



151 DETAINED IN PROSTITUTION STING
The PJ dismantled a prostitution ring detaining over 150 people, some with triad links. The gang racked up over MOP310 million

P3



HK SUBWAY COLLISION MARKS LATEST MISHAP
Two Hong Kong subway trains collided during a test run of a new signaling system

P7 GREATER BAY



THREE KILLED IN DUTCH TRAM ATTACK, SUSPECT ON THE RUN

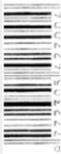
P15 TERRORISM

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WORLD BRIEFS

MONEY LAUNDERING

As one avenue for money launderers is shut, another one may be opening. In Denmark, home to Danske Bank A/S, the authorities are now taking a closer look at companies that provide payment services. *More on p9*



CHINA President Xi Jinping will visit Italy, France and Monaco from Thursday to March 26. Italy's coalition government has sent mixed signals over whether it will sign a proposed agreement to join China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road infrastructure investment drive. *More on p11*

CHINA has arrested nearly 13,000 people it describes as terrorists and has broken up hundreds of "terrorist gangs" in Xinjiang since 2014, the government said in a report yesterday issued to counter criticism of internment camps and other oppressive security in the Islamic region. *More on p10*

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EDMUND HO PROFILES NEW LEADER

Macau 'wise enough' to choose next Chief

P2



CCAC clears Sonia Chan, predecessor after two-year probe

P4-5

Lawmaker wants more publicity on diametric parking

Lawmaker Leong Sun Iok has urged a government authority to enhance the promotional campaign on diametric parking. In his written inquiry to the government, Leong pointed out that local residents are not completely familiar with the diametric parking ban sign. In addition, he pointed out that some residents had reported that their legal parking had been ticketed by police officers, and that their complaints to the Transport Bureau (DSAT) were often in vain. Leong asked whether the government will introduce CCTV surveillance to assist transport police officers on duty.

Gongbei continues breaking single day crossing records

Gongbei Border Gate has registered a new single day crossing record, with 462,500 crossings on Saturday. The old record was also set on a Saturday. Last year, Gongbei broke its crossing record three times: once on April 21 (440,000 crossings) and twice in November, (446,000 crossings and 460,000 crossings respectively). All three of these previous records were registered on Saturdays. In 2018, Gongbei Port processed a total of 134 million passengers, representing a 5 percent increase year-on-year.

MAM celebrates 20 years with event series

March 19 marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Macao Museum of Art (MAM). On occasion of the 20th anniversary of Macau's Handover to China and the 20th anniversary of the Museum this year, a series of celebratory events and activities has been organized, including large-scale thematic exhibitions, the publication of an album of works selected from its collections, the promotion of the "Youth Internship Program at the Palace Museum" and a series of thematic talks and promotional activities in arts education. All are welcome to participate.

Edmund Ho confident Macau is wise enough to elect next Chief Executive

Julie Zhu

FORMER Chief Executive Edmund Ho has implored Macau to refrain from behavior that is not conducive to solidarity and stability. Ho made this suggestion yesterday, at the Central People's Government Liaison Office of the Macau Special Administrative Region.

Yesterday, members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), representatives of Chinese companies in Macau, leaders of the Macau government, and other Chinese government officials and important political persons from Macau were present at the Liaison Office to study the spirit of the most recent sessions of the CPPCC and the National People's Congress (NPC).

Five people, comprising of Legislative Assembly (AL) chairman Ho Iat Seng, CPPCC member Ma Iao Lai, Director of the Liaison Office Fu Ziyang, the incumbent Macau Chief Executive Chui Sai On and his predecessor Edmund Ho, each read a similar statement on the spirit of the two conferences to the attendees.

During the meeting, mobile phone service was fully blocked, with the majority of the attendees listening to the study presented by these five individuals.

When presenting his speech, Edmund Ho focused on the fifth Macau Chief Executive election - which will take place this August, according to Zhang Xiaoming, Director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office.

"I am fully confident, and I believe that the Macau people have the wisdom to elect a Chief Executive who meets the requirements of the Central Government and who is also responsible," said Edmund Ho.

The former Macau Chief Executive remarked that one of the Central Government's requirements for the next



Chief Executive is that the official is able to "take the lead in making a political stance" and "stabilize and unite society."

Anything not conducive to solidarity and stability, don't say. I would want to add 'don't listen,' but that seems to be too extreme.

EDMUND HO
FORMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE

"Anything not conducive to solidarity and stability, don't say. I would want to add 'don't listen,' but that seems to be too extreme," said Ho. "Anything not conducive to solidarity and stability, don't do."

Liaison Office Director Fu Ziyang also spoke, declaring

that Chinese President Xi Jinping and Vice Premier of China Han Zheng have reiterated to Macau CPPCC members the importance of having a smooth election for the third Chief Executive.

In addition to the Chief Executive election, the speakers also conveyed the Chinese Central Government's hopes for the development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

The speakers highlighted parts of the GBA plan, including: having more Macau residents living in Hengqin and other parts Guangdong, developing Macau's tourism industry, developing the Chinese medicine industry in Macau and Hengqin, and having more Macau youth launching entrepreneurship projects in the Bay.

Besides the frequently-mentioned plan, Fu noted that "there are institutional differences in promoting the integration of Macau into the development of GBA. Everyone here feels it directly. [The government] needs to push forward institutional innovation and institutional coordination in order to let passengers and cargo flow freely within the GBA."

Some speakers, including Ho Iat Seng in particular, not only expressed the Chinese Central Government's hopes for Macau, but also highlighted Beijing's endorsement of the work of Macau's current government, mainly associated with 2018.

As Ho Iat Seng reported, Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng endorsed the Macau government's work in economic development, employment, GBA participation, "One Belt, One Road" participation, and livelihood improvement, as well as progress on national security matters.

According to Ho, the Chinese vice premier commended Macau for having established a national security committee, as well as improving and protecting the mechanisms and systems of national security.

"[Macau] organized the first overseas national security education exhibition and achieved the hanging of national flags and singing of the [national] anthem in primary schools, in middle schools, in high schools and in universities. Macau completed the anthem law establishment," listed Ho.

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CRIME

151 detained in prostitution crack down

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) deployed 200 investigators to crack down on a prostitution group. In total, 151 people were detained by police officers for further investigation, according to the PJ's re-

port, which was released yesterday. The group is said to have been operating since 2014. From 2017 until the crackdown, the group made more than MOP310 million from prostitution. Of the 151

detained, 13 are members of a criminal group. Most of the operation's masterminds are mainlanders, the police authority revealed. They worked with pimps from Macau, the mainland, and other places. The

women controlled by the pimps were mostly from mainland China, Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe, though there were also Vietnamese women involved who possessed legal blue cards as cooks, cleaning

staff or domestic helpers. The Judiciary Police did not rule out the possibility of other crimes being committed. A doctor and a nurse were requested to assist in the police investigation, as the pimps orga-

nized regular medical check-ups for the women at an assigned clinic. In addition to the detentions, MOP6 million in cash was seized, with an additional MOP2 million seized from multiple bank accounts. **JZ**

Motorcyclist that ran over octogenarian charged with manslaughter

Renato Marques

A motorcyclist is being charged with manslaughter resulting from a traffic accident Sunday morning at Avenida de Sidonio Pais, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) spokesperson, Kam Ka Kit, informed yesterday at a joint press conference held at the Judiciary Police (PJ) headquarters.

According to the spokesperson, the accident occurred at 8:20 a.m. when the motorcyclist riding on Avenida de Sidonio Pais in the direction of Flora Garden was unable to stop in time, colliding with a woman, over 80 years of age, who was trying to cross the road.

The serious accident led to a rerouting of traffic in the area in order to facilitate the job of the rescuers deployed in the aftermath of the crash.

The woman was taken to the hospital in a very serious condition and died at around 4:30 p.m. on the same day.

The motorcyclist, who suffered only light injuries, told the police that the woman was crossing the road in a place not suitable for pedestrian cross-

ing and of low visibility. These factors prevented him from stopping his motorcycle in time before hitting the pedestrian.

■ **According to the traffic regulation, the rider is considered guilty of negligence**

However, according to the traffic regulation, the rider is considered guilty of negligence and the case was forwarded to the public prosecutions office (MP) to with the charge of manslaughter.

‘FICTIONAL CRIME’ TO HIDE CASINO LOSSES

A man from the mainland is being charged with making false declarations to the police after he filed a report claiming to have been robbed by a group of people in order to justify a gambling loss of HKD21,000 that belonged to his boss, the

PJ spokesperson informed at yesterday's press conference.

The man reported to the PJ that at around 2 a.m. on Sunday, he met a foreigner woman at Rua de Nagasaki, right beside the PJ headquarters, who had offered him "sexual services." After agreeing on the price for such service, they entered a taxi and drove to an unknown location in Taipa. Upon arrival, he said that he exited the taxi only to be attacked by a group of three men of African ethnicity.

He said that he managed to run away but they took his jacket, his bank cards and the sum of HKD21,000 in cash that belongs to his boss.

After investigation, the PJ found out that he had lied about the events he had earlier reported, since the PJ found out that he had been playing all evening in Rio Casino and had left such place only ten minutes before filing the report with the PJ.

The police also found his allegedly stolen jacket in a garbage bin nearby.

The 27-year-old driver is now being charged with making false declarations to the authorities about a non-existent crime.

VIRTUAL BOYFRIEND SCAM

A married, 53-year-old local resident was scammed by a virtual boyfriend she met on a social network, the PJ revealed.

The woman complained to the police that she had met the man over a social network platform in February this year. She said that they became friends initially, but the relationship developed into a virtual romance.

The man said he was a businessman in charge of an oil drilling project in Italy.

More recently the man told her that the project was at risk because he did not have enough money to fix problems with the machinery that needed urgent repairs and maintenance.

He asked the victim for help and the woman agreed to send money to him in three different bank transfers totaling 30,000 euros (approximately MOP275,440).

After that the victim said she lost the contact with the man, realizing that it was in fact a scam and filing the complaint with the PJ.

WIFE PROSECUTES VANISHING HUSBAND

A local woman has filed a complaint against a man from the

mainland for coercion. However, the police realized that the man was in fact married to the woman in a strange case that also suggests that the marriage is fraudulent.

