



SOFTWARE AS A SOLUTION

Wynn executive Jason Ni is calling on Macau to tap into software solutions to help the city develop a sustainable tourism sector

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EMPLOYERS URGED TO VACCINATE 'BLUE CARDS'

The Health Bureau is urging vaccinations in response to a measles outbreak, but wants migrants to seek private clinics

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CARRIE LAM ASSURES: HK STILL ADHERES TO RULE OF LAW

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WORLD BRIEFS

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Two former Philippine officials have taken the bold step of filing a complaint with the International Criminal Court accusing Chinese President Xi Jinping of crimes against humanity over his government's assertive actions in the disputed South China Sea. More on p11



INDONESIA's transportation safety board denied that it leaked details from its probe into the crash of a Lion Air flight in October. The chairman of the National Transportation Safety Committee, Soerjanto Tjahjono (pictured), disputed reports describing conversations as the pilots panicked just before their Boeing 737 Max 8 plunged into the Java Sea shortly after takeoff. More on p13

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THE CASE OF E-VEHICLE STATIONS

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much

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ACCUSATIONS VIRAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Cultural Industry

Fund denies

cronyism suspicions

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weekend Guide
INSIDE

DSF claims big disputes regarding vacancy tax

The Financial Services Bureau (DSF) has stated that the situation with vacant residential properties in Macau is not serious, and that if the vacancy tax is levied, it will become necessary to obtain a social consensus on a number of technical issues first. In its reply to lawmaker Agnes Lam's inquiry, the DSF also said that the reality of Macau needs to be considered when deciding whether to impose a progressive housing tax on second properties. The bureau pointed out that there are major disputes surrounding the definition of vacant houses, high and low tax rates, and how to block the use of loopholes in the law.

Tourism police officers lead to fewer thefts

The Office of the Secretary for Security says that cases of theft in tourist areas have steadily declined after the stationing of the tourism police. The number of theft cases has dropped by more than 10 percent in tourism spots. As of today, Macau has a total of 55 tourism police officers. According to Public Security Police Force (PSP) plans, the number of locations where tourism police officers are stationed will increase from 10 to 17, with the number of officers increasing to 80.

Young woman seeking SSM job shortcut defrauded

A local 27-year-old woman was defrauded of more than 1 million Macau patacas after she sought a shortcut, hoping to get a job at the Health Bureau (SSM). The victim, a doctor, met another woman in her 50s in a tutoring center, who claimed she could help the victim get a job at the SSM or in private hospitals through her connections. The suspect lost all MOP1.1 million defrauded from the victim by gambling.

SPECIAL REPORT

CEM says electric vehicle chargers are properly installed, public disagrees

Renato Marques

IN response to concerns expressed in the community, more specifically, by electric vehicle (EV) owners and users, the Times questioned the entities responsible for the installation of the public EV charging stations network in order to ascertain the reasons behind the flaws detected.

In the last few weeks, video reports and photographs have surfaced on several social network platforms, showing the difficulties faced by users charging their vehicles, namely short charging cables which fail to reach the charging point of vehicles.

Companhia de Electricidade de Macau (CEM), a concessionaire of power supply to Macau and the entity responsible for the installation and maintenance of public EV charging stations, told the Times that all of the charging facilities had been planned and executed correctly, and followed safety procedures to cope with natural disasters.

In their reply to the concerns, CEM stated that it was supporting the Macau SAR government's green commuting policy, providing "technical evaluation of the EV charger installation."

According to the company, in order to cope with different types of EV models, "CEM has installed some EV chargers in front of the parking space and some at the back of the parking space," adding, "EV drivers can choose the parking space that [best] suits their EV type for charging."

With respect to safety measures, CEM noted, "there are



concerns suggesting that the EV chargers could be flooded or damaged by severe storms or typhoons in summer. Therefore, each EV charger is accommodated with a shelter capable withstanding strong wind and heavy rain. If flooding occurs, power to the EV chargers will be suspended and electricity leakage will be avoided, so as to decrease the damage caused to the EV chargers."

The company added that they have implemented the "necessary measures to protect the EV chargers in case of bad weather, and will continue to review the on-site condition [of the chargers] and enhance protective measures in the future."

Regarding the size of the parking spots, one of the issues mentioned by users, the com-

pany remarked, "it has complied with the mandatory laws and regulations of the DSAT [Transport Bureau] and [the size of the parking spots are] the same as the size of a normal parking space. The EV parking space should be enough to accommodate a charging EV."

According to the same source, there are currently 172 charging spaces located in 35 public car parks and five streets across the Macau Peninsula, Taipa and Coloane, with the coverage of public car parks up to 70 percent.

Also interviewed by the Times, an EV charger user reaffirmed the problems noted by several netizens in published videos and photos. "It's not properly done," he said. "The parking spots are too small for some of the EV's and in other cases, the

placement of the charging stations does not suit most of the charging points of the vehicles, forcing them to go onto the street in [the wrong direction] to park and to be able to charge," he said, giving examples such as the charging stations at Areia Preta and behind the Red Market.

As the Times observed "in loco," the stations cause some users difficulties, leading drivers to improperly park in order to reach the charging station. This happened in the public car park of the Alameda Dr Carlos d'Assumpção in NAPE, during a visit by the Times yesterday afternoon.

During the production of this report, the Times also contacted the DSAT, which did not reply to questions by press time.



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Consumer price growth slows in Feb

THE Composite Consumer Price Index (CPI) in February 2019 increased by nearly 2.8 percent year-on-year to reach 115.31, according to the latest information from the Statistics and Census Service. The rise in February represents a slowdown from a month earlier when the year-on-year growth registered 3.04 percent.

The increment in February was attributable to dearer charges for eating out and higher rentals for dwellings, as well as rising prices of motor cars, adults' clothing and fruit.

