



LIGHT FESTIVAL PIECE DESTROYED IN BLAZE

A fire that broke out on the rooftop of a ZAPE building destroyed a popular luminous 'field of flowers' from the Macao Light Festival

P4 MDT REPORT



HK MONETARY AUTHORITY SPENT USD1B DEFENDING THE PEG

P6 GREATER BAY



BREXIT ADJOURNED?

With just nine days to go until Brexit, May asked the European Union to postpone Britain's departure from the union until June 30

P15

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

WORLD BRIEFS



CHINA-US Top U.S. trade and economic officials will visit China next week for another round of negotiations, a White House official said. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer will lead the delegation. [More on p10](#)



CHINA-VATICAN The Holy See is greeting the visit to Italy of Xi Jinping later this week with a new round of overtures and says the "door is always open" to dialogue. Italian media have been speculating for days about the possibility of a meeting between Xi and Pope Francis. [More on p9,11](#)



JAPAN Rights Watch urged Tokyo yesterday to drop its requirement that transgender people be sterilized before their gender is changed on official documents. [More on p13](#)



MEXICO President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (pictured) said that talks with White House senior adviser Jared Kushner have led to advances toward an agreement that would have the U.S. government guarantee some USD10 billion in development investments for Mexico and Central America.

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Cracks showing in Agnes Lam's middle path

P2-3 LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



EDUCATION ALERT!

Macau among worst places in world for school bullying

P5 MDT REPORT

Melinda Chan responds to next gaming concession

The President of Macau Fishermen's Wharf, Melinda Chan Mei Yi, has said that if her group meets the conditions imposed by the next government's public tender for the gaming concession, it will participate in the bidding, according to a report by TDM. However, Chan noted that it is up to the government's policy whether to allow Macau enterprises to participate in the public tender for the concession. Chan hopes the government can introduce the policy as soon as possible to help the gaming industry's employees and enhance their confidence.

3,050 money exchangers repatriated in 2018

In 2018, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) repatriated 3,050 people who were involved in money exchange gangs, according to the Office of the Secretary for Security's responses to lawmaker Lei Chan U's questions. The majority of those repatriated were mainland residents. There was also one Hong Kong resident and one Vietnamese. The office further revealed that the Judiciary Police (PJ) has initiated a joint investigation with the mainland police authority to investigate the background of money exchange gangs and whether they involve group operations. The office noted that the illegal exchange of foreign currency is a violation of the financial management ordinance.

UM inaugurates new lab with CAS

An inauguration ceremony for the University of Macau (UM) and the Institute of Biophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) Joint Research Laboratory of Brain and Cognitive Sciences was held at UM. The university is currently discussing a detailed operation with CAS in respect to brain and cognitive sciences. UM's rector said that the school would exert all effort in working with CAS, and to integrate into the Greater Bay Area. The lab is believed to be a step up in both schools' research in brain and cognitive sciences.

SPECIAL REPORT

Cracks appearing in Agnes Lam's

Lynzy Valles

AGNES Lam is marking her 18th month as a lawmaker after being elected in October 2017 on a "middle ground" platform between the pro-democrats and pro-establishmentarians.

Her experience at Legislative Assembly (AL) sessions shows Lam leaning towards the safest stance – the point of least contention – trying to appease both camps. But her middle ground stance during yesterday's session was starting to irritate at least one lawmaker.

Lam – who won a seat at the AL on her third attempt – focuses on addressing public housing and transport issues, as well as matters affecting the region's most vulnerable groups.

In previous interviews, Lam has explained that she aims to be a "middle ground" between opposing lawmakers at the AL, not wanting to fall squarely in either camp.

As seen in several AL discussions, debates and voting sessions, Lam is regarded as conservative, yet sometimes inconsistent, when addressing issues raised by the legislative. Whether she votes in favor or against a proposal at the Assembly, she will often use explanatory remarks to

express the opposite opinion.

During yesterday's AL session, lawmaker Pereira Coutinho stressed during his time on the vote declaration that such time exists for lawmakers to justify their vote, and not to be used to criticize a lawmaker or proposal. He was addressing Lam specifically – though he did not mention her by name – who is known to use vote declarations to explain a stance contrary to the position in her vote.

"The vote declaration exists for lawmakers to be able to justify to the population the reasons why they voted in favor, against or abstained, during the voting process. It cannot be used to criticize a lawmaker or proposal, especially if you have voted in favor [of it]," decried Coutinho.

Defending herself, Lam told the Times last night that she has always believed lawmakers should take every chance to discuss the pertinent issues and that it is their responsibility to proactively share their opinion on legislative matters. The legislator also argued that disagreement should be welcome within the AL as that is the purpose of debate.

"It seems that Coutinho was criticizing me," Lam said. "I was explaining why I was voting for the bill. I just needed to clarify because I found

nd that, before I joined the assembly, I thought that we should always say yes to the debate. I just think that's something we can do."

"I just want to ensure that we want to propose a debate," added Lam. "We just want to ensure that it's something that is debatable and not just expressing our ideas to criticize the government, because we have a lot of chance to criticize the government."

With her background, she's got to consider her constituency – which is more middle-class, educated and middle-aged.

LARRY SO
POLITICAL COMMENTATOR

"If we all agree that we should criticize the government, then why are we debating?"

Accordingly, Lam explained why she voted against a debate proposal raised by fellow lawmaker Sulu Sou, saying that it was more an

opportunity for the airing of the lawmaker's opinion than a chance for the legislators to honestly discuss the issue.

"I found that the topic was wrong, so I voted against it," said Lam, "and people shamed me."

Political commentator Larry So told the Times that although Lam stands in the middle, she tends to lean more towards the conservative side.

"There are some incidents in the community [that] call for a radical [approach] but it seems that [she] votes alongside with the so-called conservatives; all the pro-establishment branches," So told the Times.

Yet Lam sticks to her campaign platform – particularly in relations to gender issues, women issues and domestic violence matters, as well as protecting the vulnerable groups.

"To a very large extent, she did offend the so-called establishment," said the academic. "That's why I would put her in the middle, but she tends to walk down a little bit [into] the so-called conservative, pro-government side."

Although Lam has previously expressed a desire to see a more democratic society, So remarked that the lawmaker is probably in favor of gradual, rather than radical, change. The political commentator said that there is

Joseph Lau's son refuses to comment on extradition treaty

LAU Ming-wai, son of Hong Kong property tycoon Joseph Lau Luen-hung, said that he could not share his opinion on the Hong Kong government's plan to amend the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance.

The Hong Kong Security Bureau has proposed to allow extraditions to Macau, Taiwan and mainland

China on a case-by-case basis.

While attending an online show earlier this week, Lau Ming-wai was asked a "sensitive" question, which is his view of the aforementioned extradition plan.

Previously, after news of the proposal was revealed, a newspaper pointed out that if the amend-

ment was finally passed, Joseph Lau Luen-hung, who was convicted by a Macau court for being involved in Ao Man Long's corruption case, may be required to be extradited to Macau to serve his sentence.

However, Lau Ming-wai said that "because [the proposal] involves me and my father, no matter what I say

will not be especially neutral."

Once the amendment is passed, fugitives who take refuge in one city to avoid punishment in the other may be repatriated.

The mutual legal assistance scheme between Macau and Hong Kong will allow for the collection and exchange of informa-

tion on criminal matters.

Backdating the enforcement of the treaty could allow Macau to finally mete out justice to two Hong Kong tycoons, Joseph Lau Luen-hung and Steven Lo Kit-sing. The pair were convicted in Macau in relation to bribing the former Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Ao Man Long, to secure land for a luxury property project. They escaped their prison sentences by residing in Hong Kong. **JZ**

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Times

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middle ground stance

only a small part of the general public that is radically against the government.

“With her background, she’s got to consider her constituency – which is more middle-class, educated and middle-

aged. These are the people who are more liberal but pro-establishment [at the same time],” he added.

“A number of people would look at it as a bit too slow,” concluded So. “Maybe she is

hoping to achieve something by her second or third term, but definitely not within this term.”

Lam was elected to the 10th seat in the legislature in October 2017, with a total of

9,590 votes.

According to her self-evaluation of her first year as a lawmaker, Lam considered that her efforts were “successful in calling people’s attention [to various problems].”

During her post for the first 12 months, the lawmaker received a total of 177 contacts from citizens involving around 1,000 people in total.

In her first year, the lawmaker was known for

streaming videos on her social media channels to update the public with her efforts at the Legislative Assembly. However, her social media outreach has slowed considerably in recent months.

Lam was also the lawmaker who recently assisted a domestic violence victim, criticizing the Health Bureau for failing to respond to questions on making referrals for reconstructive surgery.

RENATO MARQUES



“If we all agree that we should criticize the government, then why are we debating?”

AGNES LAM

Lawmakers Ng Kuok Cheong and Agnes Lam

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Sou’s proposal to discuss over-tourism voted down

Renato Marques

A proposal by lawmaker Sulu Sou calling the government to the Legislative Assembly (AL) to debate the negative influence of over-tourism on the population was voted down yesterday by the majority of lawmakers.

The topic, the last in discussion during yesterday’s extended session, received little debate with lawmaker Chan Chak Mo addressing the plenary to say that “we cannot choose the tourists that visit us.” Chan argued that it is not possible to set a minimum spend for visitors or cherry-pick the ones that are most profitable for the SAR. “We need to just get used to them.”

Holding the opposite perspective was lawmaker Au Kam San, who said he agreed that the topic should be debated.

“We should reduce the number of tourists, reducing also the

pressure on society. I think it’s a good topic and we should debate it. Of course I’m supporting it,” Au said.

After the voting shot down the topic for debate, several lawmakers decided to explain their vote in vote declarations.