The case started in 2010, when the victim and the suspect were married. After that, the woman said that the husband vanished and lost all contact for a period of seven years.

In 2017 the man suddenly resurfaced contacting the woman to request her to process the necessary documents to grant him permanent residency in Macau. The woman ignored the requests and, instead, filed a case in the courts of Macau for a legal divorce from the man.

At the same time, the man continued to insist that she should help him to process the permanent residency card promising to send her money.

The victim did not believe him and, noting that during the past years he never helped her financially, she ignored his requests and processed the divorce.

On March 12, the man managed to contact her through a mobile communication application and issued his threats, leading the woman to file a complaint with the PJ the next day.

On March 14, the police found the man in the surroundings of the building where the woman resides and arrested him. The case has been forwarded to the MP under the accusation of coercion.

Daniel Beitler

Anti-graft body clears Sonia Chan,

AFTER a two-year investigation, the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) has found that Macau's incumbent Secretary for Administration and Justice and her predecessor did not violate the law in recommending their relatives to the Office of the Prosecutor General, at the time headed by Ho Chio Meng.

In December 2016, while standing trial at the Court of Final Appeal accused of corruption, former Prosecutor General Ho Chio Meng alleged that his Office had hired personnel based on the recommendations of the Macau's incumbent Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, as well as her predecessor, Florinda Chan.

Shortly after the revelations, Sonia Chan came forward to acknowledge her recommendation, but denied exerting any pressure on the public prosecutor. The Secretary was at the time of the recommendation the chief of the Office for Personal Data Protection.

The CCAC received complaint letters soon after Ho Chio Meng's remarks were

reported by the media and, pursuant to Law no. 10/2000 "Organic Law of the Commission Against Corruption of the Macao Special Administrative Region," it carried out an investigation.

In January 2017, Macau Daily Times made several enquiries with the anti-graft commission to determine whether it had any intention of investigating the case, but those requests for information went unanswered.

FAULTY MEMORIES

According to the testimony given by Ho Chio Meng during his trial in late-2016, former Secretary for Administration and Justice Florinda Chan once phoned him to recommend her younger brother, Roque Silva Chan, for the prosecution service.

Roque Silva Chan was later hired by the Office of the Prosecutor General. Prior to that he worked for a law firm for almost 20 years, where he was responsible for formalities of real estate transactions and clerical work. In September 1999, after being

dismissed by the law firm, Roque Silva Chan was hired as a part-time worker by a trading company.

In November of that same year, Roque Silva Chan started to work at the Preparation Office of the Prosecutor General. According to the CCAC report, in the following January, the assessor of the Office of the Prosecutor General wrote a proposal recommending that Roque Silva Chan be employed as a third grade assistant technical specialist with 380 salary points. The proposal was approved by Ho Chio Meng on the same day.

Interviewed by the anti-graft authority, Roque Silva Chan said that his employment at the Office of the Prosecutor General was obtained by result of his own application, rather than the recommendation of Florinda Chan.

Florinda Chan also told the CCAC that she had never recommended Roque Silva Chan to Ho Chio Meng and that she "felt strange about Ho Chio Meng's remarks at

the court hearing."

Ho Chio Meng later changed the statement he made during his trial, correcting that he could not accurately remember the details of how Roque Silva Chan had been hired.

Nevertheless, upon investigation and analysis, the CCAC said it "believed it was difficult to completely rule out that the then Secretary for Administration and Justice designate, Florinda Chan, had recommended the employment of her brother."

In fact, evidence uncovered by the anti-graft body suggests that Roque Silva Chan may not have been a strong candidate for the role on paper, and that there is "reasonable doubts in the incident."

"Roque Silva Chan had only finished 9th grade of education at that time and the CV he sent had fewer than 100 words - one could hardly tell he excelled others in terms of academic knowledge or work experience," notes the CCAC conclusions released yesterday. "Nevertheless, the then Prosecutor General de-

signate, who did not know him personally, allegedly interviewed him and hired him immediately."

JUST A RECOMMENDATION

The case of Sonia Chan, the second government official accused by Ho Chio Meng of having used her influence to secure a job, is recalled by both parties more clearly. While both agree that a telephone call took place, the incumbent Secretary contends that she did not exert any pressure on the Prosecutor General to hire her relative.

During the investigation, it was found that the relative in question is her elder sister, Chan Hoi In.

Before joining the Office of the Prosecutor General, Chan Hoi In, having a diploma in administrative management, used to work for a civil association in Macau and her main duties were writing, event planning and venue decoration. In July 2008, the then-Chief of the Office of the Prosecutor General, Lai Kin Ian, wrote a proposal

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predecessor after two-year investigation

which suggested employing Chan Hoi In as a first grade assistant officer of second rank with 320 salary points. The proposal was approved by Ho Chio Meng later that same month.

Questioned by the CCAC, Chan Hoi In said that she applied to several government services at the time, before receiving an interview with the Office of the Prosecutor General, during which she did not mention her kinship with Sonia Chan, who at the time headed the Office for Personal Data Protection.

After learning her elder sister wanted to change jobs and had already applied to several public services, Sonia Chan admitted to telling Ho Chio Meng she could recommend a candidate for a job vacancy at his office if needed. Ho Chio Meng argued during his trial that Sonia Chan had actively lobbied for her sister, asking if he could find her suitable work.

The Commission Against Corruption noted in the report that since the statemen-



Secretary Sonia Chan (center)

ts of all the parties are "basically consistent," it finds the case is substantiated. While noting that the recommendation is not good practice for a transparent government and would probably constitute an illegality today, the CCAC points out that no such regulation existed at the time of the recommendation. Therefore, there is no basis for the agency to call for disciplinary

action against the Secretary for Administration and Justice.

OFFICIALS OF THEIR TIMES

The recommendations for the hiring of Roque Silva Chan and Chan Hoi In, who joined the Office of the Prosecutor General under Ho Chio Meng's approval in 1999 and 2008 respectively, both

occurred prior to the establishment of the legal regime of central recruitment and at a time in Macau when the Prosecutor General had the discretion to "freely appoint workers."

Article 5 of Administrative Regulation no. 24/2010 "Statute of Principal Officials of the Macao SAR" says that principal officials are required to prevent conflict of

interests and shall not make use of their official status directly or indirectly to seek personal interests, while Article 11 of Law no. 15/2009 "General Provisions of the Statute of Leadership and Management" stipulates that individuals in leadership positions shall behave ethically so that their personal behavior will not adversely affect the image of the Macau Government or the services or entities they serve.

However, both regulations were introduced in Macau after the alleged recommendations made by Florinda Chan and her successor. Therefore, the CCAC concludes that neither recommendation violated the laws at that time, given that there was no specific law on the conduct of principal officials designate or leaders designate of public services.

The CCAC has submitted its investigation report to the Chief Executive, as well as further suggestions for improvements to the accountability system for officials.

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TOURISM

Macau dethroned as city with highest number of 5-star hotels

LONDON replaced Macau as the city with highest number of top-rated hotels as new luxury resorts emerged in the European capital, according to the Forbes Travel Guide 2019.

London finished with 13 top-ranking hotels this year, and Macau at a close 12.

The replacement was due to the addition of new five-star hotels including Bulgari Hotel & Residences; the Langham; Mandarin Oriental, Hyde Park; and Shangri-La Hotel, At The Shard.

The annual awards acknowledged a total of 19 hotels in the region, 12 of which are five-star hotels.

The Travel Guide indicated that six new restaurants captured the coveted five-star achievement for the first time, including new five-star awards for Mizumi at Wynn Palace, Sichuan Moon by Andre Chiang and Wing Lei Palace. Robuchon au Dôme and Pearl Dragon at Star Tower at Studio City Macau also received



five-star ratings.

Meanwhile in Hong Kong, a standout amongst the awardees was The Peninsula Hotels, which made Forbes Travel Guide history by becoming the world's first all five-star hotel company. The Peninsula Manila earned its

fifth star this year, which pushed the Hong Kong-based brand's tally to 10 five-star hotels.

China also has a new addition to its highest-rated hotel following the opening of the Bulgari Hotel Beijing.

A total of 210 hotels across the

globe were deemed five-star resorts, up from the 199 properties that made the cut in 2018.

The guide, whose tagline is "We verify luxury," uses anonymous, professional inspectors who make incognito visits to evaluate luxury hotels around the world.

Forbes assesses each hotel by looking at more than 500 criteria. Scores are computed using an algorithm weighted toward the level of service hotel guests receive. The quality of the facility is also taken into account.

"Our objective, data-driven star rating list features properties that achieved an impeccable standard of excellence in hospitality," Forbes Travel Guide CEO Filip Boyen said, as cited in a press statement.

"Discerning travelers can trust that each winner is the best of the best. We are pleased to honor the 2019 Star Rating recipients, an exceptional collection of hotels, restaurants and spas dedicated to guest service."

Forbes Travel Guide rates properties in 76 countries throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Newly added destinations for 2019 include: Anguilla, Bahrain, Belize, Danang, Doha, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hoi An, Istanbul, Oman, Perth, Tel Aviv and the Swiss Alps.

The 2019 award recipients include 21 new five-star hotels, 49 new four-stars hotels and 62 new hotels in the "Recommended" category. Other first-time recipients include six five-star restaurants, eight five-star spas and 21 four-star spas. **LV**

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Jinshan Hong

TWO Hong Kong subway trains collided during a test run of a new signaling system, the second mishap in months for local rail operator MTR Corp.

The incident occurred yesterday around 3 a.m., when train services weren't open to the public, according to MTR. Two drivers were taken to the hospital, with one having a leg injury, MTR Operations Director Adi Lau said.

The accident comes about five months after a rare, simultaneous signaling glitch on four subway lines caused chaos at stations during the morning peak-hour rush. Hong Kong's subway, often lauded as being among Asia's best, carries millions of passengers on weekdays.

Service on the Tsuen Wan line between Admiralty and Central, where Hong Kong's main business districts are located, was suspended yesterday.

MTR shares fell as much as 1.3 percent before rebounding and rising 0.3 percent at the close in Hong Kong.