For the 12 months ending February 2019, the average Composite CPI rose by 3.09 percent from the previous period, with notable growth in the price indexes of clothing and footwear, and transport.

The Composite CPI reflects the impact of price changes on the general households and is a key indicator of inflation.

SMART CITY

Researcher calls for tourism to tap into software

A researcher on tourism has called for the enhancement of the SAR's software to help the city achieve its goal of sustainable tourism development.

Jason Ni, executive director of Research, Planning and Strategy at Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace, remarked that the region has been further expanding its capacity for tourism, citing the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

"The way the government could do it [...] is to really try to use software, under the current infrastructure setting," Ni told the press on the sidelines of his talk at the Macau Science and Technology University.

Ni was involved in the creation of the Macao Tourism Industry Development Master Plan, which sets forth a blueprint for the development of the local tourism sector over the next 15 years, and relevant guidelines for future actions.



Ni also recalled the government's partnership with Alibaba Group, using their big data processing capabilities and cloud computing technology to enhance public services.

"There are a lot of things going on [such as] the [...] signed deal with Alibaba about providing the cloud service, which is the basis of almost everything," Ni recalled.

"So they talk about a lot of measures but [...] things that could be happening very soon are, for example, better public bus and

taxi [...] communication servers. If we use this technology they [the government] will be able to achieve this smart city, and it is a way to increase the level of sustainability," Ni said.

Meanwhile, when questioned on whether the region should set a ceiling on the total number of tourists, Ni remarked that such a measure would not be necessary and that the city should assess the scaling of tourist arrivals.

"When you figure out a scale, you will be able to jump to the

solution. So once a solution is figured out, a ceiling number will not be necessary," said Ni.

Ni spoke about the city's tourism carrying capacity (TCC) study yesterday, urging the region to focus on the solution and the status quo, which could be used as a reference.

The TCC study does not aim to limit nor push tourism growth. Rather, it assesses which parts of the city's tourism service system are facing stress, as reflected by subjective and objective factors. **LV**

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Agnes Lam says local SMEs missing out on eco-business opportunity

Julie Zhu

IT is recommended that local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) be more eco-friendly business if they want to operate in the Greater Bay Area, Agnes Lam told the Times on the sidelines of a seminar yesterday.

The full text of the Outline Development Plan for the Greater Bay Area is more than 27,000 words long, with 35 references to "ecology," eight references to "environmental protection," and 2,300 words directly related to ecological environmental protection.

"If you read the paper from the central government, it is clearly stated that nothing that is highly polluting will be allowed [in the GBA]. So they encourage environmental protection or environmentally-friendly business only," Lam told the Times.

In Lam's opinion, local SMEs don't pay special attention to environmental protec-

tion measurements.

"They are not buying the idea of how important that will be," Lam stated. "They don't see the market potential for doing green business."

People, especially middle-class people who live in the Greater Bay, care more about environmental protection since the area is the wealthiest in China, according to Lam.

"This is the richest region in China, so we potentially have a big enough group of middle-class people, and traditionally, they are more open to environmental controls," said Lam.

However, the lawmaker criticized Macau's mentality of thinking of itself as more advanced than other regions.

"In Macau, we think that we are more advanced here, in terms of policy. But actually, if you are talking about environmental protection, you may not be correct," Lam indicated.

According to statistics from the Small and Medium Enterprise Bureau of Guangdong province, in 2017, Guangdong had approximately 10 million SMEs, ranking first in the country.

Questioned by the Times, Lam expressed no concerns about local SMEs' survival due to GBA integration.

"Actually, I don't really [worry] about their survival because of the Greater Bay Area. I think what's really hurting them is globalization," said Lam. "If they are able to brand themselves, maybe there will be more chances for them. They need to know their advantages as a Macau enterprise. We are not just talking about going there and opening a shop."

"When we talk about the Greater Bay Area, [companies] from the nine mainland cities, they would like to work with capitalism. They want to work with Hong Kong and they also want to work

with Macau," Lam stated, referring to the free port status of the two Special Administrative Regions.

“[SMEs] are not buying the idea of how important that will be. They don't see the market potential for doing green business.”

AGNES LAM

The Macau SAR government has highlighted that the local government is seeking to enhance Macau youths' un-

derstanding of the development and opportunities available in the Greater Bay Area and enhance their interest in working on the mainland side.

However, the government has rarely discussed local SMEs with respect to the Greater Bay Area. The lawmaker also complained about the fact that local SMEs are excluded from the local government's ambition for the Greater Bay Area.

"I think the government, when they are talking about the Greater Bay Area, they need to include SMEs. They should not just include young people," said Lam. "SMEs should be our strategic partner. I think they need to think about how they are going to help SMEs, and how to bring them into the project and let them grow."

"Because if they grow, they are not going to leave Macau; they are going to make Macau bigger," said Lam.

Cultural Industry Fund denies accusations of cronyism

THE Cultural Industry Fund (FCI) has denied an accusation that it practiced cronyism when granting 5.9 million patacas to a film production company. The FCI launched two subsidy programs in 2019, approving a maximum of MOP11 million to be issued to two companies for two service platforms.

The two platforms consist of a publication

service platform, and a television and filming service platform. A maximum of MOP6 million was to be given to a television and film production company to explore the expansion of the market for Macau's television and film industry.

The FCI approved MOP5.9 million for local film production company, 1220 Film Production Co., Ltd.

A rumor accusing the FCI of cronyism spread on social media, alleging that FCI members and the person in charge of 1220 Film Production had a personal relationship.

1220 Film Production has proposed that, within two years, the company will attend eight international film festivals, including one in Hong Kong, one in Cannes, and one in the U.S.