Ho Ion Sang, Ma Chi Seng and Wong Kit Cheng justified their vote of reprobation noting that the topic can, should and is already being addressed by several lawmakers through spoken and written enquiries. They said that some of the enquiries have been already delivered to the government and that soon the responsible officials would have to come to the AL to report on the administration’s opinions and ideas.

These lawmakers argued that to have another debate on the topic would be of no relevant interest and, as Ho noted, a “waste of resources.”

In the meantime, lawmaker

RENATO MARQUES

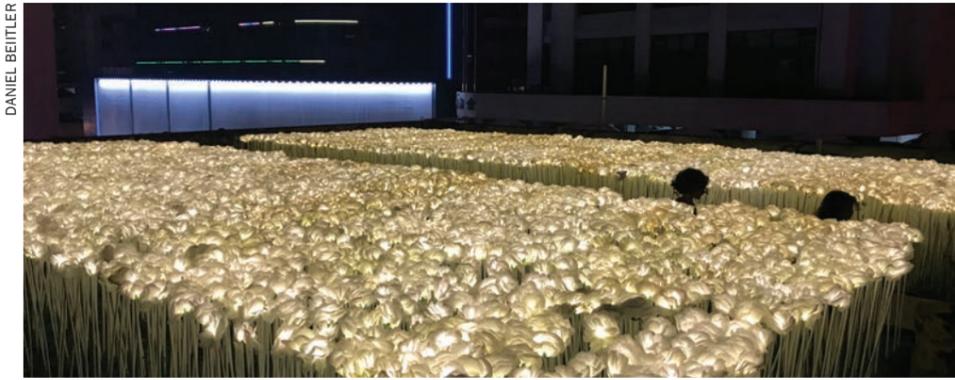


Agnes Lam, similar to what has occurred during the voting of several other bills and proposals, used her time of the vote declaration to criticize the way the topic

had been proposed. She said that lawmakers should address topics of public interest and those related to government policies and measures, adding that, contra-

rily, “this is more like an expression of a personal opinion on a topic by a lawmaker.”

Despite her stance on the debate proposal, Lam voted in favor.



The light installation



A plume of smoke is spotted in the early hours of the morning

Fire destroys light installation in ZAPE

A fire that broke out last month on the rooftop of the Macau Art Garden destroyed a light installation that had been relocated from the popular Macao Light Festival, but nobody was hurt.

The light installation featured two crops of white plastic flowers with luminescent bulbs contain-

ed within the artificial petals.

According to information provided yesterday by the Public Security Police Force (PSP), a fire broke out at approximately 3 a.m. on Feb. 24 at the building, located on Avenida do Dr. Rodrigo Rodrigues, in ZAPE district.

The fire was spotted after office hours by several police of-

ficers patrolling the area, who immediately contacted the Fire Services. The building is located just across the road from a PSP station.

Upon investigation, it was discovered that the fire was caused by an electrical failure from the light installation on the building's rooftop. A large plume

of smoke coming from the area could be seen in the early hours of the morning and reports said that the residents of nearby buildings could smell the fumes.

The PSP told the Times that there were no injuries from the fire. The Force also said that the cause of the fire was not suspicious.

An associate of the Macau Art Garden confirmed to the Times that the entire installation was burned and is now not usable in future years. Previously it had been used in both the 2018 and 2019 Macau Light Festivals and proved popular with both locals and tourists, according to organizers. **DB**

Ká Hó Reservoir tender opened

The tender for the Ká Hó Reservoir expansion project in Coloane has opened, with the government calling on proposals for the expansion of the water reservoir, as well as the reconstruction of the dam and surrounding roads.

A dispatch published in the Official Gazette by the Office for Infrastructure Development states that the maximum construction period permitted by the tender is 750 days.

"In order to intensify the sustainable urban development of Macau in terms of water supply, improve the water supply system and increase the storage capacity of the

fresh water resource, the Government of Macau [will proceed with] the expansion of the Ká Hó Reservoir," notes the Office in the dispatch.

Tenders for the project must be received by April 11.

Last month, Sociedade de Turismo e Desenvolvimento Insular S.A. (STDI), a Macau company headed by influential businesswoman Pansy Ho, agreed to concede five parcels of land to the government for its Ká Hó Reservoir extension project in eastern Coloane. According to a dispatch published at the time, the return of the land was necessary

to proceed with the expansion project for the Ká Hó Reservoir, but the firm would not receive compensation for relinquishing the five plots. It also stated that the arrangement entered into force immediately.

The expansion and improvement work at the Ká Hó Reservoir was outlined in the Macau SAR's Five-Year Development Plan, along with similar improvements to the facility at Seac Pai Van, which stated that the projects would increase the joint capacity of the reservoirs from about 300,000 cubic meters to 1.05 million. **DB**

Internet usage rate reaches 90.2 percent in 2018

THE number of Macau's households using the internet in 2018 increased by 6,600 year-on-year to 175,400, accounting for 90.2 percent of total households, the latest information from the Statistics and Census Service shows.

The data indicated that the number of households using fibre optic broadband connection continued to rise, up by 11.2 percent year-on-year to 117,500, accounting for two-thirds of total households using the internet.

Internet users aged three and above totaled 527,400, a rise of 2.7 percent year-on-year. The internet penetration rate for the population aged be-

tween 15 and 24 reached 98.1 percent, up by 1.3 percentage points year-on-year.

Internet use became increasingly prevalent among the population aged between 3 and 14, with the penetration rate rising by 5.2 percentage points to 69.1 percent, the report added.

Meanwhile, 63.7 percent of the population aged 55 and above used the internet, up by 3.1 percentage points. As regards frequency of using the internet, 91.7 percent of the internet users used it daily, a decrease of 2.8 percentage points.

As for the purpose of using, most of the users used it for communica-

tion (94.4 percent) and online entertainment (81.9 percent), with respective growth of 0.7 and 0.5 percentage points. The proportions of users searching for information (79.6 percent), and reading or downloading newspapers, magazines (46 percent) grew by 26.4 and 16.9 percentage points respectively.

The proportion of households having computer equipment fell by 2.2 percentage points year-on-year to 73.6 percent, equivalent to 143,000 households. The computer penetration rate for the population aged 3 and above decreased by 1.8 percentage points to 51 percent.

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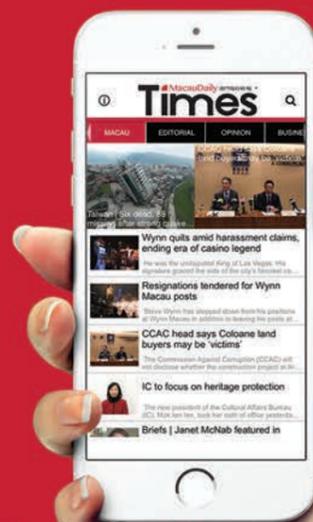
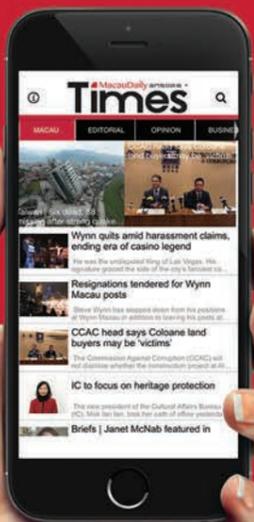
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News at hand



"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "



Renato Marques

EDUCATION

Macau among the worst places in the world for school bullying

MACAU was among the worst countries and regions of the world for school bullying, according to the last report of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which has been conducted every three years since 2000.

According to the last report issued in 2017, which reported findings from the PISA results of 2015, Macau ranked fourth among the worst performing countries and regions from a total of 53 that participated.

Macau's results in terms of the incidence of bullying in schools was 49 percent higher than the mean of the OECD countries.

The only countries that ranked worse than Macau were Singapore, New Zealand and Latvia.

On the opposite end of the list, the countries with the least incidence of bullying were South Korea, followed by Montenegro, Turkey and Taiwan, while Hong Kong registered a score 28 percentage points better than Macau.

Mainland China scored even better than the special administrative regions, with a score only 10 percent higher than the OECD mean and 39 percenta-

ge points better than Macau. It should be noted that in the PISA report, mainland China is only represented by Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Guangdong provinces.

The results can be considered even more worrying when analyzed in detail, with 27.3 percent of the students of Macau noting they were subjected to some form of bullying at least a few times a month. From these, almost 20 percent of the cases of bullying were reportedly of a psychological nature.

One of the aspects highlighted by the report was the relationship between the incidence of bullying and the socio-economic profiles of schools that were more likely to see children bullied.

Contrary to the prevailing worldwide trend, in Macau students of elite schools have a higher probability of being victims of bullying than those from public schools. Only Russia followed Macau in opposition to the world trend.

In the introduction to the report's chapter on bullying, the OECD notes that in this context, bullying is considered as a "systematic abuse of power that can be inflicted directly, through physical (hitting, punching or kicking) and verbal (name-calling or mocking) abuse," adding that it can also relate to a form of relational bullying, "a phenomenon of social exclusion, where some children are ignored, excluded from games or parties, rejected by peers, or are the victims of gossip and other forms of public humiliation and shaming." The same report also warned that as teenagers use electronic communications more and more, cyberbullying has become a new form of aggression expressed via online tools, particularly mobile phones. The phenomenon tends to occur more frequently during times of transition in childrens' and adolescents' lives, when they are figuring out where they fit in among new peer groups.



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Hong Kong's weak dollar is a victim of surging China stocks

BLOOMBERG



Tian Chen

THE rally in Chinese stocks has been bad news for the Hong Kong dollar.

Equity investors are selling the currency for the Chinese yuan and buying mainland shares through the stock trading connects, according to Ronald Man, a strategist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. That's keeping the Hong Kong dollar lower in the spot market, he said. The currency has been at the weak end of

its trading band for much of this month.