Preliminary findings show that there's a problem with the new signaling system, according to Ja-



HONG KONG

Subway collision marks latest mishap for city's metro

cob Kam, MTR's managing director and incoming chief executive officer. The company will investigate further before giving a more definitive cause for the collision, Kam told reporters yesterday afternoon.

The signaling system may be responsible for a 2017 crash in Singapore's subway that injured 38 people, the South China Morning Post reported, citing Hong Kong Federation of Railway Trade Unions Chairman Lam Wai-keung.

Hong Kong's government said it is following the situation closely. Frank Chan, secretary for transport and housing, contacted MTR Chairman Frederick Ma and asked the company to hold an urgent board meeting to

investigate the incident.

MTR further said the company's board will hold a meeting today. Repairs may take more than a day, and the company said it plans to notify the public in due course. **Bloomberg**

Macau Airport opens service center in Zhongshan

THE Macau International Airport Zhongshan Service Center was officially opened to the public last week at the Zhongshan City Terminal, providing a direct bus service to Hengqin and Gongbei Ports.

According to a statement issued by MIA, passengers can transfer to the Macau International Airport "Express Link" bus service to reach the

MIA departure hall.

On the same day, MIA participated in the "Greater Bay Area - Airport in the City Road Show Activity," providing a platform for airlines, hotel and tour operators to introduce their products to the citizens of Zhongshan and share information about the destinations accessible from MIA, as well as introduce other tourism-rela-

ted products.

The roadshow, held at Zhongshan City's Daxin Xinduhui shopping mall, included a series of programs, such as various airlines' products and service introductions.

In addition to a series of performances and an interactive session, free giveaways were available to attendees - air tickets, F&B coupons and travel packs

were distributed via a lucky draw.

MIA pledged to "continue working with airlines to explore opportunities and strengthen co-operation aiming to further expand Macau air service networks, at the same time enhancing convenience for the travelers."

The airport's next promotional activity will be held in Jiangmen. **LV**

China to flesh out foreign investment law

CHINA will introduce a series of regulations and documents in accordance with the foreign investment law to protect the legitimate rights and interests of foreign investors, Premier Li Ke-qiang said.

This is important for China in order to ensure that the law is implemented smoothly, Li said at a press conference after the conclusion of the annual session of China's national legislature.

Li underscored efforts to make the complaint mechanism open, transparent and effective.

China's national legislature on Friday passed the foreign investment law at the closing meeting of its annual session. The law will

become effective on Jan. 1, 2020.

The law will offer better legal support to the protection and attraction of foreign investment, as well as regulate government behaviors, Li said.

The foreign investment law can also serve as a reference for investors from the two special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau as well as Taiwan, Li said.

The mainland welcomes more investment from the three regions, he said, adding that the State Council will listen closely to the views of the investors from these regions when making related regulations and policies so as to better protect their rights. **MDT/Xinhua**

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Cathay will mine personal data to tailor business-class service

CATHAY Pacific Airways Ltd. is mining the data of its business-class customers so they'll keep spending with the airline.

The company has invested "a lot" in its data capability to find out what its premium customers like and is tailoring offerings specific to them, Chief Executive Officer Rupert Hogg said in an interview in Singapore yesterday. In addition, the Hong Kong flagship carrier plans to introduce a new product in its business-class cabin in the second half, he said.

"We are doing what we would call sub-furnishing the environment, the ambiance of the business-class cabin. It's mainly things that aren't structural," Hogg said. "It's everything that will make that journey comfortable," such as for sleeping, he said.

The efforts are part of Cathay's three-year transformation program started in 2017 when Hogg assumed the top post. The carrier is seeking to strengthen its financial health after taking a beating from competition from China to the Middle East. Mining client data enables precision and is what any consumer company is doing, according to aviation analyst Mohshin Aziz of Maybank Investment Bank Bhd.

Cathay "definitely" needs to take advantage of data mining, said Mohshin. "By doing this correctly, you can have repeat customers."

REAPING DIVIDENDS

The data analysis is helping Cathay "understand what people like and what they don't like," Hogg said. "That's really paying dividends."

After cutting jobs and slimming down its operating structure, the airline posted its first full-year profit in

BLOOMBERG



Cathay Pacific Chairman John Slosar

2018 following two straight annual losses. As part of the overhaul, the carrier also added international routes and lured customers with improved service offerings and meals for premium fliers.

Echoing the passenger reach of rival Singapore Airlines Ltd., whose operations range from budget to premium customers, Cathay has also changed its view about the low-cost-carrier business. Operating a budget airline was something that Hogg ruled out two years ago at the start of the transformation program.

'UNIQUE SEGMENT'

"It's a unique segment to the market," Hogg said in a Bloomberg Television interview with Yvonne Mann and Rishaad Salamat yesterday. "It's a stimulatory type of model and it's changed a lot."

The airline said this month that it's

in "active discussions" to buy shares in Hong Kong's only budget carrier from debt-laden Chinese conglomerate HNA Group Co. A successful acquisition of Hong Kong Express Airways Ltd. would fill a hole in Cathay's product offering, according to Rahul Kapoor and Chris Muckenturm, analysts at Bloomberg Intelligence.

Cathay has added 31 of the more fuel-efficient Airbus SE A350s to help start new destinations, and has also cut its overall fuel consumption, Hogg said. The carrier is making Wi-Fi available on its widebodies used for long-haul flights by 2020, and thereafter on its narrow-body aircraft operated by its Cathay Dragon unit.

"We're really focused on productivity rather than cost cutting because productivity is about doing things smarter," the executive said. **MDT/Bloomberg**

Another HK stock slumps after activist calls it a bubble

HONG Kong's most famous stock picker is on the attack again, criticizing the accounts of one of the city's top performers this year.

Kingdee International Software Group Co. dropped as much as 14 percent Monday as the worst performer on the Hang Seng Composite Index after David Webb published a critical report calling it a "bubble stock." Webb did not specify whether he had a short position in the shares, nor what he thinks they should be worth.

The company "has relied on sector-specific tax breaks, government grants, property investment gains and questionable transactions with related parties to book any profit at all," Webb wrote in a post tweeted during the city's one-hour lunch break. An external representative for Kingdee said management is confident about the company's future and considers its strategy a success.

Webb, a former Barclays Plc banker, founded a well-followed website two decades ago that gives away his research on Hong

Kong's publicly traded companies. He often advises readers to stay clear of certain firms due to corporate governance issues - and is often right. Stocks on his "not to own" lists have lost USD16 billion of their value since he warned against buying them.

Kingdee had rallied 53 percent this year through Friday's close to near a record high, trading at a whopping 60 times projected earnings. Its annual report last week was welcomed by analysts, many of whom raised their price targets on the stock after Kingdee said revenue from cloud services surged almost 50 percent.

"Investors are taking this excuse to lock in the profit as the valuation of Kingdee is at demanding level," said Kingsway Group Services Ltd.'s Steven Nie, one of only two analysts tracked by Bloomberg who recommends selling the stock. "There has been concern about its cloud business after it decided to acquire the cloud segment from its parent, as it doesn't make money." **MDT/Bloomberg**

corporate bits

MELCO PARTICIPATES IN GREEN WEEK



Melco Resorts & Entertainment participated in Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM)'s 38th Macao Green Week, presenting a butterfly garden-themed creative dis-

play featuring over 11 types of seasonal flowers, the gaming operator announced in a statement.

The display is part of Green Week Carnival held

at Tap Seac Square until March 24.

Coinciding with Macao Green Week, Melco has further organized environmental awareness activities such as charity walks, planting days, recycling programs and educational roadshows with support from its trusted community partners.

Lawrence Ho, chairman and CEO of Melco Resorts & Entertainment, said, "Melco strives to develop and continue implementing innovative green infrastructures and strategies in sustainability to benefit the local community."

The theme of the event this year is "Flying Butterflies across the Green City."

Macao Green Week is hosted by IAM in collaboration with other local groups every March.

ILCM CONDUCTS APPRECIATION DINNER FOR CAREGIVERS



More than 60 caregivers from 15 different charities in Macau attended a dinner

at the Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel, hosted by the International Ladies' Club

of Macau.

The Carers' Appreciation Dinner is held annually to recognize the important work the charities do to support those most in need in the city, the association said in a statement.

The association acknowledged different organizations including Against Child Abuse (Macao), ARTM, Asilo de Betania, Asilo Santa Maria and Cradle of Hope amongst others.

"We are so grateful to these charities for their commitment to changing lives and communities in Macau," said ILCM president Rebecca Glade, adding, "Hosting the dinner every year is our association's way of acknowledging their amazing contributions."

Frances Schwartzkopff

After Danske, new dirty money risk seen in payment services

AS one avenue for money launderers is shut, another one may be opening.

In Denmark, home to Danske Bank A/S, the authorities are now taking a closer look at companies that provide payment services. The worry is that the chain of processes behind each payment is becoming so complex that criminals might be able to hide their illicit transactions.

Danish Business Minister Rasmus Jarlov says the goal is "to all the time be ahead of the criminals." Because they're "trying to exploit any loophole and any weakness in the financial system."

The decision to focus on payment service providers comes as the industry's growth catches many off guard. Yesterday, markets woke up to news of a mega merger as Fidelity National Information Services Inc. agreed to combine with Worldpay Inc. for about USD43 billion, including debt, marking the biggest deal ever in that sector.

Banks in Europe face a September deadline to give payment service providers access to their accounts. The idea is to let such third-party firms carry out transactions on behalf of customers, provided they give their consent.

Ideally, such service providers

should add a layer of competition to the payments market, which has been dominated by banks. But banks in the Nordic region, many of which have been targeted by money laundering allegations that are now being investigated, are protesting. They argue that the development leaves them with less visibility over what's flowing through their systems.

Jarlov is part of a government that is still reeling from allegations that the main bank in his home country was at the center of one of the world's biggest money laundering scandals. Danske has itself admitted that much of about \$230 billion that flowed through a tiny branch in Estonia until as recently as 2015 was probably illicit. That's amid accusations that the bank became a European bridge for criminals from Russia to get their money into the West.