Additionally, it proposed organizing two Macau film production seminars in Shanghai. In total, the budget for these proposals is MOP10.5 million. The company received MOP5.9 million from the FCI.

In response to the rumor and accusations, Leong Heng Teng, chairman of the FCI administration committee, contended that the fund was transparent and

there was an open public tender for the film industry.

Leong further explained that the FCI received several bids for the fund, and claimed that the decision was made after an independent and fair assessment of all tenders.

"There is absolutely no cronyism problem," said Leong.

There were also doubts regarding the lack of

transparency and information about the subsidized film company.

Leong then claimed that all subsidies would be published online, and revealed his hope that the FCI could do better at disclosing information in a transparent manner. He also offered to provide more detailed information regarding the company, should any parties request it. **JZ**

Renato Marques

MEASLES

THE director of the Health Bureau's (SSM) Disease Prevention and Control Centre, Lam Chong, has urged employers of non-resident workers (TNR), especially those from the Philippines and Vietnam, and those employed in childcare, to vaccinate them against measles whenever their vaccination history is unclear or incomplete.

Lam was speaking at a press conference held by the SSM on Wednesday evening to provide updates on recently reported cases of measles in the region, adding that TNRs should preferably get vaccinated against measles at private hospitals and clinics, but that they can also go to healthcare centers where the vaccine costs less than MOP100. In the latter case, the TNR will need to bring their identification document (blue card), in addition to their Health Bureau user card, which can be obtained at the same place before the vaccination, and a document proving their working contract.

According to the official, despite the fact that Macau was certified as having achieved the eradication of measles in 2014, and was one of the first four countries and regions in the Western Pacific region to do

so, the disease is active in Macau. With several reports of outbreaks in neighboring regions, the occurrence of imported cases in Macau is likely, Lam said. In a review of the occurrence of cases during the first three months of 2019, the official noted that, so far, "eight cases of measles have been registered in Macau, with five of those considered imported cases and the other three cases of contamination in relation to the imported ones."

When reporting on the most recent cases, public health physician Leong Iek Hou revealed one case involving a physician working at Kiang Wu Hospital who had recently treated a measles patient and then contracted the disease from the patient. Another was revealed to be a TNR from Nepal who works at the Macau Jockey Club, while two other suspected cases of measles are awaiting confirmation.

The year-to-date figures wor-

RENATO MARQUES



ryingly already represent a near three-fold increase in measles cases, compared to the entire year of 2018 which registered only three cases, all imported.

The director of the Disease Prevention and Control Cen-

tre emphasized that measles is a highly contagious disease, with most cases affecting children in areas with low vaccination rates, though generally the consequences are not serious. Nonetheless, he noted that in

some cases, especially when contracted by adults, measles can cause several complications that include encephalitis and pneumonia, with a mortality rate between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 cases.

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HONG KONG

Chief Executive warns of collateral damage risk from trade war

HONG Kong's chief executive cautioned that the Asian financial hub continued to face the risk of collateral damage from the China-U.S. trade war, saying the tensions were one reason why she's joined the ranks of those tracking President Donald Trump's tweets.

"Last night, he was shouting to the media that things were good," Carrie Lam said of Trump during an interview at the Bloomberg Invest Asia forum in Hong Kong. "I certainly want to see this trade discussion leading to some positive outcome. But I don't think the problem will go away just like that. We will probably be seeing more tension in other areas."

"We know that trade issues aside, there are other deep-seated differences between China and the United States," Lam said. "These will not be easy to resolve, especially in the short term."

The increased strategic jockeying between the U.S. and China has also fueled questions in Washington about whether the former British colony should continue to enjoy a special trading status as a distinct entity from the mainland. U.S. Consul General Kurt Tong said last month that signs of political encroachment by Beijing had raised cautionary flags for some U.S. observers about the future of Hong Kong's "high-degree of autonomy."

Yesterday, Lam sought to reassure investors that Hong Kong still adhered to the rule of law and has an independent judiciary. She said she told a visiting congressional delegation that Hong Kong remained an important source of U.S. trade.

"I said, 'Nothing has changed, come on,'" Lam told Bloomberg Television on the sidelines of the event. "What have we done to cause that sort of considerable worry to the extent of upsetting this very strong and close relationship between the United

BLOOMBERG



States and Hong Kong?"

EXTRADITION LAW

Lam defended a proposed extradition law, saying it wouldn't undermine business freedom. Her government in January proposed allowing the transfer of fugitives to Taiwan, Macau, mainland China or any jurisdiction with which Hong Kong does not have an extradition agreement, sparking concerns from the European Union, the local business community and some opposition politicians.

"We don't want Hong Kong to become a haven for fugitive offenders," she said. "We are doing this with a very good

purpose, and if there are concerns it is obligatory of the government to address those concerns."

A U.S. congressional delegation to Hong Kong earlier this week said the disqualification of lawmakers from the Legislative Council, the refusal to renew a visa for a Financial Times editor last year and the proposed extradition law all posed a major challenge to the "one country, two systems" principle under which Hong Kong was handed back to Chinese rule in 1997, according to Civic Party lawmaker Dennis Kwok, who met with the American lawmakers.

Lam yesterday outlined a

list of policy priorities for her government - including new trade offices in Southeast Asia and local tax breaks - meant to signal that Hong Kong remained an open and global financial hub. She said Hong Kong's asset-management business could grow, and touted the city's potential as an offshore hub for trading the Chinese currency.

"The best strategy for Hong Kong is we don't sit and wait until the external environment either goes up or goes down. We do the right things for Hong Kong," she said in her interview, including creating more new markets and technologies.

GREATER BAY AREA

Lam also touted the benefits of the "Greater Bay Area," Chinese leader Xi Jinping's plan to better integrate the former European colonies of Hong Kong and Macau with China's mainland. China's long-awaited plan to create a high-tech megalopolis rivaling California's Silicon Valley has generated optimism among Hong Kong's business community, but thorny issues have so far been left out of the plan - including complex questions about which customs, tax and legal systems will predominate.