Net northbound fund flows climbed to around 130 billion yuan (USD19.4 billion) this year as of Monday, with sentiment helped by Beijing's looser monetary policy and an easing of trade tensions with the U.S. The market could be further supported by foreign inflows, as MSCI Inc. expands the weighting of mainland-listed shares in benchmark indexes tracked by global investors.

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority spent nearly \$1 billion defending the exchange-rate peg this month, as the Hong Kong dollar's wide interest-rate discount to the greenback makes shorting the city's currency lucrative. The latest intervention by the HKMA came Monday U.S. time.

"Positioning and risks suggest the depreciation in the Hong Kong dollar is more supported by equity investors via the stock connect than

before," Man said, adding the currency will hover near HKD7.85 per greenback - the weak end of its trading range - in the "foreseeable future."

The yuan has advanced 2.5 percent this year, Asia's second-best performer, and is near its strongest against the Hong Kong dollar since July. Funding long yuan trades with the city's currency is a better choice than using the greenback as it has lower borrowing costs, said Mingze Wu, a Singapore-based fo-

reign-exchange trader with Intl FCStone Global Payments.

The Hong Kong dollar was at HKD7.85 per greenback as of 5:45 p.m. Tuesday, while the one-month interbank rate on the currency was little changed at 1.5729 percent, the highest since Jan. 8. The yuan was little changed at 6.7132 per U.S. dollar and the Shanghai Composite Index slipped 0.2 percent after jumping 2.5 percent Monday, its biggest gain in three weeks. **Bloomberg**

HONG Kong's government plans to spend HKD624 billion (\$80 billion), equivalent to half its fiscal reserves, to reclaim land for artificial islands that'll help ease its housing crunch.

The price tag for the so-called Lantau Tomorrow Vision includes costs for reclamation, infrastructure and improving transportation, Michael Wong, secretary for development, said at a briefing Tuesday. More than a third, or HKD256 billion, will go toward building artificial islands spanning 1,000 hectares off Lantau Island.

"Since the proposal has been announced, there has been much concern in the community on whether building artificial islands and related infrastructure would drain government coffers and leave us broke," said Wong. "We have looked into it and our

HONG KONG

Administration to spend half of fiscal reserves building artificial islands

conclusion is that it won't."

The ambitious plan was first pitched by the city's Chief Executive Carrie Lam as part of her annual policy address last year, when she said the government would realize the vision within 20 to 30 years. Surrounded by water on three sides and mainland China on the other, Hong Kong faces a severe shortage of land supply that has pushed property prices to among the least affordable in the world.

The government would be able to finance the project because costs would

be spread out over a long period, Wong said. The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors estimates that the sale of commercial and residential land in the artificial islands could yield HKD970 billion to HKD1.14 trillion of revenue. The administration had HKD1.2 trillion in fiscal reserves at the end of January.

Hong Kong is stepping up its land reclamation efforts just as Macau is doubling down with its own artificial islands project.

Macau has been a world leader in land reclamation since at least the

early 20th century, presiding over a threefold increase in its total land area since 1912. But the last decade has seen an ambitious new leap, with work already underway on six new land zones and studies abound for an 85-square-kilometer sea jurisdiction expanded by the Central Government in 2015.

The six new land reclamation zones, officially known as A, B, C, D, E1 and E2, will reclaim a total area of five square kilometers from the Pearl River, bringing the total dry land jurisdiction to 35.5 square kilometers. **DB/Bloomberg**

Shenzhen customs retrieves problematic maps from overseas

CUSTOMS authorities in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province, have retrieved more than 260,000 problematic maps from the Netherlands.

Shenzhen Customs said Monday they have detained four suspects in connection to illegally exporting the problematic maps.

In September last year, customs authorities found more than 41,000 maps suspected of infringing China's sovereignty and territorial integrity during customs inspection. It later led to the discovery of a company based in Guangdong's Dongguan. The company planned to print 500,000 such maps. Authorities managed to stop

the printing of more than 190,000 maps, although more than 300,000 had been printed.

Of the 300,000 maps, more than 260,000 had been exported to Rotterdam, the Netherlands via Hong Kong.

Shenzhen customs retrieved the maps in January.

Chinese state media did not specify the infringement of sovereignty and territorial integrity detected in the exported maps.

Maps sold on the mainland show internationally-disputed jurisdictions as Chinese territory, including Taiwan and the Nine-Dash Line covering Beijing's territorial claims in the South China Sea. **DB/Xinhua**

Chinese analyst says Bay plan difficult to achieve

CHINESE economic analyst Su Yue, from the Economist Intelligence Unit, believes it will be very difficult for Chinese government officials to achieve the goals of the Outline of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) because the outline did not resolve the regulatory differences between Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China under the framework of the 'One country, Two systems' policy, according to a report by the BBC.

On the other hand, the People's Daily official overseas WeChat account revealed that Chinese political scientist Zheng Yongnian thinks that the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area can follow the high stan-

dards and good practices of the European Union (EU), and that the area can also avoid a lack of coordination.

When citing Zheng Yongnian, chairman of the academic committee of the Institute of Public Policy of the South China University of Technology, the report said that the EU is currently facing problems because there is no coordinating organization beyond the sovereign governments.

The Chinese political scientist also said that the GBA cities are all part of China, and since it has the central government coordinating among them, it has the advantages of the EU model while avoiding its flaws. **JZ**

TAIWAN COMMENTATOR

'GBA means disappearance of SARs' subjectivity'

TAIWAN independent commentator Ze-Yuan Chiu said that the introduction of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) entails the "disappearance of Hong Kong's and Macau's subjectivity," referring to the unique identities and autonomy the two Special Administrative Regions enjoy.

In his recent column, Chiu complimented the concept of the GBA for strengthening the economy in the Pearl River Delta.

Nevertheless, the Taiwanese commentator expressed his opinion regarding the potential loss of Hong Kong and Macau's subjectivity.

"This is undoubtedly an important milestone in China's regional economic integration process. Will the relevant political and ideological freedoms and universal suffrage rights of Hong Kong and Macau also be integrated into the melting pot that is Greater China?" Chiu questioned.

Chiu further depicted the GBA plan as a hidden metaphor for 'One country, Two systems.'

"One country, Two systems' actually



guarantees the subjectivity of Hong Kong and Macau. Nowadays, the concept of the GBA is to push Hong Kong and Macau from 'One country, Two systems' to 'One China'. There will be no Hong Kong SAR, but Hong Kong city under the Greater Bay Area. The subjectivity of Hong Kong will be lost," Chiu wrote.

"The subjectivity of Hong Kong's connection with the international

community will disappear. If, in the future, Hong Kong is under the GBA, will Hong Kong's links with the outside world disappear, becoming controlled by Guangdong Province?" Chiu questioned.

"If Hong Kong must be under the GBA decree system in the future, such financial squeeze and freedom will disappear. The Pearl of the Orient will be light and dusty." **JZ**

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AVIATION

Boeing 737 crisis imperils Norwegian's

Christopher Jasper & Irene García Pérez

NORWEGIAN Air Shuttle ASA's reliance on the fuel-saving Boeing Co. 737 Max to underpin its ultra low-cost trans-Atlantic strategy has exposed the loss-making carrier as the most vulnerable in Europe to the worldwide grounding of the plane.

Norwegian was among the earliest adopters of the new narrow-body, using its extra range to launch services on Europe-U.S. routes traditionally dominated by twin-aisle planes. But after the fatal crash in Ethiopia on March 10 put the Max out of action, the airline has had to scrap some flights and switch others to bigger aircraft, increasing costs and reducing competitiveness in an already cut-throat market.

The 737 crisis has hit Norwegian at a time when it can least afford disruption. The carrier is already grappling with a cash squeeze from splurging



BLOOMBERG

on planes and was forced to raise fresh funds in a rights issue this month. The move

came after British Airways parent IAG SA dropped a takeover approach, helping to send

the stock tumbling. The shares dropped as much as 4.8 percent yesterday, taking

losses to 46 percent since the start of the year.

The 737 grounding is costing Norwegian as much as 15 million kroner (USD1.8 million) a day, according to Ole Martin Westgaard at Oslo-based DNB bank. The carrier has said "it is obvious" that expenses should be reimbursed by Boeing, but the situation is unclear and the reduced market value of the Max could "significantly hurt" the company's sum-of-parts valuation, the analyst said.

The discount carrier has 18 Max jets, making it the biggest operator of the model in Europe ahead of German holiday company TUI AG, which has 15. Norwegian usually deploys them on services from Scotland and Ireland to the U.S., and between Norway and the U.K.

BUS TRIP

While it's now using older 737s on the latter routes, flights from Edinburgh to Stewart in upstate New York were terminated. Services from Dublin to Stewart and

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cut-price US routes

Providence, Rhode Island, were combined into a single flight to the New York town using a Boeing 787 sourced from Norwegian's London Gatwick wide-body hub. People going to Providence have to complete their journey by bus.

"Passengers will be taken care of," Bjorn Kjos, the carrier's co-founder and chief executive officer, said in a video message on its website. "We are combining flights, reallocating aircraft and booking customers to other departures. Only a small part of our operation is affected."

TUI is relying on other planes to cope with the Max grounding, which affects 10 percent of its 150-strong fleet, while leasing in one or two extra jets a day and more on weekends. It has also rerouted some flights, changed departure times and will postpone non-critical work, such as repainting, to maximize resources, a spokesman said.

SOFTWARE FIX

In the Middle East, FlyDubai, which has 13 Max planes representing 12 percent of total capacity, is canceling up to 15 flights a day. Customers are being given the option of re-booking with the airline, transferring to sister carrier Emirates, or receiving a refund.