Julie Galbo, head of risk management at Nordea Bank Abp, says she's seen evidence that, in some cases, the money going through such providers flows "from, for



The Kobmagergade pedestrianized shopping street in Copenhagen

instance, Russia to, for instance, exotic places that are not known for their high tax payments in the EU - Cyprus, Malta - and nice islands in the Caribbean."

Payments can go through multiple service providers but the information "is owned" by the

payment service provider, so banks can't see all of it, Galbo said. Like banks, payment service providers must vet customers, but they don't pass on their information to the banks, she said.

Security has become a rising concern amid efforts to establish

large, cross-border systems for processing payments instantly. Nordic banks are working toward creating a region-wide network while the European Central bank launched a similar settlement system in November. **MDT/Bloomberg**

AD

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Wednesday, 27/3/2019

Macau's Gambling Industry Rolling high on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?

Speaker: **Dr. Tiffany C. H. Leung**, Lecturer in SPEED at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University

FMCC Breakfast Meeting

Introduction: Firms in Macau's gambling industry tend to adopt the Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI) to disclose their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) performance in their annual reports. Dr. Tiffany Leung will analyse the current and future CSR trends that benefit their business operations, including cost and risk reduction, innovation and creating shared value. Not to be missed!

Date: Wednesday, March 27th, 2019
Time: 9:00 - 10:30am (Reception: 8:45am)
Venue: Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16
 Promenade Meeting Room (6th floor)

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Beijing says 13,000 Xinjiang 'terrorists' arrested since 2014

CHINA has arrested nearly 13,000 people it describes as terrorists and has broken up hundreds of "terrorist gangs" in Xinjiang since 2014, the government said in a report yesterday issued to counter criticism of internment camps and other oppressive security in the traditionally Islamic region.

The lengthy report said the government's efforts have curbed religious extremism but gave little evidence of what crimes had occurred. The far northwestern region is closed to outsiders, but former residents and activists abroad say mere expressions of Muslim identity are punished.

Criticism has grown over China's internment of an estimated 1 million Uighurs and members of other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups. China describes the camps as vocational training centers and says participation is voluntary. Former detainees say they were held in abusive conditions, forced to renounce Islam and swear allegiance to China's ruling Communist Party.

The camps sprang up over the past two years at extraordinary speed and on a massive scale, as monitored by satellite imagery. China maintains a massive security presence in Xinjiang and efforts to independently verify claims by Uighur activists are routinely blocked.

The new report said "law-based

de-radicalization" in Xinjiang has curbed the rise and spread of religious extremism.

It said 1,588 terrorist gangs have been crushed and 12,995 terrorists seized since 2014. Over that time, 2,052 explosive devices were seized and more than 30,000 people were punished for taking part in almost 5,000 "illegal religious activities," the report said. It said 345,229 copies of "illegal religious publicity materials" were also seized.

■ The report shows the 'vague and broad definition of 'terrorism' and 'extremism' by the Chinese government'

China's government has spent decades trying to suppress pro-independence sentiment in the region fueled in part by frustration over an influx of migrants from China's Han majority. Beijing authorities say extremists there have ties to foreign terror groups but have given little evidence to support that.

Despite the region's religious, linguistic and cultural differ-

ences with the rest of country, China says Xinjiang has been Chinese territory since ancient times.

Experts and Uighur activists believe the camps are part of an aggressive government campaign to erode the identities of the Central Asian groups who called the region home long before waves of Han migrants arrived in recent decades.

Yesterday's report sought to underplay Islam's role in the region's historical makeup, saying that while it "cannot be denied that Xinjiang received the influence of Islamic culture," that did not change the "objective fact" that Xinjiang's culture is a facet of Chinese culture.

"Islam is not the natural faith of the Uighurs and other ethnicities, nor is it their only faith," the report said.

China has sought to defend itself against charges of cultural genocide, painting its critics as biased and seeking to smear China's reputation and contain its rise as a global power.

The report shows the "vague and broad definition of 'terrorism' and 'extremism' by the Chinese government," said Patrick Poon, a China researcher for Amnesty International.

"It's exactly because of the Chinese government's arbitrary and vague definition of these terms that leads to mass arbitrary detention of many ordinary people in Xinjiang," Poon said.

Poon cited the many families that have lost contact with relatives who are suspected of having been detained.

"It's simply not normal at all for people losing contact with their relatives if they are merely receiving 'vocational training' as the Chinese government claims," Poon said.

China's reputation for taking a hard line against religious minorities, and Muslims in particular, continues to draw global attention.

The man arrested in last week's New Zealand mosque attacks said in his online manifesto that China is the nation that most aligns with his political and social values.

Dilxat Raxit, a spokesman for the World Uyghur Congress, an overseas Uighur advocacy group, said China was using the specter of terrorism in an attempt to undermine sympathy for the Uighur cause.

"The purpose of issuing this report is to seek support for their extreme policies and the trampling of human rights," Raxit said.

In November, China rejected criticism of its treatment of ethnic Muslims, telling the United Nations that accusations of rights abuses from some countries were "politically driven."

At a U.N. review of the country's human rights record, China characterized Xinjiang as a former

hotbed of extremism that has been stabilized through "training centers" which help people gain employable skills.

Last week, a U.S. envoy on religion called for an independent investigation of the detentions and for the release of those being held, describing the situation in Xinjiang "horrific."

Sam Brownback, U.S. ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, said China has done nothing to assuage concerns from the U.S. and others over the detention of Uighurs, Kazakhs and members of other Muslim minority groups.

Brownback described China's explanation of the reasons behind the camps as "completely unsatisfactory answers."

China is already listed by the U.S. among the worst violators of religious freedom, and Brownback held open the possibility of sanctions and other punitive measures "if corrective actions aren't taken."

The report is "part of the Chinese government's efforts to diffuse the international community's growing criticisms of its abusive policies in Xinjiang," said Maya Wang, a senior China researcher for Human Rights Watch based in Hong Kong.

The government's counter-offensive on Xinjiang "appears to reflect its nervousness about its international image," Wang said, citing in particular Muslim-majority countries where China is promoting its massive "belt and road" infrastructure initiative.

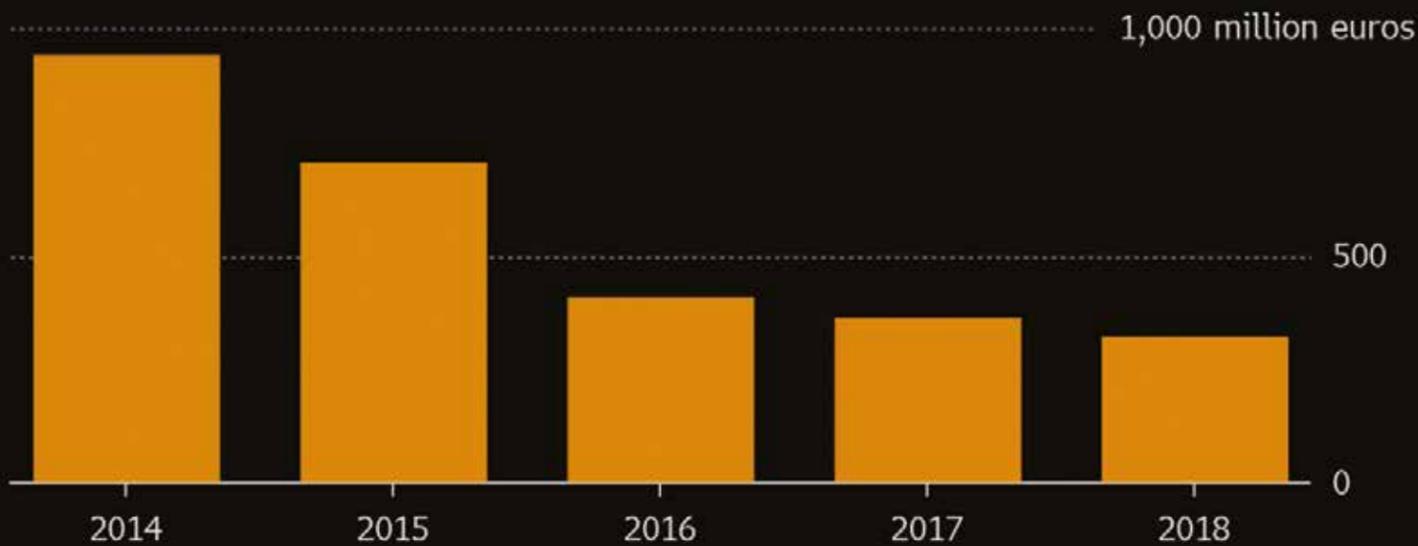
"If the Chinese government is so certain that it has nothing to hide in Xinjiang, then it should allow independent international observers such as the U.N. into the region," Wang said. **AP**



AP PHOTO

Falling Profit

Prada's operating profit plunged 66% over 4 years



Sources: company filings

Bloomberg

Daniela Wei & Robert Williams

Prada loses USD864m in value as China slump hits profit

PRADA SpA shares fell to the lowest close since 2016 as slower Chinese spending contributed to an unexpected drop in the Italian fashion house's annual profit.

The Hong Kong-listed luxury group attributed a slump in Asia mostly to Chinese tourists reining in spending in Hong Kong and Macau because of the weakness in the yuan. Other luxury brands, including Kering SA's Gucci, have seen the impact of softer buying by Chinese tourists offset by increased spending on the mainland, but Prada failed to get a similar boost from Chinese spending at home, said Citigroup analysts led by Thomas Chauvet.

Prada's China sales were flat for the year, a "significant swing" after a first-half gain of 17 percent, Citigroup said. Yes-

terday's stock plunge after the disappointing earnings shaved USD864 million off the company's market value.

Chinese consumers have turned more cautious amid the slowest economic expansion in almost three decades and a trade war with the U.S. While cars and iPhones have seen bigger slumps so far, Prada's results could spark worry that China's newly wealthy middle class is scaling back on high-end purchases. For an industry that relies on Chinese demand for 30 percent of \$1 trillion in global luxury spending, that's a chilling prospect.

Kering shares, which have bounced back since jitters over the state of the Chinese consumer emerged last autumn, were up 0.6 percent early yesterday in Paris. Louis Vuitton owner LVMH was down 0.3 percent.

