Hard

5x5 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle with numbers 1-5.

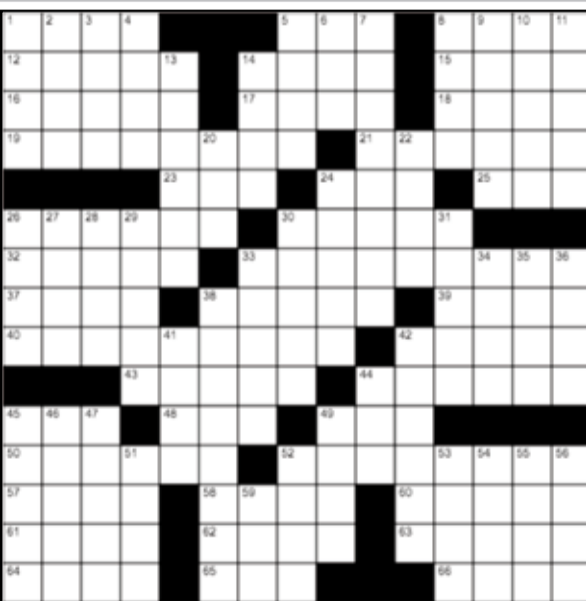
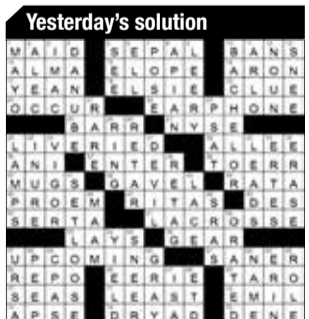
WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION for various cities in CHINA and WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Sp. ladies; 5- Cotton deseeders; 9- Govt. property overseer; 12- Isn't wrong?; 13- Pertaining to a sovereign; 15- Score; 16- Mirth; 17- ___ a customer; 18- House member; 19- Continuously; 21- Republic in E Africa; 23- Clublike weapon; 25- Must have; 26- Airport stat.; 29- Lash; 31- Least polite; 35- Untrained; 36- Crystal ball users; 38- Perfect Sleeper maker; 39- Let's just leave ___ that; 41- One of the family; 43- Geeky type; 44- Capital of Egypt; 46- Pointed arch; 48- KGB counterpart; 49- Maestro Toscanini; 51- In the blink ___ eye; 52- ___ in turkey; 53- Balkan native; 55- Intestinal sections; 57- Agreement between states; 61- Suave; 65- Garage job; 66- Scent; 68- Iowa college town; 69- ___ vera; 70- Snob; 71- Small blemish; 72- Formerly known as; 73- Olympic weapon; 74- Exxon, formerly;

DOWN: 1- It's a long story; 2- Small stream; 3- From scratch; 4- Water vapor; 5- Former monetary unit of Austria; 6- Electrically charged particle; 7- Russian refusal; 8- Lucifer; 9- Thug; 10- Hindu garment; 11- "M'A'S'H" star; 14- Hermit; 15- Elate; 20- Goes off-course; 22- Chief god of ancient Greece; 24- Children's refrain; 26- Novelist Jong; 27- Golden Horde member; 28- Look forward to; 30- Ragu competitor; 32- Standing up; 33- Narrow furrow; 34- Triumphant cries; 37- Fantasy genre; 40- Depository; 42- Appraise; 45- Sweet sandwich; 47- Steven Chu's cabinet dept.; 50- Killer whales; 54- Shouldered; 56- Degrade; 57- Scheme; 58- Govern; 59- Slender woodwind; 60- Roller coaster feature; 62- Concert gear; 63- Revivalists; 64- This, in Tijuana; 67- A Stooge;



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Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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IACM 28 387 333
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RUGBY | SIX NATIONS

Wales' best still to come, Edwards says

WALES assistant coach Shaun Edwards believes the side has more to give as the Six Nations rugby leader.

"Hopefully our best," Edwards said.