The 737 Max was grounded around the world amid concern the African tragedy that killed 157 people on board was caused by the same combination of malfunctioning sensors and a computer system that took over the plane that was blamed for a Lion Air crash last October. Boeing has said it's finalizing software and pilot-training updates to address the issue, though the company's best-selling jet is expected to remain grounded at least through April.

Norwegian's use of the 737 Max and 787 allowed it to steal a march on bigger rivals by utilizing the impro-

ved efficiency of the new aircraft to offer trans-Atlantic fares they couldn't match. But problems with the planes have made the bet look like a bad one. The 787 fleet has already been affected by engine problems at Rolls-Royce Holdings Plc.

Norwegian said in October that the 787 engine issues had already cost it 1 billion kroner, including customer claims after airports struggled to cope with a rented A380 superjumbo.

Like other Northern Hemisphere airlines, the grounding has come during the low season for Norwegian, when part of the fleet typically stands idle, and could prove more disruptive once demand begins to climb toward summer. The carrier has already been slowing its capacity growth with the closing of four European bases and a slowdown in its long-haul expansion. The Edinburgh-Stewart route was earmarked to shut later in the year. **Bloomberg**

Xi says China-Italy pact offers closer ties in strategic sectors

John Follain

CHINESE President Xi Jinping, brushing aside U.S. and European concerns ahead of his visit to Rome (more on p11), offered Italy a "global strategic partnership" stretching from building the new Silk Road together to boosting ties in sensitive sectors including telecoms and ports.

Writing in daily Corriere della Sera, Xi invoked a "new era" in relations between China and Italy, where he'll arrive today. The Chinese leader and his populist hosts are set to sign a controversial memorandum of understanding giving Italy a role in Beijing's massive Belt and Road infrastructure project.

"We are ready, together with out Italian counterparts, to build Belt and Road together - the new Silk Road," Xi wrote. He urged stronger cooperation in telecommunications, developing Italian ports, shipping, aeronautics, aerospace and pharmaceuticals.

Italy will be the first Group of Seven country to sign a Belt and Road memorandum, fueling U.S. concerns about an open door for China into strategic sectors like telecoms and ports. European Union allies have also voiced disquiet about Italy's bilateral approach, seen as deviating from the group's policy of dealing with China as a bloc.

China is ready for closer ties "at the highest levels and to reinforce cooperation at all levels between our governments, parliaments, parties and local authorities," Xi wrote yesterday.

The Chinese leader also offered to "reinforce coordination" between China and Italy in international bodies from the United Nations to the G-20 and the World Trade Organization on issues from global governance to climate change.

The president also paid homage to the history, lifestyle and art heritage of "my dear Italian friends," recalling explorer Marco Polo who "set off the first passion for China." **Bloomberg**

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TRADE DISPUTE

High-level talks with US to resume next week

Christopher Rugaber, Washington

TOP U.S. trade and economic officials will visit China late next week for another round of negotiations, a White House official said yesterday [local time].

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer will lead the delegation, Trump administration officials said. The sources spoke on background because they weren't authorized to comment publicly.

The scheduled talks suggest the two sides believe they can make at least some progress. President Trump said last week at the White House that, "Talks with China are going very well."

But the negotiations are also taking place in late March, a period when administration officials had previously hoped to sign an agreement at Mar-a-Lago, the president's Florida resort. Business lobbyists say an agreement now probably won't be reached until late April.

"I would say perhaps the month of April," Larry Kudlow, the top White House economic adviser, said on C-Span Friday. "It's not in cement."



White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow (left) Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer

The trade dispute began last year after the U.S. listed a number of complaints, including that China engaged in outright theft

of U.S. trade secrets and forced companies to transfer technology in exchange for access to its market. Trump imposed tariffs

on USD250 billion of Chinese imports, about half what the United States buys from that country. China retaliated with

tariffs on about \$110 billion of U.S. items.

Administration officials say they speak with their Chinese counterparts on a nearly daily basis. Business lobbyists say that a key sticking point is what type of enforcement mechanism will be included in the agreement. The Trump administration, they say, wants to have the option to impose tariffs on Chinese goods if China doesn't abide by the terms of the pact. The U.S. also wants China to promise not to retaliate against those tariffs.

Still, business groups say the talks are making progress.

"We are cautiously optimistic that the two sides are going to get there," said Jeremie Waterman, president of the U.S. Chamber China Center. "They're clearly whittling the number of outstanding issues down."

A report released Friday estimated that the trade war will likely damage the U.S. economy. Analysts at the Rhodium Group, in conjunction with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, estimated that the tariffs, if they remained in place, could cost the United States a cumulative \$1 trillion in economic output over the next decade.

Even if the tariffs are soon lifted, the report estimates that they will shave \$50 billion, or 0.3 percent, off this year's economic output.

The duties would also not bring back production of information technology hardware to the United States, the report found. **AP**

BUY-BUST

Philippines seizes drugs in upscale area, arrests 4 Chinese

Jim Gomez, Manila

PHILIPPINE authorities said yesterday that they have seized methamphetamine concealed in tea wrappers and biscuit cans in their second-largest drug haul this year in a sign of how the problem has persisted despite the president's bloody anti-drug crackdown.

Three Chinese nationals and a Chinese-Filipino interpreter were arrested late Tuesday in "buy-bust" raids in an upscale residential enclave and outside a shopping mall in Alabang village in the Manila metropolis, said Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency chief Aaron Aquino.

The drugs, with a street value of USD20.7 million, were concealed similarly to seizures in Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar, indicating an international drug syndicate was behind

the trafficking, Aquino said.

Last month, anti-narcotics agents raided a house in Tanza town in Cavite province south of Manila, killing two suspected Chinese drug dealers in a gunbattle and seizing \$36 million worth of methamphetamine, a powerful stimulant locally known as shabu, Aquino said.

Aquino has called for the return of the death penalty in the Philippines for drug traffickers, better security along the archipelago's extensive coastlines and more extensive databases of foreign drug suspects for the immigration bureau to deter drug trafficking. Corruption also fosters the drug menace, he said.

"There are those who have been detained for drug offenses, for example, in China but they could still enter our country. We have arrested many of

those identified foreign offenders here," Aquino told The Associated Press by telephone.

"The Chinese will never stop putting up drug laboratories because, firstly, there is no death penalty, and secondly, they can buy anybody," Aquino said. "They can buy judges, they

■ The drugs, with a street value of USD20.7 million, were concealed similarly to seizures in Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar

can buy prosecutors and eventually they can go home safely."

Aquino has also sought legislation to make it easier to criminally charge owners of plush residences, condominium units and buildings, where he said drug traffickers have shifted their bases from more public areas and rural warehouses that have been raided by law enforcers. Tuesday's drug raid targeted a house that the Chinese suspects rented in posh part of Alabang village where prominent lawmakers, politicians and business executives live under tighter security.

President Rodrigo Duterte has elevated drugs to a national security concern and launched a crackdown that has killed more than 5,000 mostly poor drug suspects in reported clashes with the police since he took office in mid-2016.



The killings have alarmed Western governments, U.N. human rights experts and rights groups and sparked two complaints for crimes against humanity, which are being examined by the International Criminal Court.

Duterte's move to withdraw the Philippines from the tribunal supposedly took effect on Sunday, but its prosecutor said she would continue examining the complaints.

Duterte has denied condoning extrajudicial killings but has openly threatened drug traffi-

ckers with death. Last week, he drew fresh criticisms when he publicly named 46 government officials, including three congressmen, he alleged were involved in illegal drugs but have not been criminally charged.

Critics have warned him against making such public announcements without solid evidence but Duterte said he trusted the government agencies that provided the information. Several of the politicians he named denied they were involved in the drug trade. **AP**

Nicole Winfield, Vatican City

Vatican makes overtures on eve of Italy visit by Xi

THE Vatican is greeting the visit to Italy of Chinese President Xi Jinping later this week with a new round of overtures and says the "door is always open" to dialogue.

Italian media have been speculating for days about the possibility of a meeting between Xi and Pope Francis during Xi's four-day visit starting today. But there has been no word from either side. China and the Holy See haven't had diplomatic relations for more than a half-century.

When asked Tuesday about Xi's visit to Italy, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's secretary of state, said: "Our door is always open." But he noted that both sides would have to express a willingness to meet.

At a briefing yesterday, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Chao said the sides were working on improving relations based on "constructive dialogue" and "building mutual trust."

Wang gave no word about any meetings between Xi and the pope or any new agreements to be signed.

The Vatican has been working across a variety of fronts to build on relations stemming from the historic provisional agreement reached in September between Beijing and the Holy See over

AP PHOTO



bishop nominations.

China's estimated 12 million Catholics are split between those belonging to the government-backed Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, which is outside the pope's authority, and an underground church loyal to the pope. Underground priests and pa-

rishioners are frequently detained and harassed.

The September deal was aimed at uniting the flock, regularizing the status of seven bishops who weren't recognized by Rome and thawing decades of estrangement between China and the Vatican.

But it has led to deep reserva-

tions of some of China's underground faithful, for whom the deal represents a sell-out to the Communist government and betrayal of their decades of loyalty to the pope.

In a preface to a new book on Vatican-China relations — the publication of which was timed to

coincide with Xi's visit — Parolin stressed that it's time to "remember the past and write together a new page for the future of the church in China."

"The Catholic Church in China is not a 'foreigner' but an integral and active part of Chinese history and can contribute to the edification of a society that is more harmonious and respectful of all," he wrote.

"Today, the hope of Pope Francis is that, after so many difficulties, misunderstandings, and sufferings, the Catholic Community, too, can intone in the Middle Kingdom, through sincere dialogue, a hymn of faith and thanksgiving, enriched by authentically Chinese notes," he wrote.