Prada's operating profit declined 10 percent to 323.8 million euros, falling short of the 378 million euros predicted by analysts. The shares slumped 11 percent in Hong Kong yesterday, the biggest one-day drop since September 2017. The stock has lost 38 percent over the past year.

CMB International Securities

Ltd. analyst Walter Woo said the profit miss was surprising, even after the firm downgraded its forecast recently on weaker China sales.

"We haven't seen significant recovery in its China sales during the first two months this year after a weak fourth quarter in 2018," Woo said. "We still expect the business improvement for Prada will be slower than peers in 2019, as it takes time for the brand to upgrade its product design and retail operations in the country."

Prada has seen its earnings tumble for four straight years, falling more than 50 percent

since their 2014 peak as the group raised handbag prices and took too long to come up with products to follow up its best-selling Galleria line.

This year, however, revenue returned to growth as the brand rolled out new handbags like the \$3,000 Sidonie shoulder bag and fresh shapes in its more affordable black nylon that helped win the favor of younger shoppers. But the cost of investing in e-commerce and social media as well as staging pop-up stores and parties to reignite interest in the brand all incurred additional costs. **Bloomberg**

Chinese TechCrunch rival 36Kr is said to plan overseas IPO

Lulu Yilun Chen & Crystal Tse

36KR, a Chinese website that tracks startup fundraisings in the country, is planning an overseas initial public offering, people with knowledge of the matter said.

The Beijing-based company is considering selling shares of its flagship media business in the U.S. as soon as this year, the people said, asking not to be identified

because the information is private. 36Kr, whose website is similar to the TechCrunch portal that chronicles Silicon Valley, is targeting to raise at least \$100 million, the people said.

Chinese companies completed USD43 billion of first-time share sales overseas last year, the most since 2014, data compiled by Bloomberg show. Investors are keen for tech invest-

ments in the world's most populous country, with 80 percent of greater China-focused funds considering or actively pursuing new economy deals, according to Bain & Co.

Deliberations are at an early stage, and details of the offering including the fundraising size and listing venue could change, the people said. 36Kr is open to exploring opportunities in the capital market, thou-

gh it doesn't have a specific IPO timeline, Chief Executive Officer Liu Chengcheng said by text message yesterday.

36Kr's news portal hosted 50,000 articles and had 150 million readers at the end of 2017, its website shows. 36Kr, founded in 2010, also has affiliates operating a data analysis platform and running co-working spaces in China, according to its website. **Bloomberg**

Xi to make 3-nation Europe visit starting Thursday

CHINESE President Xi Jinping will visit Italy, France and Monaco from Thursday to March 26, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

Italy's coalition government has sent mixed signals over whether it will sign a proposed agreement to join China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road infrastructure investment drive. The initiative aims to expand commerce by building ports, railways and other infrastructure across more than 60 countries from the South Pacific through Asia to Europe and Africa.

Projects under the initiative have faced complaints that they leave host countries with too much debt, and with too little work going to local companies.

Italy's Undersecretary of State Guglielmo Picchi tweeted earlier this month that Italy should not sign the agreement.

The foreign ministry's statement did not give details of Xi's schedule during the trip. **AP**

NEW ZEALAND

Citizens open to gun reform after massacre

Stephen Wright & Kristen Gelineau, Christchurch

THE New Zealand leader's promise of tightened gun laws in the wake of the Christchurch mosque shootings has been widely welcomed by a stunned population.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said her Cabinet considered the details of the changes yesterday. She has said options include a ban on private ownership of semi-automatic rifles that were used with devastating effect in Christchurch and a government-funded buyback of newly outlawed guns.

While curtailing gun owners' rights is a political battleground in the United States, Christchurch gun owner Max Roberts, 22, predicted Ardern won't face serious opposition to her agenda.

"There will be no opposition to it. There's no movement in New Zealand for that. Our media and politics are more left wing," said Roberts, a carpenter who uses guns for hunting.

Elliot Dawson, who survived the shooting at Christchurch's Linwood mosque by hiding in a bathroom, hopes New Zealand follows Australia's lead on gun control.

In Australia, a virtual ban on private ownership of semi-automatic rifles and a government-funded gun buyback cut the size of the country's civilian arsenal by almost a third.

The ban followed a 1996 massacre in which a lone gunman used



assault rifles to kill 35 people in Tasmania state in 1996.

"Personally, I don't think guns should be legal at all. Maybe in some extreme self-defense, but I don't think they need such firearms like that," Dawson said. "New Zealand is not America. America is a totally different situation. I think in America it would be probably more dangerous to take people's guns away. But here, I don't think we need them at all."

Akshesh Sharma moved to Christchurch from Fiji to study. He was shocked that the shooter

was able to get his hands on such military-style weapons.

Sharma agrees with the prime minister that gun laws need to be tightened.

"I don't see this as a place where you need guns to live to feel safe," Sharma said. "I can understand in the U.S. maybe, but here it's a different story."

Roberts, the gun owner, doubted banning certain types of weapons would be effective. But he said New Zealand should only allow its own citizens to buy guns. Brenton Harrison Tarrant, the

Australian charged in the Christchurch shootings, obtained a New Zealand gun license in November 2017 and started legally amassing an arsenal of five guns within a month.

"I think when people harbor hate like, that these things are possible," Roberts said.

"Particularly Australian citizens, I don't understand how they can get access to firearms in New Zealand when New Zealand citizens can't get access to firearms in Australia," he added.

Ian Britton uses a rifle for shooting rabbits and target shooting.

He favors outlawing assault rifles like those used in Christchurch because they're unnecessary.

"I can't use the words I'd like to use, but it's disgusting. I never thought I'd see that in this country," Britton said.

Ardern noted that attempts to reform had failed before under pressure from the gun lobby.

"There have been attempts to change our laws in 2005, 2012 and after an inquiry in 2017. Now is the time for change," she said. AP

Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo

SPACE

JAPAN'S space agency said yesterday that its Hayabusa2 spacecraft will follow up last month's touchdown on a distant asteroid with another risky mission — dropping an explosive on the asteroid to make a crater and then collect underground samples for possible clues to the origin of the solar system.

Hayabusa2 made history on Feb. 22 when it successfully touched down on the boulder-strewn asteroid and collected some surface fragments.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said Hayabusa2 will drop an impactor the size of a baseball weighing 2 kilograms on the asteroid on April 5 to collect samples from deeper underground that have not been ex-

Japan to make crater on asteroid to get underground samples



posed to the sun or space rays.

The mission will require the spacecraft to move quickly to the other side of the asteroid so it won't get hit by flying shards from

the blast, JAXA project engineer Takanao Saeki said. "It will be very challenging."

While moving away, Hayabusa2 will leave a camera to capture the outcome. The spacecraft is to wait a few weeks before returning to the area above the crater for observations. The mission will allow JAXA scientists to analyze details of the crater to determine the history of the asteroid, said Koji Wada, who is in charge of the project.

A day before the mission, Hayabusa2 will start descending to the asteroid from its home position of 20 kilometers away. It will drop

a cone-shaped piece of equipment containing explosives that will blast off a copper plate on its bottom. That will turn into a ball and slam into the asteroid at 2 kilometers per second.

JAXA projects it will create a crater of up to 10 meters in diameter with a depth of 1 meter if the underground structure is soft. A crater created on a rock-like structure would be smaller.

During its February touchdown, Hayabusa2 extended a sampler pipe and shot a pinball-like bullet into the asteroid surface to collect dust and tiny fragments.

JAXA plans to have Hayabusa2 briefly land in the crater, but agency researcher Takashi Kubota said they may prioritize safety for the spacecraft and not do so. If it is successful, it would be the first time for a spacecraft to take materials from underground, Kubota said.

Hayabusa2 is scheduled to leave the asteroid at the end of 2019 and bring surface fragments and underground samples back to Earth in late 2020 for analysis.

In a 2005 "deep impact" mission to a comet, NASA observed fragments after blasting the surface but did not collect them.

The asteroid, named Ryugu after an undersea palace in a Japanese folktale, is about 900 meters in diameter and about 300 million kilometers from Earth. AP

Jeffrey Pattirajawane, Jayapura

Flash floods, earthquake in Indonesia kill over 80

THE number of people killed after torrential downpours triggered flash floods and mudslides that tore through mountainside villages in Indonesia's easternmost province has climbed to 79, with dozens of others missing, officials said yesterday.

On Sunday, the disaster-prone country was hit by an earthquake, triggering a landslide that hit a popular waterfall on the tourist island of Lombok, killing at least three people and damaging hundreds of homes.

The worst-hit area from the flooding was Sentani subdistrict, where tons of mud, rocks and trees from a landslide on a mountain early Sunday rolled down to a river that burst its banks, sweeping away residents, National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told a news conference in the capital, Jakarta.

Floodwaters and landslides destroyed roads and bridges in several areas of Papua province's Jayapura district following days of torrential rains, hampering rescue efforts, Nugroho said.

"The combination of natural factors and human activities has caused this fatal disaster," he said.

Nugroho said 79 bodies had



AP PHOTO

been pulled from the mud and wreckage of crumpled homes by Sunday. Another 74 people were hospitalized, many with broken bones and head wounds.

Nugroho said the number of dead and injured would likely increase since affected areas had not been reached and rescuers were still searching for dozens of people reportedly still missing.

"We are overwhelmed by too many injuries," said Haerul Lee, the head of the Jayapura health

office, adding that some medical facilities had been hit by power outages. "We can't handle it alone."

Papua military spokesman Col. Muhammad Aidi said rescuers saved two injured infants who had been trapped for more than six hours. The parents of one of the babies were washed away and died.

Nugroho said rescuers evacuated more than 4,200 people to temporary shelters as more than

600 houses and buildings were damaged and submerged.

Television footage showed hundreds of rescuers and members of the police and military evacuating residents to shelters at a government office. Others were carrying bodies in black and orange body bags. Ambulances and vehicles were seen carrying victims on muddy roads to several clinics and hospitals.

Seasonal downpours cause frequent landslides and floods and kill dozens each year in Indonesia, a chain of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains.

Meanwhile, a moderately strong earthquake triggered a landslide on Lombok island on Sunday. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake had a magnitude of 5.5 and struck at a depth of 23 kilometers (15 miles).