Wales is the only unbeaten team with two rounds to go. Wales faces Scotland this Saturday at Murrayfield, the finishes at home against Ireland.

"It's a while [2012] since we have actually been three [wins] from three, but we are fully aware of Scotland's threat," he added.

"A couple of their players have said they don't feel they have been at their best so far in the campaign, and we feel that we are still improving as well. And we would like to think the longer we have the players, the better we get.

"They will probably challenge us ball in hand probably more than the three teams (France, Italy, England) we've had before. We are fully aware of the potency of their two halfbacks — they are very experienced — and the speed and class they've got on the outside."

Scotland looks like having both halves available after flyhalf Finn Russell returned to training on Monday with scrumhalf and captain Greig Laidlaw and the squad.

Russell was concussed while playing for his French club and missed Scotland's trip to Paris more than a week ago,



when it was well beaten by France 27-10.

Along with Russell, a swag of forwards also overcame injuries, including WP Nel, Hamish Watson, Sam Skinner, and Grant Stewart. Matt Fagerson and Byron McGuigan, who missed out on the initial squad through injury, and London Irish prop Gordon Reid also came in.

Lock Jonny Gray said the review of the France defeat was painful, but their confidence

wasn't shaken.

"It's very disappointing to lose but the manner we lost wasn't us in a lot of ways," Gray said.

"But we get to bounce back this week against Wales, who are absolutely flying. So it's a very exciting challenge, and it's good to be back at Murrayfield.

"There's a huge belief there [in the squad]. The best thing to do is get back in training, and train well."

FRANCE RETAIN SAME 23 FOR IRELAND

The same France side which dominated Scotland will take on Ireland on Sunday in Dublin in Six Nations rugby.

After chastening defeats to Wales and England, France was fizzy two weekends ago in beating Scotland 27-10 and maintaining a 20-year unbeaten record at home against the Scots.

Yesterday, coach Jacques Brunel retained halves Antoine Dupont and Romain Ntama-

ck, the teammates at Toulouse who paired up for the first time in a test, and successfully. Thomas Ramos also stayed at full-back, with goalkicking duty.

The French go to Ireland, where the home side, the defending champion, has yet to rediscover its groove from 2018. Ireland followed a thumping from England with shaky wins over Scotland and Italy.

France last beat Ireland in 2016, and last won in Dublin in 2011. **MDT/AP**

FOOTBALL

Pelle scores 2 to help Shandong draw 2-2 at Gyeongnam

ITALY international Graziano Pelle scored a pair of goals yesterday to give Chinese club Shandong Luneng to a 2-2 draw at South Korean team Gyeongnam in the opening round of the Asian Champions League.

Pelle, who signed for Shandong from Premier League club Southampton in 2016, put his team ahead with a header midway through the first half. He added the second in the 77th minute after Woo Ju-sung and Kim Seung-jun had given Gyeongnam the lead in

its debut appearance in the competition.

Malaysian club Johor Darul Ta'zim also was making history in the tournament, and also lost in Group E.

The first team from Malaysia to appear in the Asian Champions League lost to defending champion Kashima Antlers 2-1.

Taiki Hirato and Serginho scored a goal each for the Japanese team.

In Group F, South Korean club Daegu won its debut game in the Asian Champions League, beating Melbourne

Victory 3-1 in Group F.

Cesinha scored with a spectacular half-volley in the 31st minute, two minutes after the hosts had taken the lead in Melbourne. Hwang Soon-min then put Daegu ahead in the second half and Brazilian forward Edgar added the third.

In the other Group F match, Brazilian teammates Anderson Talisco and Paulinho scored a goal each to give Chinese club Guangzhou Evergrande a 2-0 victory over Japanese rival Sanfrecce Hiroshima. **AP**



Hungarian judge OKs extradition of Portuguese hacker

A court in Budapest has ordered the extradition to Portugal of a man linked to the Football Leaks whistleblower website.