"Work on the Greater Bay Area is progressing well and progressing fast," she said. **Bloomberg**

The scariest hour in FX keeping HK peg defenders busy

Tian Chen

THE early part of the Asian trading day - when currency flash crashes tend to happen - seems to be when intervention happens too.

All five instances the Hong Kong Monetary Authority has recently bought the local currency to keep it from falling below the weak end of its trading band have been

around 5 a.m. to 6 a.m. local time.

A lack of market liquidity - blamed for extreme moves seen in recent years in the yen, pound, euro and Swiss franc - is the issue here too. After New York traders have gone home and before Asia is fully open, it's easier for large sell orders to push the HKMA into action, said Alan Yip, a senior foreign-exchange

strategist at Bank of East Asia Ltd.

This was the case again yesterday, when Hong

HKMA has now pumped USD1.5 billion into defending the dollar peg

Kong's de facto central bank bought HKD3.54 billion (USD451 million) of local currency just after 5 a.m. local time. The city's currency then rose as much as 0.06 percent, the most since January, aided by a dovish Federal Reserve damping hopes for interest-rate hikes. The Hong Kong dollar pared the gain to 0.03 percent at HKD7.8479 a dollar as of 5:04 p.m.

The Hong Kong dollar has fallen to the weak end of the trading band at HKD7.85 repeatedly this month as its wide interest-rate discount to the U.S. dollar makes it profitable to short the city's currency. That has prompted the HKMA to spend USD1.5 billion to defend the exchange-rate peg to the greenback over the past two weeks, driving up the local currency's in-

terbank borrowing costs.

While investors during U.S. hours are mostly interested in shorting the Hong Kong dollar, local banks sometimes buy it during the Asian workday for use in the city, said Ryan Lam, head of research at Shanghai Commercial Bank Ltd. That tendency can help cap the Hong Kong dollar weakness that prompts intervention. **Bloomberg**



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China Southern Power Grid to build new GBA network

CHINA Southern Power Grid claims that, by 2030, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA) will have completed building a 'smart power grid,' according to Chinese reports.

The Guangzhou-based state-owned enterprise will invest more than 170 billion yuan (about USD25.3 billion) across 2018 to 2022 to improve the disaster prevention capacity of power grids in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, which is frequently hit by natural disasters including typhoons.

The company vows to ensure central urban areas in Guangzhou and Shenzhen will have power outages last for no more than 30 minutes each year, while other cities such as Zhuhai and Zhongshan will have power cuts of less than one hour annually.

It will also invest more

than 20 billion yuan during the period, mostly in the fields of clean energy, direct-current transmission, distributed micro grid, engineering centers and laboratories on energy storage and superconductivity.

According to the company, total electricity consumption in GBA reached 520 billion kilowatts in 2018 and is expected to hit 700 billion kilowatts by 2035.

In addition, the company is building the world's first UHV multi-terminal flexible transmission project. After its completion and commissioning in 2021, the project will add 5 million kilowatts of clean water from Yunnan to the GBA, whereby coal consumption and carbon dioxide emissions in the Bay Area will be reduced by 6 million tons and 16 million tons respectively. JZ

FORUM

MDT/Macauhub

Chinese group HNA sells stake in TAP – Air Portugal

THE HNA group has divested the 9 percent stake that it indirectly held in the share capital of TAP – Air Portugal by selling its subsidiary Hainan Airlines Civil Aviation Investment Ltd, the group said in a market filing.

Hainan Airlines Civil Aviation Investment Ltd, a subsidiary of Chinese group HNA, was sold to Global Aviation Ventures LLC fund and Brazilian airline Azul for USD55 million, the group said in a statement to the market.

The company was a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hainan Airlines (Hong Kong) Co., which is also 100 percent controlled by the HNA group and its assets are a 20 percent stake in Atlantic Gateway, SGPS, which in turn held a 45 percent stake in TAP's share capital.

Following a privatization process, the Atlantic Gateway consortium, owned mostly by Brazilian air carrier Azul, held 45 percent of TAP's capital, with the remaining 55 percent divided into 5 percent for workers



and 50 percent for the Portuguese state.

The subsidiary of the Chinese group was sold in two lots – one of 54.55 percent to the Global Aviation Ventures LLC fund for USD30 million and a remainder of 45.45 percent to airline Azul for USD25 million, according to the statement released in Shan-

ghai.

The HNA group had, for less than a month, increased its stake in Atlantic Gateway from 12 percent to 20 percent at a time when it was already experiencing liquidity problems and is currently under the supervision of a group of creditors led by the China Development bank.

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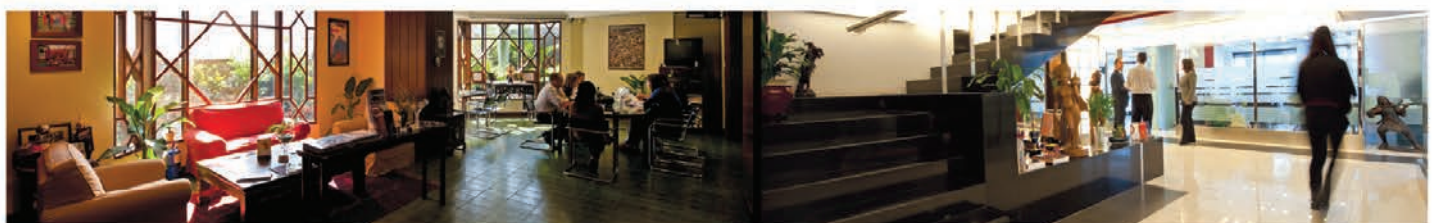
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Lulu Yilun Chen

TENCENT Holdings Ltd. posted a quarterly profit that missed analysts' estimates after it spent heavily on cloud and mobile payments businesses to offset a gaming slowdown.