The book was just the latest initiative by the Vatican-affiliated Jesuit magazine, La Civiltà Cattolica, to lay the intellectual and cultural foundations for improved Vatican-China ties.

As part of that effort, the magazine recently teamed up with the Jesuit-run Georgetown University in Washington to launch an ongoing series of talks, the "China Forum for Civilizational Dialogue."

The issue of bishop nominations had been the main stumbling block to restoring diplomatic relations that were severed nearly seven decades ago when the Chinese communists came to power. **AP**

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

FMCC Breakfast Meeting

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KAZAKHSTAN

Leader hands over presidency, puts daughter in contention

Nariman Gizitdinov

KAZAKHSTAN began a new political era, at least formally, as Kassym-Jomart Tokayev was sworn in as president yesterday, succeeding leader-for-life Nursultan Nazarbayev. One of his first acts was to move Nazarbayev's daughter into contention as a successor.

The Kazakh Senate unanimously elected Dariga Nazarbayeva as the body's new chairwoman, putting her formally in the line of succession to the presidency under the constitution. Tokayev, who was Senate chairman before Nazarbayev announced his resignation on Tuesday, nominated her, the Interfax news service reported.

The move adds intrigue to a presidential handover that signaled the start of a long-forecast transfer of power in central Asia's largest energy producer. Nazarbayev, 78, has ruled Kazakhstan since 1989 and remains head of the Kazakh security council with

authority to issue executive orders to state bodies. Lawmakers voted in 2010 also to make Nazarbayev leader for life of the nation that's sandwiched between Russia and China.

"Tokayev will be a transitional constitutional successor" and Nazarbayev may opt for a different figure including from his own family at the next elections, said George Voloshin, a Paris-based analyst for Aperio Intelligence Ltd. "The real question is: who will succeed Tokayev as president before or in 2020?"

The eldest of Nazarbayev's three daughters, Nazarbayeva, 55, has often been mentioned as a potential successor, though he has previously ruled out handing power to family members. Another daughter Dinara controls Halyk Bank, the nation's biggest lender, with her husband, Timur Kulibayev.

Elections are scheduled for 2020. Tokayev, 65, said he intends to continue Nazarbayev's policies as the second Kazakh



president since independence in 1991.

CURRENCY DEMAND

While the central bank said it saw no reason for the tenge to decline, demand for dollars in the morning trading session in Almaty, the financial capital, jumped about five-fold compared to the average volume so far this year. The currency was down 0.5 percent to 378.41 against the dollar as at 3:40 p.m. in Astana.

Tokayev is a former prime minister and career diplomat who speaks English, Russian and

Chinese. With Russia and China watching developments closely, he faces a key task in balancing relations with Kazakhstan's giant neighbors.

"We hope for continuity" in Kazakh policies, Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday. Nazarbayev has China's understanding and Beijing is fully confident in bilateral cooperation, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a briefing.

RENAME CAPITAL

In his inauguration speech, Tokayev proposed renaming the

Kazakh capital, Astana, as Nursultan, and said the central street of every regional city should be called after Nazarbayev. Portraits of the region's last Soviet-era ruler will continue to hang in schools and other public buildings, he said, adding that Nazarbayev "remains the only and lifelong father of the people."

"Nazarbayev has stepped down, of course, but he's not going very far," said Konstantin Kostin, a political analyst in Moscow.

Nazarbayev wants to become a Kazakh version of Singapore's late founding leader Lee Kuan Yew, Alexander Gabuev, senior fellow at the Moscow Carnegie Center, wrote on Twitter. Tokayev is among his most trusted allies and "unlikely to pose a challenge to Nazarbayev's grip on real power in the future," he said.

Tokayev's first challenges include reviving central Asia's largest economy after Nazarbayev last month replaced the government and demanded trillions of tenge in extra spending to boost living standards. Kazakhstan has spent at least USD18 billion on bailouts since 2009 to keep its ailing banking system afloat, though the money did little to boost lending to the real sector. Nazarbayev complained last month that living costs for Kazakh families were rising while earnings were "flatlining." **Bloomberg**

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Taliban kill 6 paramilitary troops in southwestern Pakistan

PAKISTANI authorities say militants overran a remote security outpost in southwestern Baluchistan province, killing six members of the paramilitary forces.

The Pakistani Taliban — known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan — claimed responsibility for the attack in Ziarat district early yesterday morning, saying in an Urdu-language statement that it was revenge for the deaths earlier of their comrades at the hands of the paramilitary Baluchistan Levies Force.

Qadir Baksh Pirkani, Ziarat district deputy commissioner, said the assault began in the early morning hours and that an investigation into the killing is underway.

Several insurgent groups operate in Baluchistan, including the Pakistani Taliban, a secessionist Baluchistan group and members of an Islamic State affiliate, which is based across the border in Afghanistan. **AP**

LGBT

Japan urged to stop requiring surgery for ID gender change

Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo

RIGHTS Watch urged Japan yesterday to drop its requirement that transgender people be sterilized before their gender is changed on official documents.

A 2004 law states that people wishing to register a gender change must have their original reproductive organs removed and have a body that “appears to have parts that resemble the genital organs” of the gender they want to register. The Supreme Court in January rejected an appeal by a transgender man who wanted legal recognition without undergoing surgery, though the court acknowledged that the practice restricts freedom and could become out of step with changing social values.

Human Rights Watch said the compulsory sterilization requirement is abusive and outdated. In a report, the international

rights group said requiring invasive and irreversible medical procedures violates the rights of transgender people who want their gender identity legally recognized.

“Japan’s government needs urgently to address and fundamentally revise the legal recognition process that remains anchored to a diagnostic framework that fails to meet international standards,” the report said. It said the law, which still defines gender incongruence as a “disorder,” is out of step with international medical standards.

The group based its report on interviews with 48 transgender people and legal, medical and other experts in Japan. It said the country has fallen behind globally in recognizing transgender people’s rights and still enforces “outdated, discriminatory and coercive policies.”

Japanese society has a growing awareness of sexual diversity but it is often superficial. Pressure for conformity forces many



LGBT people to hide their sexual identity even from their families, and transgender people often have high obstacles to living outside traditional gender roles.

Fumino Sugiyama, a transgender man who has had a mastectomy but still has ovaries, said in a video released with the report that he is still female on official documents including his passport, and he and his girlfriend cannot register as a married couple. Japan does not recognize same-sex marriage. Even though his partner had a baby after receiving artificial insemination and they live as a family, “she is

legally a single mother and I’m just a roommate, Sugiyama said.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his conservative supporters have campaigned to restore a paternalistic society based on heterosexual marriage.

Lawmakers in the ruling party have repeatedly been criticized for discriminatory remarks about LGBT people. One said earlier this year that “a nation would collapse” if everyone became LGBT, and another said last year that the government shouldn’t use tax money for LGBT rights as those couples aren’t “productive.” **AP**



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EU fines Google USD1.7 billion for abusing online ads market

Kelvin Chan & Raf Casert, Brussels

EUROPEAN Union regulators have fined Google USD1.7 billion for abusing its dominant role in online advertising, the third big antitrust penalty they've given the internet giant since 2017.

The latest punishment means the commission has now issued Google with almost \$10 billion in fines from probes into various parts of the Silicon Valley tech company's business.

In the latest ruling, Google and parent company Alphabet were found to have breached EU rules by imposing restrictive clauses in contracts with websites that used its AdSense advertising business. That prevented Google rivals from placing their ads on these sites, the EU's competition commissioner, Margrethe Vestager, said yesterday.

"Google abused its dominance to stop websites using brokers other than the AdSense platform," Vestager told a news conference as she outlined the results of the



long-running probe.

The AdSense For Search service — known simply as AdSense — lets Google act as a middleman between advertisers and website owners who want to make money by selling space for ads. AdSense allows web publishers such as newspapers and bloggers to place text ads on their websites, with the content of the ads based on results from search functions on their sites.

The commission said Google has 70 percent of the European market for "online search advertising intermediation."

Microsoft filed a complaint with the EU in 2009 about Google's service and the commission formally launched its probe in 2016, although it said at the time that Google had already made some changes to give customers more freedom to show competing ads.

Google "prevented its rivals from having a chance to innovate and to compete in the market on their merits," Vestager said. "Advertisers and website owners, they had less choice and likely faced higher prices that would be passed on to consumers."

Last year, Vestager hit the company with a record \$5 billion at the time fine following an investigation into its Android operating

Google abused its dominance to stop websites using brokers other than the AdSense platform.

MARGRETHE VESTAGER
EU'S COMPETITION COMMISSIONER

system. In 2017, she slapped Google with a \$2.7 billion at the time fine in a case involving its online shopping search results.

Google's case highlights how the EU has led the way in promoting tougher regulation for the big tech companies. Besides cracking down on antitrust breaches by multinationals like Microsoft and Intel, the EU has enforced tougher data privacy rules that affect Facebook and other social media companies.

Google's senior vice president of global affairs, Kent Walker, said the company agrees that "healthy, thriving markets are in everyone's interest."

"We've already made a wide range of changes to our products to address the commission's concerns. Over the next few months, we'll be making further updates to give more visibility to rivals in Europe," Walker said in a statement.

Google, which is appealing both of the earlier cases, said ahead of yesterday's announcement that it has put in place remedies required by the commission. The company said in a blog post that it was making some tweaks to its shopping results. It will also start asking European users of new and existing Android phones if they want to use another search service or mobile browser. **AP**

AD

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UK's May asks EU to delay Brexit until June 30



Jill Lawless & Danica Kirka

PRIME Minister Theresa May formally asked the European Union on yesterday to postpone Britain's departure from the bloc — due in nine days — until June 30. But a frustrated EU has warned it could keep Britain waiting for an answer.