The decision by the Budapest Metropolitan Court has been appealed by the lawyers of Rui Pinto, who is wanted in

his native Portugal for attempted extortion, illegal access to data and other crimes connected to the release of secret information about the financial dealings of top European soccer clubs.

Pinto told the court he fears for his own life and his family's, saying the

case was "a matter of life or death. I ask you, please don't send me back to Portugal."

An appeals court is expected to issue a ruling within a few weeks. If the extradition is upheld, Portuguese authorities will have 10 days to take over custody of Pinto. **AP**

opinion

Made in Macao
Jenny Lao-Phillips



INSECTS AWAKEN

Today, the 6th of March, is a special day this year. It was Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, and the beginning of abstinence and fasting for Christians. For the Chinese tradition, yesterday we also entered a new period of the twenty-four solar terms within the traditional Chinese calendar: the term of Insects Awaken (驚蟄 Jingzhe).

It is said that the beginning of this third of the solar terms is marked by rain and thunderstorms, so insects in hibernation are awakened by the thunder. There is an old story which tells that the god of thunder is a bird with a hammer, and on the first day of Jingzhe the bird god uses his hammer to wake up all lives on earth, hence, the thunderstorm. Of course, we then learn from science that animals and insects come out of hibernation because of the warming up of the weather. No matter what awakens the insects, this phenomenon signifies to farmers that it is the time to begin rigorous ploughing as Jingzhe is followed by lots of rain, then sun, then the growing of plants. One may think that unless we live on a farm, the agricultural reminder does not seem to have much to do with our lives. But Jingzhe is actually a special time for us all.

It is a time for us to cultivate luck for the year. Why? Because this is the time for villain hitting, better known as 'hitting the little man'. I wrote about the custom of hitting the little man a few years ago. Basically, it is an act which gets rid of one's enemies, especially those who deliberately sabotage one's career or personal development. It is believed that by hitting the little man, bad luck will go away. Also, to cultivate luck, the third term is a time for offering to the White Tiger. Although it is called the White Tiger, the animal in question is actually yellow with black stripes. Legend has it that the White Tiger brings verbal conflicts amongst people which lead to bad luck, so as the insects and the White Tiger awaken each year, people offer pig fat to a paper tiger as offering to keep it away.

This is also a time to nurture our health. According to ancient Chinese belief, the Insects Awaken is the time that people get sick the easiest. I guess it also makes scientific sense that while insects awaken, bacteria also awaken. And with the temperature rapidly rising, our bodies may not adapt fast enough. Aside from physical health, mental health also needs to be nurtured at this time. I came across an article saying that Jingzhe is a time when depression rates are at their highest. This could be due to the weather, with thunderstorms and rain and gray sky for most of the time. On top of that, in this part of the world we also have to battle humidity. For those without a strong dehumidifier at home, everywhere is wet and sticky, which easily brings us into a bad mood. Aside from the temperature affecting our mental health during Insects Awaken, it could also be because of March. If you look at the annual public holiday list, March seems to be the only month with no holidays. While this is also true for July and August, most people take their summer vacation during these two months. But whether it is the weather or the lack of holiday to look forward to, according to ancient Chinese medical belief, during this period of time, we need to store up positive chi (energy) in our body. We need to first, prevent getting ourselves tired. Second, prevent getting angry and upset. Third, consume food that is good for the liver such as spinach, lettuce, or duck blood (although probably not the blood during fasting days). So, our practice during Jingzhe determines whether we have a lucky and healthy year.

THE SWEDISH ACADEMY TO ANNOUNCE TWO NOBEL LITERATURE PRIZES IN OCT

The foundation behind the Nobel Prize in literature says the winners of the 2019 and the delayed 2018 editions of the prestigious award will be announced in October by the Swedish Academy, saying that the scandal-rocked body has revamped itself and restored "trust."

The Nobel Foundation had warned that another group could be picked to award the prize if the academy did not improve its tarnished

image. The foundation formally announced yesterday that the academy will hand out the two prizes this year.