Net income fell 32 percent to 14.2 billion yuan (USD2.1 billion) in the three months ended December, missing the 17.55 billion-yuan average of estimates and reflecting share issues and impairment provisions for companies it's invested in. Revenue however surpassed projections.

China's social media leader is enduring one of its darkest periods, as a months-long freeze on game approvals derailed its core business over much of 2018. The social media titan is also grappling with an economic slowdown that's depressing advertising. It's turned to spending to sustain growth, investing in everything from cloud computing and entertainment to retail, locking horns with Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.

"As it turns out the market was probably worried about the wrong thing," Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Vey-Sern Ling said in an email. "The unexpected bit is how much cost of revenues and operating expenses have expanded. This is driven by video, payments, cloud, film and TV production."

Tencent is said to be clearing out about 10 percent of managers to

Tencent profit misses estimates as games slip, costs swell



An attendee stands in front of a screen displaying QR codes for various programs and services at Tencent Holdings Ltd.'s WeChat Open Class Pro conference in Guangzhou

make room for younger executives as it confronts a slowdown in growth. Revenue was 84.9 billion yuan compared with estimates for 83.4 billion yuan. But costs surged 43 percent from a year earlier,

as content and financial technology bills pile up.

"Looking ahead, we will invest in core infrastructure and frontier technologies to embrace the trend of the industrial internet,

while continuing to drive the evolution of the consumer internet," the company said in an exchange filing. "For digital content, we will continue to invest and grow our subscription business."

Adjusted earnings-per-share were 2.07 yuan, better than the 1.83-yuan projected. Revenue from the Value Added Services unit, which includes online games and messaging, climbed 9 percent to 43.7 billion yuan. WeChat's monthly active users rose to 1.1 billion, while the mobile version of QQ had 699.8 million users at the end of the quarter.

Tencent introduced a dozen games in the fourth quarter, according to HSBC. But the regulatory hurdles mean that, in China at least, it wasn't able to make money off of two of its most popular titles: PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds and Fortnite. And its tentpole hack-and-slash game Honour of Kings lost steam: daily active users dropped to 68 million in December from 71 million in September, according to Questmobile.

"Mobile game revenues at 19 billion yuan was actually decent because last quarter was 19.5 and typically the fourth quarter is seasonally slow," Ling said. "Given they have new games in the first quarter I think the 19 billion number bodes well for a mobile game recovery into 2019." **Bloomberg**

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Elaine Kurtenbach

AUTHORITIES in China and Myanmar are failing to stop the brutal trafficking of young women, often teenagers, from the conflict-ridden Kachin region for sexual slavery, according to a report by Human Rights Watch.

The report released yesterday says women are often tricked into traveling to China in search of work or kidnapped and held against their will to be sold as “brides” for Chinese men. Most of those taken hostage by Chinese families are locked up and raped, it says. Those who do escape are often obliged to leave children fathered by Chinese men behind.

The report urges authorities to do more to raise awareness about the risks of trafficking, provide more support for victims who return home, and to prosecute those guilty of crimes against them.

The 226 known cases of such trafficking in 2017 were only a fraction of the total number, since many victims are afraid or ashamed to come forward, especially given the lack of support from law enforcement or welfare services, the report says.

“Human Rights Watch’s research suggests the number of women and girls being trafficked is substantial and possibly growing,” it said.

The group interviewed 37 survivors of such crimes for the report. It said the women were sold to Chinese families for the equivalent of USD3,000-\$13,000 each. Twelve of those interviewed were under 18 when they were trafficked. The youngest was 14. It said 22 of them were held for a year or longer.

Often, the women are drugged and taken captive, left at the mercy of families with whom they can barely communicate.

Report: Myanmar, China failing to stop ‘bride’

AP PHOTO



“Most were locked in a room and raped repeatedly as the families that bought them wanted them to become pregnant,” said Heather Barr, author of the report and a co-director for women’s rights at Human Rights Watch.

The traffickers are able to lure women with false promises of jobs because of the lack of good options for making a living in camps for displaced people in northern Myanmar’s Kachin state.

As of September, there were about 100,000 people displaced inside Kachin, where the Kachin Independence Army, like other ethnic minority armed groups, has been fighting for greater au-

tonomy for decades. Thousands of women and children have also fled their homes in neighboring Shan state, some across the border into China.

The porous border between southern China’s Yunnan province and northern Kachin facilitates such trafficking, and the relative shortage of marriageable women, thanks to Chinese traditions favoring male heirs over girls has left many families in China desperate for brides.

Although Chinese authorities have been battling trafficking inside China as well, the families who buy the women are almost never prosecuted, the report says.

Some foreign brides from nei-

ghoring countries go voluntarily.

But for many, the experience is harrowing. One interviewee, Ja Htoi Tsawm, was kidnapped while doing farm work in China to support her family and held captive for two years. While she was away her in-laws sold her house and put one of her children in an orphanage. Another of her four children died.

The report said that Myanmar police and other authorities refused interviews by Human Rights Watch although the Ministry of Social Welfare did provide some data. Myanmar anti-trafficking police said they handled 130 cases of trafficking, 96 of which involved women, in

January-July 2018, the report said.

Of 820 successful prosecutions for trafficking in 2008-2013, 534 cases involved forced marriages and an even larger share were with China. The trafficking networks span China.

Chinese authorities did not respond to requests for comment, it said.

Most were locked in a room and raped repeatedly as the families that bought them wanted them to become pregnant.