The earthquake was felt across the island, located next to Bali, panicking residents still recovering from a major quake last August that killed more than 300

people and left thousands homeless.

Sunday's quake triggered a landslide from Mount Rinjani and hit dozens of tourists at the Tiu Kelep waterfall located in the foothills of the active volcano, said Nugroho, the disaster agency spokesman.

Two Malaysians and a 14-year-old Indonesian boy were killed in the landslide, Nugroho said.

He said rescuers managed to evacuate 22 Malaysians and 14 Indonesians from the waterfall site, and 56 others — mostly local surveyors from government institutions, the military and the police — from the mountainous area.

At least 182 people were injured in the quake, including 26 Malaysians, Nugroho said. About 525 homes were damaged, including 32 that were flattened.

Indonesia sits on the "Pacific Ring of Fire" and has frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the United Nations was ready to help Indonesia cope with the disasters.

"The United Nations expresses its solidarity with the Indonesian authorities and stands ready to work with them as they respond to the humanitarian needs resulting from both natural disasters," the spokesman for the secretary-general said in a statement. **AP**



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RUSSIA

Putin visits Crimea to mark 5th anniversary of annexation

Vladimir Isachenkov, Moscow

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin yesterday marked the fifth anniversary of Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine by visiting the Black Sea peninsula.

Putin began his trip by attending the launch of new power plants in Crimea, part of Moscow's efforts to upgrade the region's infrastructure. Ukraine has cut off energy supplies to the peninsula and blocked shipments of Crimea-bound cargo via its territory after Moscow annexed the region in 2014.

"The situation has changed radically," Putin said, adding that the new power facilities will fully cover Crimea's needs.

Russia's modernization effort has included the construction of a 19-kilometer bridge which

opened last year across the Kerch Strait that links the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. The USD3.6-billion project gave Crimea a land link to Russia. Previously, ties between the two depended on a ferry crossing that was often interrupted by gales.

Russia's annexation of Crimea drew U.S. and EU sanctions against Russia. Yesterday, NATO and the European Union reaffirmed their strong condemnation of the land grab.

NATO allies said in a statement that "we strongly condemn this act, which we do not and will not recognize." They also criticized Russia's military buildup in Crimea and alleged rights abuses including "arbitrary detentions, arrest, and torture" against members of the Crimean Tartar community.

EU foreign policy chief Federica

Mogherini said "we stand in full solidarity with Ukraine, supporting its sovereignty and territorial integrity."

“We strongly condemn this act, which we do not and will not recognize.**”**

NATO ALLIES

NATO and the EU also called for the release of Ukrainian seamen who were seized by Russia in November's standoff in the Black Sea.

Putin claims that Russia "re-in-

tegrated" Crimea after the ouster of Ukraine's former pro-Russian president in 2014 to protect ethnic Russians who made up the majority of Crimea's population from Ukrainian nationalists. The Kremlin was also worried that a new Ukrainian government could annul Russia's lease on its key Black Sea navy base in Crimea and welcome NATO there instead.

Crimea was first seized by Russian forces in the 18th century under Catherine the Great.

The 27,000-square kilometer territory, roughly the size of Massachusetts, became part of Ukraine in 1954 when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev transferred jurisdiction from Russia, a move that was a mere formality until the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union meant that Crimea landed in an independent Ukraine.

The Kremlin has argued that Khrushchev's move violated then-Soviet law, making the transfer illegitimate.

Russian troops swept Crimea just days after the February 2014 ouster of Ukraine's Russia-friendly president, catching the West by surprise. The Russian forces blocked Ukrainian soldiers at their garrisons, setting the stage for a hastily-called referendum in Crimea that the West denounced as illegitimate.

Putin said he put Russia's nuclear forces on combat readiness during the 2014 developments in Crimea and warned his Western counterparts that Moscow was ready to defend what it considered its land. The annexation gave Russia hundreds of miles of coastline along the Black Sea, a near-stranglehold on commerce in the Sea of Azov and access to vast amounts of potential energy riches on the Black Sea shelf.

The U.S. and the EU responded to the annexation of Crimea and Moscow's support for a separatist insurgency in Ukraine's east with waves of sanctions that have limited Russia's access to global financial markets and to energy and defense technologies. The Kremlin fired back by cutting imports of most Western food.

The annexation of Crimea, a lush peninsula which long has been a favorite vacation destination for Russians, helped bolster Putin's popularity at home and strengthened Moscow's positions in the Black Sea. However, public enthusiasm in Russia over the grab has worn off over years amid the country's economic difficulties and a plunge in living standards.

A poll conducted earlier this month by the Public Opinion Foundation, a Moscow-based survey firm, showed that most Russians continue to support the annexation, but also indicated an increasing public awareness of its costs.

The nation-wide survey of 1,500 had 46 percent of respondents saying the seizure of Crimea had a negative impact on the country's international standing, while 26 percent said it had a positive influence and the rest were undecided. It had a margin of error of no more than 3.6 percentage points. **AP**

USA

Lyft opens up its IPO road show, offers 30 million shares

LYFT officially kicked off the road show for its initial public offering, putting 30 million shares up for sale yesterday with an anticipated price of between USD62 and \$68 per share.

That would raise more than \$2 billion for the San Francisco ride-hailing company, which could be valued between \$20

billion and \$25 billion eventually.

Lyft and Uber have raced to be first with an IPO, and Lyft's rival is expected to offer shares in the coming weeks.

Lyft released financial details about the company for the first time this month, reporting \$2.2 billion in revenue last year, more than double its \$1.1 billion

in revenue in 2017, but also \$911 million in losses. Lyft has lost nearly \$3 billion since 2012, but has brought in more than \$5 billion in venture capital.

The company's executives warned that the company could struggle to turn a profit, despite a rapidly growing market share.

The company's share of the U.S. ride-hailing

market was 39 percent in December 2018, up from 22 percent in December 2016, according to its filing. The \$2.2 billion in revenue for 2018 was about double what it brought in the previous year.

Bookings, which represent Lyft's fares after subtracting taxes, tolls and tips, have been rising dramatically — a trend that the

company intends to highlight to potential investors. Lyft's bookings surpassed \$8 billion last year, 76 percent more than in 2017 and more than four times the number from 2016.

Lyft's recent market-share gains came as Uber was dogged by reports that drivers accosted passengers and that the company tolerated rampant sexual ha-

arrassment internally. Those problems ultimately led its co-founder Travis Kalanick to resign. Uber has been working to repair its image under CEO Dara Khosrowshahi.

Lyft said it would offer 30,700,000 shares of its common stock to the public and give underwriters the option to buy up to 4,615,500 more shares. **AP**

Aleksandar Furtula & Mike Corder, Utrecht

TRAM SHOOTING

Dutch police hunt suspect after shooting kills three

DUTCH police were hunting down a suspect after a shooting yesterday on a tram in the central city of Utrecht that left three people dead and wounded five.

Authorities immediately raised the terror alert for the area to the maximum level and said they are considering the possibility of a "terrorist motive" in the attack. Dutch military police went on extra alert at Dutch airports and at key buildings in the country as the Utrecht manhunt took place.

Police, including heavily armed officers, flooded the area after the shooting yesterday on a tram at a busy traffic intersection in a residential neighborhood. They later erected a white tent over an area where a body appeared to be lying next to the tram.

Utrecht police said trauma helicopters were sent to the scene and appealed to the public to stay away. As the manhunt continued, heavily armed anti-terror officers gathered in front of an apartment block close to the scene.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark

Rutte called the situation "very worrying."

Police spokesman Bernhard Jens said no one had been detained yet in the shooting, and one possible "explanation is that the person fled by car." He did not rule out the possibility that more than one shooter was involved in the attack.

"We want to try to catch the person responsible as soon as

possible," Jens said. A German police spokesman said German authorities near the border were initially told to look out for a red Renault Clio compact sedan but were later told it had been found abandoned in Utrecht. There was no immediate confirmation on that from Dutch police. The Netherlands' anti-terror coordinator raised the threat alert to its highest level around Utrecht. Pieter-Jaap Aalbersberg said the "threat level has gone to 5, exclusively for the Utrecht province." "The culprit is still on the



AP PHOTO

run. A terror motive cannot be excluded," he said in a Twitter message.

After the shooting, Dutch political parties halted campaigning ahead of a provincial election scheduled for Wednesday that will also determine the makeup of the Dutch parliament's upper house.

In neighboring Germany, police stepped up their surveillance of the Dutch border. Heinrich Onstein, a spokesman for federal police in North Rhine-Westphalia state, said additional officers had been detailed to watch not only major highways, but also minor crossings and railway routes.

German police are in close contact with authorities in the Netherlands and have a description of the suspect, he said, but would not elaborate for security reasons. AP

AD

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what's ON



EXHIBITION OF NEW WORKS IN MAM COLLECTION – CHE HO
TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)
UNTIL: April 14, 2019
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

MEMBER JOINT EXHIBITION OF 33RD ANNIVERSARY OF CAC – CÍRCULO DOS AMIGOS DA CULTURA DE MACAU
TIME: 3pm-8pm (Mondays); 12pm-8pm (Tuesdays to Sundays)
UNTIL: April 14, 2019
VENUE: Albergue SCM
ADMISSION: Free

MASTERPIECES OF RUSSIAN ART FROM THE STATE TRETYAKOV GALLERY
TIME: 10am-7pm (last admission 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)
UNTIL: April 22, 2019
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

ONENESS: CALLIGRAPHY BY PROFESSOR JAO TSUNG-I
TIME: 10am-6pm (No admission after 5:30pm, closed on Mondays)
UNTIL: September 30, 2019
VENUE: Jao Tsung-I Academy
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2523

BIOMIMICRY – INSPIRED BY NATURE
TIME: 10am-6pm (closed on Thursdays)
UNTIL: March 31, 2019
VENUE: Gallery 2, Exhibition Center, Macau Science Center
ADMISSION: MOP25
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0822

CELEBRATING LIFE – JU MING LIVING WORLD SCULPTURE SELLING EXHIBITION
TIME: 10:30am-11pm
UNTIL: April 7, 2019
VENUE: Rippling Gallery, Roaming Gallery, and Floating Gallery, MGM Cotai
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8806 8888