The literature prize was cancelled last year after a mass exodus at the exclusive Swedish Academy following sex abuse allegations. Jean-Claude Arnault, husband of a former academy member, was convicted last year for two rapes in 2011.

Second man seems to be free of AIDS virus after transplant



Timothy Ray Brown

Carla K. Johnson, Seattle

A London man appears to be free of the AIDS virus after a stem cell transplant, the second success including the "Berlin patient," doctors reported.

The therapy had an early success with Timothy Ray Brown, a U.S. man treated in Germany who is 12 years post-transplant and still free of HIV. Until now, Brown is the only person thought to have been cured of infection with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Such transplants are dangerous and have failed in other patients. They're also impractical to try to cure the millions already infected.

The latest case "shows the cure of Timothy Brown was not a fluke and can be recreated," said Dr. Keith Jerome of Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle who had no role. He added that it could lead to a simpler approach that could be used more widely.

The case was published online yesterday [Macau time] by the journal Nature and will be presented at an HIV conference in Seattle.

The patient has not been identified. He was diagnosed with HIV in 2003 and started taking drugs to control the infection in 2012. It's unclear why he waited that long. He developed Hodgkin lymphoma that

year and agreed to a stem cell transplant to treat the cancer in 2016.

With the right kind of donor, his doctors figured, the London patient might get a bonus beyond treating his cancer: a possible HIV cure.

Such transplants are dangerous and have failed in other patients

Doctors found a donor with a gene mutation that confers natural resistance to HIV. About 1 percent of people descended from northern Europeans have inherited the mutation from both parents and are immune to most HIV. The donor had this double copy of the mutation.

That was "an improbable event," said lead researcher Ravindra Gupta of University College London. "That's why this has not been observed more frequently."

The transplant changed the London patient's immune system, giving him the donor's mutation and HIV resistance.

The patient voluntarily stopped taking HIV drugs to see if the virus would come back.

Usually, HIV patients expect to stay on daily pills for life to suppress the virus. When drugs are stopped, the virus roars back, usually in two to three weeks.

That didn't happen with the London patient. There is still no trace of the virus after 18 months off the drugs.

Brown said he would like to meet the London patient and would encourage him to go public because "it's been very useful for science and for giving hope to HIV-positive people, to people living with HIV," he told The Associated Press.

Stem cell transplants typically are harsh procedures which start with radiation or chemotherapy to damage the body's existing immune system and make room for a new one. There are complications too. Brown had to have a second stem cell transplant when his leukemia returned.

Compared to Brown, the London patient had a less punishing form of chemotherapy to get ready for the transplant, didn't have radiation and had only a mild reaction to the transplant.

Dr. Gero Hutter, the German doctor who treated Brown, called the new case "great news" and "one piece in the HIV cure puzzle." AP

Station	Air quality	Icon
Roadside	35-55 Moderate	☹️
High Density Residential Area	35-55 Moderate	☹️
Ambient	35-55 Moderate	☹️

WORLD BRIEFS



VENEZUELA Opposition leader Juan Guaido shrouded the route and timing of his return in secrecy amid concerns he might be detained by Venezuela's government. Yet he breezed through airport immigration checks and brazenly called for the downfall of President Nicolas Maduro at a rally where the presence of security forces was minimal.



CANADA A leading Cabinet minister in Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government resigned, becoming the second minister to step down over a scandal that has shaken the government in an election year. More on p15



USA Hillary Clinton says she won't run for president in 2020, but vows she's "not going anywhere." The former secretary of state, senator and first lady ruled out another campaign during an interview on New York TV station News12. Clinton, who lost the 2016 election to Trump, says, "I'm going to keep on working and speaking and standing up for what I believe."



MARDI GRAS The streets of New Orleans will be filled today [Macau time] with excited kids catching beads from atop ladders, revelers in fancy costumes walking through the French Quarter and Mardi Gras Indians wearing finely beaded costumes. It's the final day of the Mardi Gras season, which began on January 6. The weather is expected to be cold but sunny, there.