HEATHER BARR
AUTHOR OF THE REPORT

The persisting conflict in areas of Myanmar has left millions of women and children vulnerable to great risk. U.N. investigators reported last fall on a fact-finding mission that found violence by the Myanmar military in Kachin, Shan and the western state of Rakhine. It cited allegations of crimes by the military and other security forces including murder, torture, pillaging, execution without due process, rape, sexual slavery and hostage taking.

Members of the Kachin Women’s Association, a group affiliated with the Kachin Independence Organization that helps victims, were quoted as saying that at times they lack the money to help provide and top up SIM cards needed to keep in contact with the women still stuck in China. **AP**

Taiwan leader to tour Pacific allies, with Hawaii stopover

Yanan Wang, Beijing

TAIWAN President Tsai Ing-wen left yesterday on a tour of diplomatic allies in the Pacific that will end with a stopover in Hawaii.

Taiwan has struggled to shore up its dwindling roster of allies as countries are choosing instead to establish relations with Beijing, which considers the self-governing island part of Chinese territory.

Tsai will visit Palau, Nauru and the Marshall Islands, Taiwan’s official Central News Agency re-

ported.

The agency said she will transit through Hawaii on March 27 on her way back from the Marshall Islands, but did not give further details.

Only 17 mainly small, developing countries still recognize Taiwan as a sovereign nation. The island split from mainland China amid a civil war in 1949. Beijing has recently ratcheted up its rhetoric around “re-unifying” Taiwan with Communist Party-ruled mainland China.

China is particularly sensitive to cooperation

between Taiwan and the U.S. When the latter approved the sale of USD330 million of military equipment to Taiwan last September, China warned of “severe damage” to bilateral relations.

China’s foreign ministry said yesterday that it has complained to the U.S. about Tsai’s Hawaii stopover, mirroring its action toward a similar trip in 2017.

“Any attempt to create ‘two Chinas’ or ‘one China, one Taiwan,’ will be opposed by all Chinese people,” ministry spokes-

man Geng Shuang said at a daily briefing. “We urge the U.S. to abide by the ‘one China’ principle [...] and to not grant a stopover for Tsai Ing-wen, and to not send wrong messages to Taiwan independence forces.”

Tsai’s trip coincides with a visit to mainland China by Kaohsiung Mayor Han Kuo-yu, whose election last November ended 20 years of rule by Tsai’s independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party in the southern Taiwan port city. The DPP lost significant representation to

AP PHOTO



the Nationalists, Han’s party, in the local races, raising doubts about Tsai’s prospects for re-election in 2020.

Han has said Taiwan should be more open to peace negotiations with China, in contrast to

Tsai, who has dismissed Beijing’s overtures.

Han is to visit the southern cities of Shenzhen and Xiamen, as well as the semi-autonomous regions of Hong Kong and Macau, from today March 28. **AP**

Ex-Philippine officials accuse Xi of crimes against humanity

Jim Gomez, Manila

TWO former Philippine officials have taken the bold step of filing a complaint with the International Criminal Court accusing Chinese President Xi Jinping of crimes against humanity over his government's assertive actions in the disputed South China Sea, which they say deprived thousands of fishermen of their livelihood and destroyed the environment.

Former Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario and chief anti-graft prosecutor Conchita Carpio Morales said yesterday that they filed the complaint with the tribunal last week, before the current Philippine president's move to withdraw the country from the tribunal took effect last weekend.

They accused Xi and other Chinese officials of turning seven disputed reefs into islands in a massive engineering feat, causing extensive environmental damage, and of blocking large numbers of fishermen, including about 320,000 Filipinos, from their fishing grounds.

"This has seriously undermined the food and energy security of the coastal states in the South China Sea, including the Philippines," del Rosario and Carpio Morales said in a statement.

China's island building, which started in 2013 in an effort to construct air and naval bases in the disputed waters, reportedly destroyed large expanses of coral reefs and endangered fisheries. "It presents one of the most massive, near permanent and devastating destruction of the environment in humanity's history," they said.

"Though widely publicized, these atrociously inhumane actions of Chinese officials in the South China Sea and within Philippine territory remain unpunished, and it is only the ICC that can exact accountability on behalf of Filipinos and the international community," they said.

There was no immediate reaction from China.

Chinese officials have long claimed virtually the entire waterway, one of the world's busiest, with the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei also contesting ownership of parts of the strategic waters, where a large amount of world goods and the oil that fuels Asia's bustling economies transit.

When he was the Philippi-

nes' top diplomat, del Rosario questioned the legality of China's massive claims and other actions in a landmark international arbitration case against Beijing which the Philippines won but was ignored by China.

The arbitration tribunal declared in its July 2016 ruling that China's claims based on historical grounds were invalid and that Chinese forces have unlawfully prevented Filipino fishermen from disputed Scarborough Shoal. The tribunal also ruled that China breached its obligation under a 1982 U.N. treaty to protect the environment by undertaking island-building works and tolerating illegal fishing by Chinese nationals.

Despite the arbitration ruling and a 2002 accord with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to stop occupation and constructions in the disputed region, Beijing "behind the scenes" planned and later constructed the islands in the disputed territory, the complaint said. "This has placed billions of dollars' worth of natural resources, including fish, fossil fuels and shipping lanes, under Beijing's control," it said.

The complaint outlined China's increasingly assertive actions through the decades, starting in 1974, when it forcibly dislodged Vietnamese forces from the Paracels, to 1995, when it seized Philippine-claimed Mischief Reef, and 2013, when it started its island building.

Aside from Xi, it named as "perpetrators" Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Chinese Ambassador to Manila Zhao Jinhua.

The legal offensive against China contrasts with President Rodrigo Duterte's rapprochement with Beijing since he took office in mid-2016 while often criticizing the security policies of the United States, a treaty ally.