In a letter to European Council President Donald Tusk, May said the Brexit process “clearly will not be completed before 29 March, 2019” — the date fixed in law two years ago for Britain's departure.

She asked for a delay until June 30, and said she wanted to set out her reasons to EU leaders at a summit in Brussels today.

Opposition politicians, and pro-EU members of May's Conservative government, had urged a longer extension, saying a delay of just a few months could leave Britain once again facing a cliff-edge “no-deal” Brexit this summer.

But a long extension would in-

fringe the pro-Brexit wing of May's divided party, and would require Britain to participate in the late May election for the European Parliament.

May said that would be unacceptable.

“As prime minister I am not prepared to delay Brexit any further than June 30,” she said in the House of Commons.

She said a longer delay would result in Parliament spending “endless hours contemplating its navel on Brexit.”

Britain voted in June 2016 to quit the EU, but almost three years later, its politicians are deadlocked over how — and even whether — to leave.

British lawmakers have twice rejected the Brexit deal May has struck with the bloc. Her troubles deepened when the speaker of the House of Commons ruled earlier this week that she can't ask Parliament to vote on the deal again unless it is substantially changed.

That scuttled May's plan to try a

third time this week to get the agreement approved.

May told Tusk that despite the ruling “it remains my intention to bring the deal back to the House.”

If it is approved, she plans to use the extension until June 30 in order for Parliament to pass the necessary legislation for Britain's departure.

“Today marks 1,000 days since the referendum and this government has led the country and themselves into crisis, chaos and division,” said opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn.

A delay to Britain's withdrawal requires the approval of all 27 remaining EU countries. The head of the bloc's executive branch said EU leaders are unlikely to agree to a delay at a summit this week.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said if May wanted a delay, “she must bring approval of the negotiated deal and she must bring clear ideas on timing.”

“My impression is [...] that this

week at the European Council there will be no decision, but that we will probably have to meet again next week, because Mrs. May doesn't have agreement to anything, either in her Cabinet or in Parliament,” Juncker told Germany's Deutschlandfunk radio.

“As long as we don't know what Britain could say yes to, we can't reach a decision.”

Britain's political chaos has drawn reactions ranging from sympathy to scorn at home and around the world. On its front page, the Brexit-backing Daily Mail newspaper bemoaned the time since the referendum as “1,000 lost days.”

From Washington, Donald Trump Jr. said May should have listened to his father, who urged her last year to sue the EU in order to secure better departure terms. The U.S. president has criticized May for not taking his advice.

The president's multimillionaire son blamed “elites” in London and Brussels for scuttling Brexit.

Writing in the Daily Telegraph, Trump Jr. said “democracy in the U.K. is all but dead.”

The gridlock is also causing increasing exasperation among EU leaders.

Juncker said that “in all probability” Britain won't leave on March 29, but he underlined the EU's insistence that it will not reopen the painstakingly negotiated withdrawal agreement that British lawmakers have snubbed.

“There will be no renegotiations, no new negotiations and no additional assurances on top of the additional assurances we have already given,” he said.

Juncker said Britain's Parliament needed to decide whether it would approve the deal that is on the table.

“If that doesn't happen, and if Great Britain does not leave at the end of March, then we are, I am sorry to say, in the hands of God,” he said. “And I think even God sometimes reaches a limit to his patience.” **AP**

IMMIGRATION

Asylum seekers waiting in Mexico seek to stay in US

Elliot Spagat, San Diego

SEVERAL asylum seekers who are being forced to wait in Mexico while their cases wind through U.S. immigration court told a judge yesterday [local time] that they are afraid to return to Mexico as they await their next hearing — a development that introduces a new wrinkle to a major U.S. policy shift.

The seven cases being

heard in a downtown San Diego courtroom are among the first to advance under the Trump administration policy that calls for people seeking asylum in the U.S. to be held in Mexico.

The initial appearances came three days before a federal judge in San Francisco is set to hear arguments by advocacy groups to halt the policy.

Attorney Robyn Barnard asked for access — at least

by telephone — to any interviews conducted with her Honduran client with U.S. officials about whether his fears of returning to Mexico are well-founded.

Jason Aguilar, an attorney for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, didn't object but deferred the request to other agencies within the Department of Homeland Security.

Customs and Border Pro-

tection said it wouldn't comment due to pending litigation, and Citizenship and Immigration Services had no immediate comment.

The developments raised more questions about the administration's new approach to handling the claims of people who say they fear returning to their homelands because of danger related to race, religion, political beliefs, nationality or membership

in particular social groups.

The administration hopes that making asylum seekers wait in Mexico will discourage weak claims and help reduce an immigration court backlog of more than 800,000 cases. Currently, families are typically released in the U.S. with notices to appear in court and can stay until their cases are resolved, which can take years.

Critics say asylum seekers are forced to wait in unsa-

fe environments and will struggle to find legal advice while in Mexico. Tijuana had more than 2,500 homicides last year.

The policy shift was introduced as families from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador arrive at the U.S. border to seek asylum.

Five of the seven people who were scheduled to appear were represented by attorneys. Six were Honduran; one was Guatemalan. **AP**

what's ON



JABBAWOCKEEZ – TRUE TO YOURSELF
 TIME: 8pm (Wednesdays to Fridays)
 6pm & 8pm (Saturdays)
 4pm & 6pm (Sundays; no performance on Mondays and Tuesdays)
 UNTIL: March 31, 2019
 VENUE: MGM Theatre
 ADMISSION: MOP388, MOP488, MOP588, MOP988
 ENQUIRES: (853) 8802 3833 / 2855 5555 (ticketing)

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

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
 ENQUIRY: (853) 2852 2550

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

Offbeat

WORKS BY JAY-Z, LAUPER, RFK BEING ADDED TO RECORDING REGISTRY



Songs performed by Jay-Z, Cyndi Lauper and a Robert F. Kennedy speech are among 25 recordings being inducted to the National Recording Registry. The Library of Congress announced yesterday that "La Bamba," "Gunsmoke" and "Hair" are some of the titles tapped for preservation this year. The national library chose a few more memorable titles including Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline," Earth, Wind & Fire's "September" and Sam & Dave's "Soul Man." The registry is adding Kennedy's recorded speech after Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1968 assassination – two months before Kennedy was killed. Curtis Mayfield's "Superfly," Lauper's "She's So Unusual" and Jay-Z's "Blueprint" album are being added. Other songs being added include Nina Simon's "Mississippi Goddam," Sylvester's "You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)" and "Schoolhouse Rock!" The library selects titles for preservation because of their cultural and historic importance to the American soundscape.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Água de Mar
15:50	Zig Zag
16:20	Conversa da Treta
16:45	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
17:35	Moda Portugal Sr.3
18:10	Ministério do Tempo
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
22:00	Justiça de Chicago Sr.1
22:40	Todas as Palavras
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Arquivos do Entendimento - Os Contrastes 'Poder Repartido'
00:15	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:05	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

21 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



1984 EEC SUMMIT COLLAPSES OVER REBATE ROW

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has come under attack for the breakdown of negotiations at the European Economic Community common market summit in Brussels.

Mrs Thatcher returned to Downing Street in the early hours of this morning after the collapse of talks regarding the rebate to Britain from Europe. It is understood Mrs Thatcher asked for an annual rebate of £730m but was offered £580m, which she refused.

The rebate makes-up any shortfall between money the UK invests in Europe and how much is eventually returned.

Mrs Thatcher described the situation as "frustrating" after the members had come so close to a settlement but run out of time.

As it ended in failure, French and Italian authorities announced they would consider blocking Britain's £450m rebate from last year.

Mrs Thatcher said she would then consider withholding Britain's payments to Europe until the rebate was settled.

The matter will be discussed by the Cabinet tomorrow but in the House of Commons this afternoon Mrs Thatcher made clear she did not intend to back down describing the actions of the European Community as "reprehensible".

"It is almost intolerable that one should be expected to send a supplementary levy in the face of what has happened," she said.

But her European counterparts placed the blame on Mrs Thatcher and stated her actions had left the community in disarray.

Greek leader Andreas Papandreu said, "It would be a great relief if Britain left the EEC".

And Italian premiere Bettino Craxi said: "The British government bears the entire responsibility for this failure."

The row brings into question the future of the EEC and what action the other nine member states should take.

EEC President Gaston Thorn said it was imperative an agreement was reached.

"We have so many challenges to face and the community is getting more and more shaky. We cannot go from one failure to another."

The discussion on rebates has been raging for some time since Edward Heath's government did not decide on a payment plan when it negotiated Britain's entry to the community 12 years ago.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The row had been rumbling for five years with Mrs Thatcher demanding money be returned to Britain. But other member states said contributions were like taxes - nobody could claim back what they put in. Mrs Thatcher said unless a rebate was given she would veto any further expansion of spending. The rebate made up the shortfall between what the UK paid into Europe and what it got back. But Britain often got less back than other states because of its relatively small farming industry and the fact so much spending was on farm subsidies. In June 1984 at the Fontainebleau European Council an agreement was reached to reduce the UK's budgetary agreement. Under the deal, for every £1.50 per capita the UK poured into Europe it got £1 back. In 2005 Britain was forced to agree to give up part of the rebate to help pay for enlargement of the EU. The deal also included a commitment to review farm spending in 2008.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You can have a great day if you don't think about anything except what's in front of you, and be sure to do it well.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21

Be careful what you say, unless you can what you afford to put your money where your mouth is.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You're certainly not at one of life's pinnacles. That leaves you plenty of room to move forward.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22

Just how much longer will this dry spell last? You don't have any ready answers, not that anyone is looking to you for them anyway.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You used to think hoping for good luck was a waste of time, but these days, what do you have to lose?

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You don't have any energy to waste on power struggles. The real struggle is so important you can't afford even the slightest distraction from it.