Offbeat

MAN RETURNS LIBRARY BOOK 53 YEARS LATE

A New Jersey man says he has returned an overdue library book — 53 years after he first borrowed the book.
Fair Lawn resident Harry Krame says he checked out “The Family Book Of Verse” by Lewis Gannet from his school library when he was 13 and Lyndon Johnson was president. The now 65-year-old Krame found the book recently while cleaning out his basement and felt guilty about keeping it overdue for all those years.
Memorial Middle School Vice Principal Dominick Tarquinio says a late fee at today’s rate would be about USD2,000, but says the district will let it slide.
School librarian Susan Murray says she plans to use the book for a display to teach students about returning books.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Água de Mar
15:45	Zig Zag
16:15	Conversa da Treta
16:40	Quem Quer Ser Millionário
17:35	Ministério do Tempo
18:30	TDM Desporto (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Entrevista
21:50	Escritores a Norte - Vidas com Obra em Casas D'Escritas
22:30	Filhos da Nação Sr.2
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Uma História de Autonomia
00:45	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:30	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

14 - 20 Mar



CAPTAIN MARVEL

ROOM 1

2:30, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30 pm

Director: Anna Boden, Ryan Fleck

Starring: Brie Larson, Samuel L. Jackson, Ben Mendelsohn

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 124min



ESCAPE ROOM

ROOM 2

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

Director: Adam Robitel

Starring: Taylor Russell, Logan Miller, Jay Ellis

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 99min



DRAGON BALL SUPER BROLLY

ROOM 3

2:30, 7:30pm

Director: Tatsuya Nagamine

Starring: Masako Nozawa, Aya Hisakawa, Ryô Horikawa

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 100min

KAMEN RIDER HEISEI GENERATIONS FPREVER

ROOM 3

4:30, 9:30pm

Director: Kyohei Yamaguchi

Starring: Eiji Akaso, Shunsuke Daitô, Nayuta Fukuzaki

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 100min

this day in history



1964 'AMBITIOUS' PLANS FOR SOUTH EAST

Three new cities are proposed for south east England as part of the largest regional expansion plan in Britain.

A study, published today, estimates the country's population will increase by three million by the early 1980s.

The South East study is a blueprint for the south east of England, which could see an overhaul of public transport services in the area and of the road network.

The research shows that in an area to the south east of a line drawn from the Wash in Lincolnshire, to Dorset, the population will rise from between 18 million and 21 million between 1961 and 1981.

It is expected to lead to 350,000 London families needing re-housing outside the capital and could cripple services and employment if plans are not in place for the overflow.

New cities are planned near Southampton, Bletchley and Newbury and six large new expansions will be carried out at Ashford, Ipswich, Northampton, Peterborough, Swindon and Stansted.

There will also be smaller expansions in other towns across the country.

Public consultations are expected to be held before planning gets the go-ahead.

Funding has not been outlined in the study and the government insists payment and timing depends on "national priorities".

Most of the building is expected to take place in the 1970s, with smaller building in the 1980s.

A group of civil servants from several departments completed the study, which accepts as a basic assumption London's growth will be contained and the green belt preserved.

An accompanying White Paper accepts the basic objectives of the study but final decisions will not be taken until local authorities have been consulted.

Minister of Housing and Local Government Sir Keith Joseph has written to local authorities and expects preliminary reactions by May.

In an interview with the BBC he said: "This plan is to allow for the orderly planning and finding of homes and jobs."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The three "new towns" created were Milton Keynes, Havant and Basingstoke.

There were widespread fears the creation of new communities in the south east of England would destroy the green belt.

But government calculations insisted that by 1981 more than 83% of the green belt area would be open space and green areas would be preserved.

At the heart of the plans was the premise the population of London would not increase because the city would not be able to cater for millions more.

Sir Keith Joseph became secretary of state for social services in 1970 until the defeat of the Conservative government in 1974.

He is best remembered as the author of the Conservative Party's "New Right" ideology which led to Thatcherism. He died in 1994.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You need to take control of a new situation, and make sure that everyone involved knows what's expected of them.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You don't like the big change that has been announced from on high, but there's not much you can do except to be clear about your concerns.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Your thinking gets even deeper today, which is saying quite a bit. All that great mental energy helps lead you to an exciting new conclusion.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You need to deal with financial issues today - though you probably would rather do anything else. Just get your information all in one place and then work until it starts to make sense.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 People come to you looking for answers - and you've got them! It's a great time for you to step up and offer solutions to problems that have been bugging friends and coworkers for weeks or months.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You can't just assume that you know what's going on this time - so make sure that you're playing around and trying to figure out the details. That could mean you need to experiment more than usual.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Your friendly ways are making life a lot better for those around you - and you can easily mend fences with those you need to have back on your side.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Your urge to redecorate is strong, and almost impossible to resist. That could lead to problems if you don't live alone, but your style should help you win any arguments that pop up.

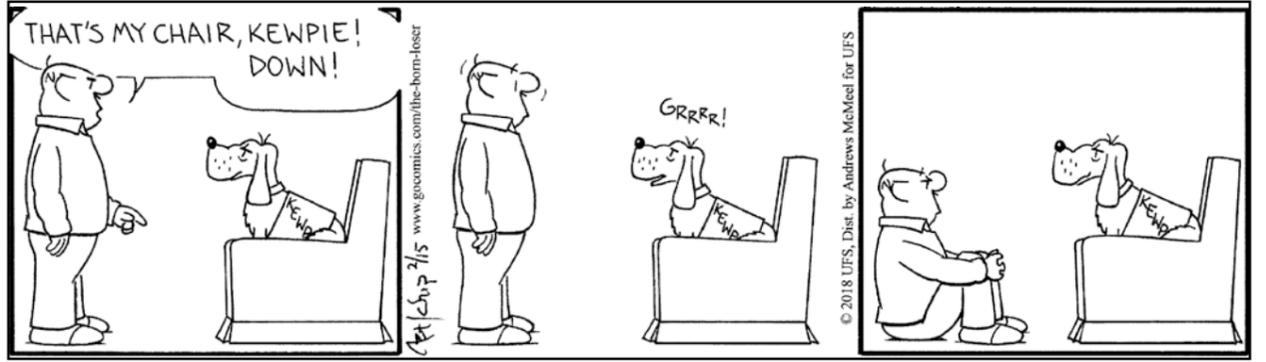
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your social energy is peaking right now, and you should find it easier to end feuds and reach out to new people. It's a great time to make new friends and to connect with those you love.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 It's time for a little change - everyone else seems to be doing it! See if you can tweak your style or your approach to something important without coming across as a revolutionary.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You are sure to get a good response to your proposals today - people are really affected by your passion! It's a good time to offer new ideas at work, but you can succeed almost anywhere.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 This isn't a great day for intense study or concentration - you are much better off wandering physically and mentally. Pretty soon, your energy will refocus itself and you can get back to work.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles categorized by difficulty: Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each puzzle is a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a 'Yesterday's solution' section with a completed grid and answers.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

List of useful telephone numbers including Emergency calls, Fire department, Police (PJ), Customs, S. J. Hospital, Kiang Wu Hospital, Commission Against Corruption (CCAC), IACM, Tourism, and Airport.



Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' listings for various properties in Taipa and Macau, including apartment complexes and commercial buildings.



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Beth Harris, Indian Wells (Calif.)

TENNIS

ROGER Federer came out playing like his legendary self. Dominic Thiem needed a set to adjust to what he was seeing across the net.

Thiem went on to beat Federer 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 and win the BNP Paribas Open yesterday [Macau time], denying Federer a record sixth title in the desert.

"It just feels unreal what happened," Thiem said. "He's such a legend."

Thiem trailed 4-3 and 5-4 in the third set before breaking Federer with a forehand winner to go up 6-5. Thiem served out the two-hour match that ended with yet another error from Federer, a forehand dumped into the net.

Federer was in the final for the third straight year and lost for the second year in a row. He was beaten in a third-set tiebreaker by Juan Martin del Potro last year. Federer won his 100th career title in Dubai recently.

Thiem had lost in his previous two ATP Masters 1000 finals. But the 25-year-old Austrian's solid serve held up against Federer as it had throughout the tournament.

Thiem was broken just four times out of 61 service games in the tournament. He didn't lose serve during his semifinal win over Milos Raonic, facing only one break point in that match.

Canadian teenager Bianca Andreescu upset Angelique Kerber 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 to win the women's title.

Thiem and Andreescu earned \$1.3 million each.

Federer and Thiem had split their four previous meetings, but Federer had won both of their hard-court matches without dropping a set.

He cruised through the first set in 36 minutes while getting broken for just the second time during his run to his ninth appearance in the final. But Federer broke back in the next game and served out the set.

"The way he was playing the first set was unreal," Thiem said. "I had to get used to it."

Thiem earned the only break of the second

Thiem edges Federer in 3 sets to win Indian Wells title



Dominic Thiem, of Austria, celebrates after defeating Roger Federer

set in the fourth game, going up 3-1. Federer won just two more games in the set.

Both players were on serve in the third set until Thiem collected the only break. Federer tried consecutive drop shots that Thiem retrieved for crosscourt forehand winners before the Austrian hit a winning forehand to lead 6-5.

"He did very well when he got up to the ball, stayed calm, made the shot," Federer said.

Federer won just one point on Thiem's serve in the final game.

"Just came up against somebody who was on the day a bit better when it really mattered," Federer said. "I have been in these positions so many times that I get over it very quickly."

Federer advanced to the final after rival Rafael Nadal withdrew before their semifinal match because of knee pain. Thiem also benefited from a walkover, reaching the semis when Gael Monfils withdrew with an Achilles injury.

Andreescu, an 18-year-old Canadian, became the first wild-card winner and second-youngest to claim the title in

tournament history.

"The fucking champion of Indian Wells," Andreescu said. "It's crazy."

She overcame nerves, fatigue, arm and leg issues in the final set to earn the first title of her fledgling career.

Andreescu won on her fourth match point when Kerber netted a backhand. She broke Kerber three times in the third set, rallying from a 3-2 deficit to take four of the final five games.