Duterte has lashed out against Washington for raising alarm over his anti-drug crackdown, which has left thousands of poor suspects dead and sparked two complaints charging mass murder before the ICC.

Duterte decided to withdraw the Philippines from the ICC in a move that took effect last Sunday, prompting del Rosario and Carpio Morales to file their complaint ahead of that date. Duterte's move has been challenged by human rights advocates before the Philippine Supreme Court. **AP**

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Preeyapa T. Khunsong & Tassanee Vejpongsa, Bangkok

ELECTIONS

Thai PM hopeful wants constitutional changes

THE leader of Thailand's oldest political party said if he becomes prime minister after Sunday's elections, he will make forceful but careful efforts to undo undemocratic provisions in the constitution imposed by the military government that seized power in 2014.

Abhisit Vejjajiva, head of the Democrat Party and a former prime minister, said in an interview with The Associated Press that the polls, the first since the coup, give Thailand a chance to halt military interventions in politics and respond effectively to challenges such as technological disruptions, an aging society and high inequality.

Sunday's general election is "important for the whole country. It's a chance now to get the country out of the cycle of dictatorships and corrupt governments," he told AP on Wednesday.

The army toppled an elected government in 2014 after months of sometimes-violent street protests that paralyzed Bangkok's streets. The army said its goal was to restore stability but ruled with a heavy hand and for much longer than it had promised.

It has cracked down on its critics while imposing a new constitution and election laws that give its allies a powerful advantage in the balloting and increase the chances of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, the coup leader, remaining in office.

Abhisit noted "irregularities" by Prayuth and the party backing him. Referring to campaign-like activities by Prayuth that are treated as official business, he said they are "obviously not held to the same kind of rules and standards" as other parties. But with four days to go before the

AP PHOTO



vote, he said he was hopeful the election would proceed smoothly.

"My appeal to the people involved is let's not make this an election that is unacceptable," he said. "Let's not make this election unfree or unfair. Not because one side would benefit over the other. But because we need to maintain the integrity of the system."

Many political parties have heavily criticized the 2016 constitution pushed through by the military government, with some saying it should be completely rewritten.

Abhisit agreed there is much in the constitution that needs to be addressed but said battles should

be carefully chosen.

"The way we go about it is, I think, we have to identify and be clear about what kind of issues that need to be amended, particularly the undemocratic aspects of the constitution," he said. "Build a consensus around it. Gain public support to put pressure on senators to accept that amendments are needed."

He warned that a call for wholesale change might be risky.

"If you say you rewrite or revamp the whole constitution, there continues to be a deep distrust that politicians might also use this to rid themselves of the various checks and balance mechanisms," he said.

A view of politicians as a corrupt element of society contributes to the cycle of elections followed by coups, Abhisit said, noting that "one of the clearest conditions for previous coups has been rampant corruption."

The Democrat Party shares the conservative, royalist viewpoint of the military but also professes adherence to democratic principles, leading to sometimes uneasy alliances. Abhisit became prime minister in 2008 with the political backing of the army, and was forced to rely on it to put down violent protests in 2009 and 2010 against his government.

He said he hopes to end the

military's influence in politics by using the power of persuasion rather than antagonism. Several other parties contesting the polls have attracted attention with campaign promises to slash the military budget, an idea that has drawn scorn from military leaders.

He said reducing the military budget can be done "by talking to the military, using reasoning, looking at the fiscal situation, assessing the necessity of their proposed projects."

It's a chance now to get the country out of the cycle of dictatorships and corrupt governments.

ABHISIT VEJJAJIVA
HEAD OF THE DEMOCRAT PARTY

"I don't see the value of being deliberately confrontational. I don't see the value of creating political controversy about these issues," Abhisit said. "My government was one that actually succeeded in reducing the defense budget. We didn't make any noise about it. We didn't make it a conflict with the military. We just have to work professionally."

"I've learned from experience," Abhisit said. "The challenges facing the country have changed. We've now got many more new challenges. Technological disruptions, an aging or fast-aging society, a high degree of inequality — these need to be met head on." AP

AUSTRALIA

2,000 people moved from powerful cyclone's path

Trevor Marshallsea, Sydney

ABOUT 2,000 Australians were being moved inland yesterday from part of the northern coast ahead of a powerful cyclone expected to hit this weekend.

Evacuees were being moved by air and road from remote, mostly indigenous communities on the east coast of the Northern Territory, with most going to the provincial capital, Darwin.

Australia's Bureau of Meteorology said Cyclone Trevor, with sustained winds of 125 miles per hour and gusts of up to 160 mph, was expected to bring heavy rainfall and a dangerous storm surge.

An emergency was declared

in communities along the western Gulf of Carpentaria where Trevor is expected to make landfall today, Northern Territory Chief Minister Michael Gunner said.

At landfall, Trevor is forecast to be a Category 4 severe tropical cyclone, roughly similar to a Category 2 or 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale used in the U.S.

Bureau of Meteorology spokesman Todd Smith said a further intensification has not been ruled out. Flash flooding was likely, with heavy rains of up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) in a day set to fall on ground "hard-baked" by drought, Smith said.

Gunner said the decision

to evacuate the communities in the cyclone's path was due to their remoteness.