Taurus April 20-May 20

Attachments are more important than ever. You need security in life, and you're not getting the financial variety, at least not at the moment.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Life just gets bigger and better, even if you can't see the same sparkle you once could.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22

So how does it feel to be the underdog? It's a rank you don't want to brag about, that's for sure.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Your biggest challenge is accepting the status quo. But conditions won't be changing anytime soon, so don't even bother asking.

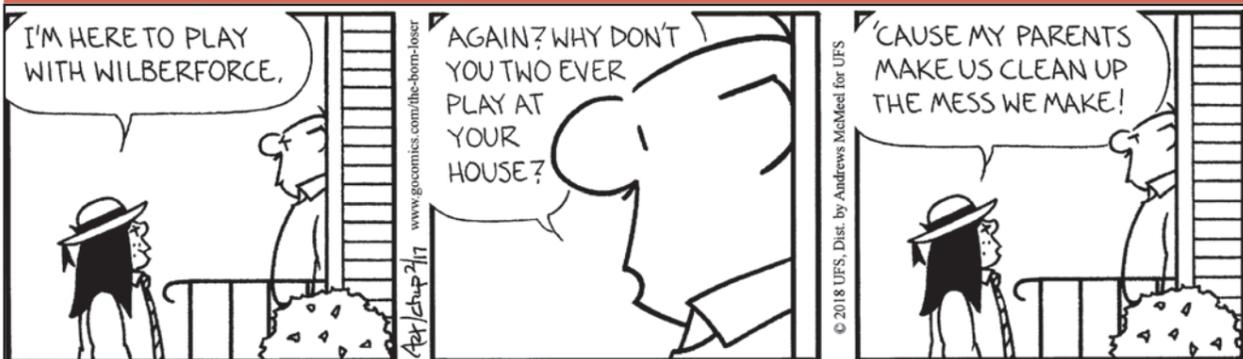
Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19

This isn't the old days. Don't be talked into sharing if you don't have enough for you and yours.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20

It's easy to slip into a fantasy world when the real one starts to feel overwhelming, but daydreams won't put bread on the table.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

8x8 Sudoku grid for Easy level.

Easy+

8x8 Sudoku grid for Easy+ level.

Medium

8x8 Sudoku grid for Medium level.

Hard

8x8 Sudoku grid for Hard level.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table for China and World cities, including min/max temperatures and conditions.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Pealed; 5- Half of a 45; 10- Grating sound; 14- Conception; 15- Customary; 16- So that's it; 17- Litigant; 18- Japanese porcelain; 19- Distort; 20- 'Show Boat' composer; 21- Sugar candy with gel interior; 23- Flightless fowl; 25- Paulo, Brazil; 26- State in SE Australia; 31- Capital of Vietnam; 35- Go astray; 36- Capital of Belarus; 38- Critical evaluations; 40- Q.E.D. part; 42- Glossy fabric; 44- Facilitate; 45- Adjust to zero; 47- Forest makeup; 49- 'Today' rival, briefly; 50- Kofi Annan's home; 52- Supervisor; 54- Last: Abbr.; 56- Dwarf with glasses; 57- Excitable; 62- Blind as ___; 66- Belgian river; 67- Garden figure; 68- Numerous; 69- ...baked in ___; 70- Frasier's brother; 71- Type of school or cook; 72- Beginner; 73- Surgery souvenirs; 74- Word of division;

DOWN: 1- Hazard; 2- Together, musically; 3- Not e'en once; 4- January birthstone; 5- Capable of managing one's affairs; 6- Woe ___; 7- Twofold; 8- Viscounts' superiors; 9- Immigration of Jews to Israel; 10- Greet the judge; 11- ___ silly question...; 12- Espied; 13- Church perch; 22- Fishing vessel, perhaps; 24- Popular tattoo; 26- Go off course; 27- Like some vbs.; 28- Collide; 29- ___ the finish; 30- The Jetsons' dog; 32- Bridal bio word; 33- Inedible orange; 34- 'Who's there?' response; 37- Ukraine's capital; 39- Cauterize; 41- It's in the bag; 43- Unnecessary; 46- Hardware fastener; 48- Theater sign; 51- Straights; 53- Shrimp dish; 55- Quinine water; 57- See; 58- Rabin's predecessor; 59- Creme-filled snack; 60- Vincent Lopez's theme song; 61- From the U.S.; 63- Building for storing hay; 64- Work without ___; 65- Word processing error; 66- China's Sun ___-sen;

Yesterday's solution crossword grid with filled-in words.

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers.

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
IACM 28 387 333
Tourism 28 333 000
Airport 59 888 88



AD

Real estate advertisement for JML Property, listing various properties for sale and rent in Macau, including Pacifica, Nova City, Lake View Tower, and Ocean Garden.

Rugby Academy

Bats ups and downs at Hong Kong Festival

Donald Shaw, Hong Kong
Special to MDT

MACAU Bats played their final Hong Kong festival last weekend. Hosted by the Hong Kong Football Club at Happy Valley, the Bats were keen to bounce back from a slightly off-key group of games at their last festival.

First up were the U6s, winning their first two games, 4-2 against Sandy Bay and 5-2 over the Football Club. This was followed by a high-scoring 5-5 draw against Sai Kung Stingrays and a tight 5-4 win over Tuen Mun Sharks to finish the day unbeaten.

The U7s started with a 2-2 draw against Sandy Bay followed by two defeats against Stingrays (1-2) and Football Club (0-3) before turning in their strongest performance with a 3-1 win over Shatin Sha Pei.

The U8s scored a remarkable 32 tries in their four matches, winning 6-4 against South Lantau Buffalos and 9-5 over Tin Shiu Wai Eagles before two high scoring draws with Football Club (7-7) and USRC Tigers (10-10).

The U9s recorded a resounding 7-0 win over USRC Tigers in the first division before losing 3-4 in an entertaining game with Valley Fort. The team had been working on their tackling technique and it was clearly paying dividends. Although the Bats lost their final two matches against a very strong Sandy Bay (2-7) and Football Club (1-6), the team played very well and both games were closer than the final shorelines suggest.

The U10s were also playing in the top division for their age group and put in a good performance against Football Club before going down 2-4. Their second game was against Singapore Rugby Club who quickly ran into a 1-3 lead. However, the Bats showed great determination and a lot of skill to comeback and win the game 4-3. Next up was a tough game against familiar foes, Sai Kung Stingrays. Despite some good tackling and cover defence the Bats lost 0-3 to a very good Stingrays team.

The final game against USRC Tigers saw Macau prevent their opponents from scoring during the first half and then run in some excellent tries to finish up winners by 5-0.

The main competition of the day was the Richard Hawkes Cup for the U12s. Macau had been seeded ninth and drawn against three 1st division teams in their group. This made the first game against fellow 2nd division Valley Fort particularly important and the Bats duly chalked up an impressive 2-1 win.

There followed three matches against top tier opponents and although the Bats lost all, they were tight, competitive games - USC Tigers (1-2), Sai Kung Stingrays (0-1) and Sandy Bay (0-3). This put the Bats in the Plate semi-final against Discover Bay Pirates, another fine performance saw the Bats remain in the game until the last moments when the Pirates scored two late tries to win 2-5. Some small consolation would be gained from the fact that the Pirates went on to win the Plate.

Next up for the Bats is hosting a U13 7s competition at TIS on Saturday and competing in the U16s HK 7s on Sunday. The Bats will host their main rugby festival on the 13th April at the TIS field.



MOTORSPORTS

Danica Patrick to join NBC's Indy 500 team

Jenna Fryer, Charlotte

DANICA Patrick will join NBC Sports' inaugural coverage of the Indianapolis 500 as an analyst alongside host Mike Tirico.

Patrick retired from racing after last year's Indianapolis 500. Her eighth appearance in "The Great American Race" prepped her for a return as a television personality.

She told The Associated Press racing at Indy last year after an eight-year run in NASCAR refreshed her knowledge bank and gives her plenty to discuss. Patrick will be a studio analyst on race day and contribute to NBC Sports' pre-race, in-race and post-race coverage. She will also be part of the broadcast team for qualifying on May 19 and will promote the race across NBCUniversal platforms.

"This is an event that means so much to me," she said in a telephone interview ahead of yesterday's announcement. "I am so glad I did the 500 last year because my information is much more current and relevant. I think it's going to be quite a bit of work — I've always thought being part of the broadcast team is a different kind of work — there's a lot of preparation there."

Her homework began in earnest with the IndyCar season opener in St. Petersburg, Florida, two weeks ago when Patrick tuned in to watch the race.

"I thought, 'Oh my God, I've got to know all the names.' I've got to know who's the guy who has momentum and who doesn't," she said. "I need to respect the event and the position that I'm in. It's so important for me to be

AP PHOTO



up to date on everything."

NBC Sports this season snagged the entire IndyCar broadcast package and with it the crown jewel Indy 500, which had been aired exclusively by ABC since 1965 in the second-longest-running partnership of its kind.

NBC has made the race part of its "Championship Season" marketing campaign that features high-profile events from May to July that include horse racing's Triple Crown, Premier League Championship Sunday,

the French Open, the Stanley Cup Final and the Tour de France.

In treating the race as a prized property, NBC Sports is building a strong team for its debut broadcast that is expected to include in some role star NASCAR analysts Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Steve Letarte.

Patrick is the surprise addition. It will mark her return to a race track for the first time since she crashed and finished 30th last May. Patrick has previous analyst experience from three

Xfinity Series races with Fox Sports, and last July she was the first woman to host the ESPYs.

"Danica has a perspective unlike any other driver in the history of motorsports and will be a great addition to our first-ever coverage of the Indy 500," said NBCSN executive producer Sam Flood. "She has proven to be as fearless with her opinions and analysis as she was in breaking barriers while racing in the most competitive motorsports circuits in the world."