Andreescu dropped her racket near the baseline and fell on her back, her legs in the air as she covered her face in disbelief. After getting up and exchanging kisses with Kerber, the teen bent down and kissed the sunbaked hard court and dropped to her back again, her arms and legs splayed, before grabbing her head.

Born in Canada, she later moved with her parents to Romania, where she first started playing tennis.

Kerber was the last of five seeded players that Andreescu knocked off in her seven matches.

"When she had the chances, she just go for it," Kerber said.

The Canadian followed in the footsteps of Naomi Osaka, who was a little-known 20-year-old when she won the title last year. Osaka used it as a springboard to win titles at the U.S. and Australian opens while ascending to the No. 1 ranking in January.

"No pressure," Andreescu said, joking.

She's projected to rise 36 spots to No. 24 in the WTA Tour rankings.

Kerber, ranked eighth, remains without a title since winning Wimbledon last year.

She was a crowd favorite, with fans waving Canadian flags and chanting "Let's go, Bianca! Let's go" in the second set.

They clearly enjoyed Andreescu's fearless style of play. She alternately outpunched opponents from the baseline, tossed up high-arching shots and unleashed well-timed drop shots — usually during the same point.

A smiling Andreescu was quick to correct a reporter.

"It's not moonballing," she said. "It's just hitting heavy to her backhand with more spin. We're not under 12 here." AP



FOOTBALL

Ronaldo charged by UEFA for gesture mocking Simeone

UEFA has charged Cristiano Ronaldo for a provocative gesture mocking Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone after Juventus eliminated the Spanish club from the Champions League. UEFA says its disciplinary panel will judge the charge of "improper conduct" last week. Simeone was fined 20,000 euros (USD22,700) by UEFA for making an obscene gesture after Atletico took the lead in a 2-0 win over Juventus in the first leg. Ronaldo's hat trick in the 3-0 win in the return leg in Turin last week sent Juventus to the quarterfinals. Ronaldo celebrated at the final whistle by mimicking Simeone's gesture. When Ronaldo played for Real Madrid, he twice won Champions League finals against Atletico.



SKI

Shiffrin tops World Cup money list with record USD885,000

Mikaela Shiffrin (pictured, right) earned a record 886,000 Swiss francs (USD885,000) in prize money during the World Cup ski season. Shiffrin's 17 victories — the most ever in a season — gave her at least double the amount of the next highest earner on the women's circuit. Petra Vlhova was second with 428,000 Swiss francs (\$427,000). Marcel Hirscher, who won a record-extending eighth straight overall World Cup title, topped the men's list with 565,000 Swiss francs (\$564,000). Shiffrin won the women's overall title for the third straight year. World Cup organizers typically pay 45,000 Swiss francs (\$44,950) for a win. Prize money is paid down to 30th place, which usually earns 500 Swiss francs (\$499).



Canceled Crusaders match overshadows Super Rugby's fifth round

One match that wasn't played carried more significance than five that were in the fifth round of Super Rugby. The scheduled match between the Crusaders and Highlanders in Dunedin was canceled on Saturday by joint agreement in a mark of respect for victims of a mass shooting the previous day in Christchurch. On Friday afternoon a lone gunman opened fire at two mosques in the South Island city and in less than 30 minutes left 50 dead and dozens wounded. Crusaders chief executive Colin Mainsbridge said players were shocked by the events which had taken place in their own city and "all other issues and considerations pale in significance" against the loss of life.

opinion

World Views

Nathaniel Bullard, Bloomberg

HONG KONG'S TAXI FLEET AGES IN REAL TIME

The South China Morning Post recently published an analysis of the 210,000 licensed drivers of Hong Kong's iconic taxi fleet. Those Toyota Crown sedans are a venerable design, released in 1995. More venerable still are its drivers, nearly half of whom are older than 60. Hong Kong's taxi drivers are a service sector aging in real time, a microcosm of a service economy going the same way.

Hong Kong has no mandated retirement age for its taxi drivers. Hong Kong Transport Department figures also show that only about 15 percent of them are younger than 50, and more than 8 percent are older than 70.

I was curious to see how taxi drivers' ages have changed over time, and found a useful proxy: the age of drivers involved in accidents. Driving was a young person's game in the 1990s, when this data set begins; by 2017, accidents were just off their all-time highs, and the drivers involved were all-time old as well.

If we look at those accidents by age group as a percent of the total, it is even more obvious how old the drivers are. In 1991, 60 percent of all accidents occurred with drivers younger than 40. By 2017, 60 percent of all accidents occurred with drivers older than 55.

That's not to say that older drivers are necessarily worse drivers. It's likely that they are a cross-section of a population that is aging in general, buoyed by the fact that one can drive for longer than one can work in construction, for instance.

Older drivers are in more accidents because there are more old drivers — but that doesn't mean age presents no issues at all. Age is a concern, says the vice chairman of the Taxi Council, as older drivers intersect with new technologies that both enable and potentially distract:

"If the ageing continues, it will be hard to push for the use of technology and reforms in service quality," he said, adding that older drivers had a harder time learning how to use their mobile phones for navigation and monitoring traffic.

While the total number of taxi accidents has increased, the number of drivers and the number of registered taxis have not changed much in the past 18 years. There were 219,032 licensed drivers in 2001, and 210,524 in 2017. And the number of registered taxis increased by 25 (not a typo) over the same period, to 18,163 from 18,138.

The number of private cars on the road has increased markedly in the same time period, however. There are more than 600,000 private cars registered in Hong Kong, an increase of more than 50 percent since 2001.

Hong Kong has the world's longest life expectancy: 81.3 years for men, 87.3 years for women. It also has an exceptionally low birth rate, as I highlighted in a recent piece on the potential for automating low-speed transport in developed East Asia megacities.

Hong Kong's economy is heavily services-based: In charting the composition of its gross domestic product, it was easier to highlight the components of GDP that are not services. Transport, construction, information and communications, utilities, manufacturing, and Hong Kong's tiny agriculture, fishing, mining and quarrying sectors make up just 17 percent of economic activity.

Hong Kong's aging drivers will be an interesting test case, in coming years, for how the city handles its aging workforce. Will we eventually see centenarian cab drivers in Hong Kong? Will young people be attracted to a job that healthy older people are willing to perform as long as they are able? Or will technology play a major role — either in aiding older drivers, or making them less able to do an increasingly connected job?

THE UK PRIME MINISTER IN LAST-MINUTE PUSH TO WIN BREXIT SUPPORT

British Prime Minister Theresa May was making a last-minute push to win support for her European Union divorce deal, warning opponents that failure to approve it would mean a long — and possibly indefinite — delay to Brexit.

Parliament has rejected the agreement twice, but May aims to try a third time this week if she can persuade enough lawmakers to change their minds. Her aim is to have the deal agreed before

EU leaders meet Thursday for a summit in Brussels.

But there was no sign of a breakthrough, and the government faces a deadline of the end of today to decide whether they have enough votes to pass the deal, so that a vote can be held tomorrow.

May's spokesman said yesterday that the government would only hold a vote if there is "a realistic prospect of success."

Facebook says service hindered by lack of local news

David Bauder, New York

FACEBOOK'S effort to establish a service that provides its users with local news and information is being hindered by the lack of outlets where the company's technicians can find original reporting.

The service, launched last year, is currently available in some 400 cities in the United States. But the social media giant said it has found that 40 percent of Americans live in places where there weren't enough local news stories to support it.

Facebook announced yesterday it would share its research with academics at Duke, Harvard, Minnesota and North Carolina who are studying the extent of news deserts created by newspaper closures and staff downsizing.

Some 1,800 newspapers have closed in the United States over the last 15 years, according to the University of North Carolina. Newsroom employment has declined by 45 percent as the industry struggles with a broken business model partly caused by the success of companies on the Internet, including Facebook.

The Facebook service, called "Today In," collects



news stories from various local outlets, along with government and community groups. The company deems a community unsuitable for "Today In" if it cannot find a single day in a month with at least five news items available to share.

There's not a wide geographical disparity. For example, the percentage of news deserts is higher in the Northeast and Midwest, at 43 percent, Facebook said. In the South and West, the figure is 38 percent.

"It affirms the fact that we have a real lack of original local reporting," said Penelope Muse Abernathy, a University of North Carolina professor who studies the topic. She said she hopes the data helps pinpoint areas where the need is greatest, eventually leading to some ideas for solutions.

Facebook doesn't neces-

sarily have the answers. "Everyone can learn from working together," said Anne Kornblut, director of news initiatives at the company.

The company plans to award some 100 grants, ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000, to people with ideas for making more news available, said Josh Mabry, head of local news partnerships for Facebook.

That comes on top of \$300 million in grants Facebook announced in January to help programs and partnerships designed to boost local news.

The company doesn't plan to launch newsgathering efforts of its own, Kornblut said.

"Our history has been — and we will probably stick to it — to let journalists do what they do well and let us support them and let them do their work," she said. **AP**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Tony Karumba/AFP/Getty Images

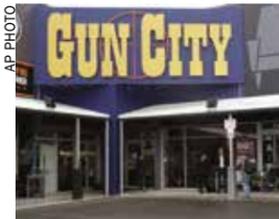


Hunger. More than a million people in a dozen Kenyan counties are in urgent need of food assistance after below-average rainfall curbed farm output, according to the East African nation's drought-management agency.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	50-70 Good
High Density Residential Area	35-55 Good
Ambient	50-70 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



NEW ZEALAND Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern promise of tightened gun laws in the wake of the Christchurch mosque shootings has been widely welcomed by a stunned population. **More on p12**



USA Democratic presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke (pictured) raised USD6.1 million online during the first 24 hours after he announced his White House bid, the highest first-day number reported by any candidate, his campaign said. The "record-breaking" fundraising came "without a dime" from political action committees, corporations or special interests.



CRIMEA NATO and the European Union are condemning Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula five years after Moscow declared the region Russian territory. NATO allies said in a statement that "we strongly condemn this act, which we do not and will not recognize." **More on p14**



MUSIC Dick Dale (pictured, in 2007), whose pounding, blaringly loud power-chord instrumentals on songs like "Miserlou" and "Let's Go Trippin'" earned him the title King of the Surf Guitar, has died at age 81. His former bassist Sam Bolle says Dick Dale passed away Saturday night.