On the track, Patrick is the only

woman to lead laps in the Indy 500 and win an IndyCar Series race. Her third-place finish at Indy in 2009 is the highest for a woman. She moved to NASCAR and was the first woman to win the pole for the Daytona 500, and she concluded her career last year with the "Danica Double" of racing in one final Daytona 500 and Indy 500.

Besides the ESPYs, Patrick has had a lower profile since her final race and has focused much of her time on personal travel and her line of wine. **AP**

SUPER RUGBY

Reports suggest Sunwolves out after this season



Sione Teupa of Sunwolves is tackled by Duncan Paiaaua of Reds during their Super Rugby match in Tokyo, last Saturday

SUPER Rugby's governing body plans to issue a statement on Friday over the future of the 15-team competition with speculation that the Tokyo-based Sunwolves will be cut after just three years in the tournament.

Australian media yesterday reported the decision had already been made, with suggestions that the competition will become a 14-team, single division tournament. Currently there are three five-team conferences, forcing at least one team to have a bye each weekend.

"SANZAAR and its stakeholders will not be making any comment on Super Rugby until the statement has been released," SANZAAR said in a brief statement.

The Sunwolves have won only seven of their 43 matches since joining the competition in 2016.

The Australian newspaper, citing a Sunwolves spokesperson, said the team had objected to a request from SANZAAR to pay a Super Rugby participation fee, which is not asked of any of the other franchises.

The Sunwolves, fourth in

the five-team Australian conference after losing four of their five games this season, joined Super Rugby along with South Africa's Southern Kings and Argentina's Jaguares when the competition expanded from 15 to 18 teams in 2016.

The Japanese franchise retained its spot when the tournament was reduced to 15 teams last year after the expanded format proved unpopular with fans and broadcasters. Then, the Kings and Cheetahs from South Africa and the Western Force from Perth, Australia were cut.

SANZAAR has been criticized, based on its hope for increased television revenue, for expanding the original Super 12 tournament in the first place — from 14 to 15 teams in 2011, to 18 in 2016, back to 15 in 2018 and now reportedly back to 14 next year.

In the current format, five teams from New Zealand are grouped in one conference, four teams from Australia and the Sunwolves are in another conference and four teams from South Africa and the Argentina-based Jaguares are in the third conference. **AP**

opinion

Made in Macao

Jenny Lao-Phillips



THE FORGOTTEN CUSTOMS OF THE SPRING EQUINOX

Today marks the Spring Equinox (春分 Chun Fan), the 6th of the 24 solar terms of the year, which is one of the feasts that is not much remembered nowadays. But as I try to learn more about this day, I have found that there are some interesting customs that used to be practiced during this term in the middle of spring.

As the term equinox defines, it is one of the two days a year on which the equator passes through the center of the Sun, and so the 24 hours of the day are divided exactly in half, giving us the same length of sun and moon. But aside from an extremely well-balanced day, we also have an interesting "balancing" game. As a Chun Fan tradition, we used to play the game of 'standing eggs up on their end', which is to put an egg down vertically, and it would not fall on its side as they normally do. Scientifically, due to the equinox, the yolks of the eggs are pulled down, and so, on this day, eggs can stand vertically. However, this phenomenon is limited to eggs that are 4 to 5 days old. Therefore, today is also the day to buy eggs, to give us a chance to practice an old custom and to test the freshness of the eggs.

Another practice on Chun Fan is to eat 'spring vegetables', which is a kind of Chinese spinach. And it is not merely about cooking and eating the Chinese spinach; the custom was that the whole village would gather to pick fresh spring vegetables together, and then use the veggies to boil soup with fish. Not surprisingly, the soup was named 'spring soup'. It was believed that the consumption of this 'spring soup' would bring good health to the whole family for the year.

One of the most interesting traditions on the day of Chun Fan that I have read is the sending of the 'spring cow'. The custom was to send a large picture of the calendar of the solar terms of the whole year, with paintings of farmers working, to different families. Why this calendar and painting is called 'spring cow', I have no idea, perhaps because the pictures show cows ploughing the fields. But there were professional 'spring cow' senders, who would deliver these pictures to families and say many words of blessings to make the families happy, until the families give them money. This is not unlike the Chinese New Year practice of giving out red packets to children. But the kinds of blessings these professionals say to the families have been lost. It would be interesting know which words could make people so happy that they would give someone money in mid-spring.

Like many other festivals, Chun Fan also involves offerings to the gods and ancestors. In fact, in the past, this was the day to begin the cleaning of the ancestors' graves, which nowadays we know as the act specifically for Cheng Meng. In fact, in the past, people started cleaning ancestors' graves from Chun Fan, and had to finish all the cleaning by Cheng Meng, otherwise, the ancestors would not bless the families.

There is one more interesting custom on this day: eating dumplings. Yes, we eat all kinds of dumplings on different festivals, but the special thing for Chun Fan is that the dumplings were to be put together on a long stick, and were planted around the fields for birds to eat. This is because mid-spring is when crops start to grow, and farmers wanted to prevent birds from eating the crops.

Anyway, this not very popular term amongst the 24 turns out to be a fun day. So, play with the eggs, eat spinach soup and dumplings, and don't forget to feed some to the birds.

THE NEW ZEALAND POLICE: MOSQUE GUNMAN HAD PLANNED A THIRD ATTACK

A father and son who fled the civil war in Syria for "the safest country in the world" were buried before hundreds of mourners yesterday, the first funerals for victims of shootings at two mosques in New Zealand that horrified a nation known for being welcoming and diverse.

The funerals of Khalid Mustafa, 44, and Hamza Mustafa, 15, came five days after a white supremacist methodically gunned down 50 worshippers at two mosques in Christchurch — a

massacre that he broadcast live on Facebook. Police said they believe he was on his way to a third attack when officers ran him off the road and arrested him. They declined to release any more details, citing the active investigation.

During the funerals, Hamza's high school principal described the student as compassionate and hardworking, and said he was an excellent horse rider who aspired to be a veterinarian.

Disney closes USD71b deal for Fox entertainment assets



Mae Anderson

DISNEY has closed its USD71 billion acquisition of Fox's entertainment business, putting "Cinderella," "The Simpsons," "Star Wars" and "Dr. Strange" under one corporate roof.

The deal is likely to shake up the media landscape. Among other things, it paves the way for Disney to launch its streaming service, Disney Plus, due out later this year. It will also likely lead to layoffs in the thousands, thanks to duplication in Fox and Disney film-production staff.

By buying the studios behind "The Simpsons" and X-Men, Disney aims to better compete with technology companies such as Amazon and Netflix for viewers' attention - and dollars.

Disney needs compelling TV shows and movies to persuade viewers to sign up and pay for yet another streaming service. It already has classic Disney cartoons, "Star Wars," Pixar, the Muppets and some of the Marvel characters. With Fox, Disney could add Marvel's X-Men and Deadpool, along with programs shown on such Fox channels as FX Networks and National Geographic. Fox's productions also include "The Americans," "This Is Us" and "Modern Family."

The deal helps Disney further control TV shows and movies from start to finish - from creating the programs to distributing them through television channels, movie

theaters, streaming services and other ways people watch entertainment. Disney would get valuable data on customers and their entertainment-viewing habits, which it can then use to sell advertising.

By buying the studios behind The Simpsons and X-Men, Disney aims to better compete with technology companies such as Amazon and Netflix

Disney CEO Bob Iger said in an earnings call in February that Disney Plus and other direct-to-consumer businesses are Disney's "No. 1 priority."

Cable and telecom companies have been buying the companies that make TV shows and movies to compete in a changing media landscape. Although internet providers like AT&T and Comcast directly control their customers' access to the internet in a way that Amazon, YouTube and

Netflix do not, they still face threats as those streaming services gain in popularity.

AT&T bought Time Warner last year for \$81 billion and has already launched its own streaming service, Watch TV, with Time Warner channels such as TBS and TNT, among other networks, for \$15 a month.

In addition to boosting the Disney streaming service, expected to debut next year, the deal paves the way for Marvel's X-Men and the Avengers to reunite in future movies. Though Disney owns Marvel Studios, some characters including the X-Men had already been licensed to Fox.

Disney also gets a controlling stake in the existing streaming service Hulu, which it plans to keep operating as a home for more general programming. Family-friendly shows and movies will head to Disney Plus.

No pricing has been disclosed for Disney Plus. The streaming service will feature five categories of material: Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars and National Geographic. Disney charges \$5 a month for ESPN Plus, a service that offers programming distinct from the ESPN cable channel.

Meanwhile, Fox Corp. — the parts of 21st Century Fox that are not part of the deal, including Fox News, Fox Sports and Fox Broadcasting — started trading on the Nasdaq under the "FOX" and "FOXA" tickers yesterday. AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	35-55 Good
High Density Residential Area	40-60 Good
Ambient	35-55 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



USA Arizona authorities say a woman, Machel Hackney (pictured), has been arrested on allegations of using pepper spray to discipline her seven adopted children and locking them for days inside a closet.



BOSNIA United Nations appeals judges upheld the convictions of former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic (pictured) for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and increased his sentence from 40 years to life imprisonment. Karadzic showed almost no reaction as a judge in Denmark read out a damning judgment.



FRANCE President Emmanuel Macron announced that soldiers will be deployed across the country to help maintain security during yellow vest protests planned this weekend. Macron said the military will secure government buildings and other sites to allow police forces to focus on maintaining public order.



FINLAND has topped an index of the happiest nations for the second consecutive year, with researchers saying the small Nordic country of 5.5 million has succeeded in generating a happiness recipe for a balanced life not simply dependent on economic and material wealth.