Almost 1,000 people had left the towns of Groote Eylandt and nearby Numbulwar by Wednesday (Macau time), Gunner said. Most of Borroloola's 900 residents were expected to be evacuated, along with several smaller communi-

At landfall, Trevor is forecast to be a Category 4 severe tropical cyclone

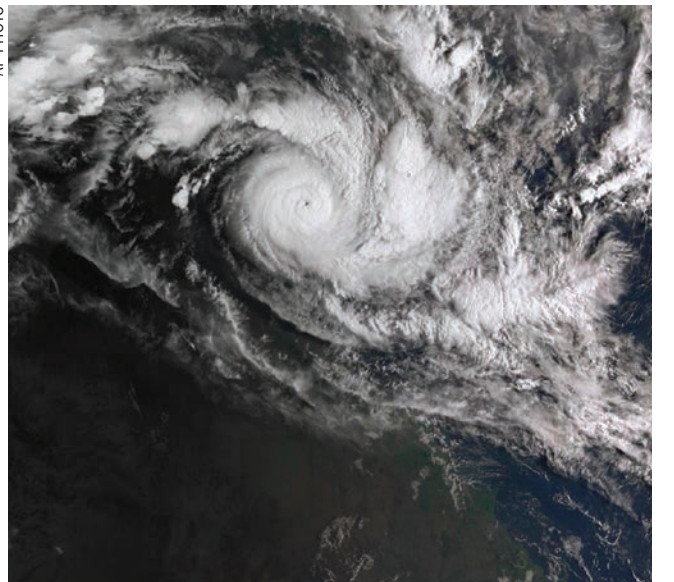
ties. Most would be housed in temporary accommodations in Darwin, he said.

Air force Hercules aircraft, along with helicopters, buses and cars were being used to transport evacuees to Darwin and nearby Katherine, with sleeping areas set up in buildings on local fairgrounds, Smith said. Steps were being taken to ensure indigenous cultural protocols were respected and tribal languages used.

It's the largest pre-cyclone evacuation in Northern Territory history, and the largest cyclone-related exodus since Cyclone Tracy hit Darwin in 1974, killing 71 people and forcing 30,000 to flee the city.

Trevor earlier crossed the Cape York peninsula in

AP PHOTO



northern Queensland state, causing flooding, closing roads and knocking out power. No fatalities have been recorded.

Meanwhile, another powerful category 4 cyclone was bearing down on the other side of Australia's northern rim. AP

BUY-BUST

Vietnam arrests 8 Chinese suspected of drug trafficking

VIETNAMESE police have arrested eight Chinese suspected of drug trafficking after seizing 300 kilograms of methamphetamine worth up to USD26 million.

The state-run Tuoi Tre newspaper says the alleged ring leader was arrested Wednesday when he received the drugs in Ho Chi Minh City from three Vietnamese accomplices who had transported them in a pickup truck from Dak Nong province on the Laos border. It says seven other Chinese were also arrested.

The newspaper says Huang set up a garment factory as a cover for drug trafficking. Authorities believe the drugs originated in Laos and were to be sent to Taiwan in cartons of garments.

Vietnam has some of the world's toughest drug laws. Trafficking more than 100 grams of heroin, cocaine or methamphetamine is punishable by death. **AP**

AVIATION

Official: third pilot helped on next-to-last Lion Air flight

Niniek Karmini, Jakarta

THE chairman of Indonesia's transportation safety agency confirmed yesterday that a third pilot was in the cockpit of a Lion Air Boeing 737 Max 8 on a troubled flight the day before the aircraft crashed on Oct. 29, just minutes after takeoff.

However, Soerjanto Tjahjono, chairman of the National Transportation Safety Committee, yesterday disputed reports citing recordings of cockpit discussions during the aircraft's final flight.

He suggested the reports fabricated details from the recordings.

The third pilot, who has not been identified, was qualified to fly Max 8s and was deadheading aboard the Oct. 28 flight from Bali's Denpasar airport to Jakarta. The aircraft encountered the same problems that appear to have caused it to crash a day later. Some reports, citing unnamed sources, said the ex-

tra pilot had some experience with the problem and advised the two in charge of the flight on how to stop the plane from automatically pointing its nose downward, in line with Boeing's operating instructions.

It remains unclear if the pilots fully shared their difficulties handling the plane with safety regulators, the airline or the pilots who perished in the Oct. 29 flight.

Tjahjono said the NTSC interviewed the pilot but legally cannot publish its findings.

Indonesian investigators say they are still analyzing conversations from the Oct. 29 flight recorded by the cockpit voice recorder that was only recovered from the sea bed in January.

Interest in the investigation into the crash off Indonesia's coast, which killed all 189 people aboard, has intensified following a crash of another Boeing 737 Max 8 in Ethiopia earlier this month that killed 157 people.

The Lion Air plane had issues on several flights before it



Indonesian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Yudo Margin shows the recovered cockpit voice recorder of Lion Air flight 610

crashed, with terrifying episodes of loss of altitude possibly related to an automated anti-stall system.

An earlier report issued by Indonesian aviation regulators aboard the plane's penultimate flight. It does not mention that a third person was in the cockpit along with the pilot and co-pilot.

Tjahjono said NTSC investigators have visited Boeing to carry out a reconstruction of that next-to-last flight. The agency will

publish results of its investigation in August or September, he said.

Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft have been grounded in many countries following the two crashes.

A preliminary report from Tjahjono's agency issued in December stopped short of declaring a probable cause of the Oct. 29 crash. But it provided details about pilots' earlier struggles to fly the highly automated jet and Lion Air's difficulties with fixing sensors on the plane. **AP**

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Juliet Williams & Nick Perrym,
Christchurch

NEW ZEALAND

'Military-style' guns banned after mosque attacks

NEW Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern yesterday announced a ban of "military-style" semi-automatic firearms and high-capacity magazines like those used in the shootings at Christchurch mosques last week.

Ardern said a sales ban was effective immediately to prevent stockpiling and would be followed by a complete ban on the weapons after new laws were rushed through.

She said people could hand over their guns under an amnesty while officials develop a formal buyback scheme, which could cost up to USD140 million.

The man charged in the mosque attacks had purchased his weapons legally using a standard firearms license and enhanced their capacity by using 30-round magazines "done easily through a simple online purchase," Ardern said.

"Every semi-automatic weapon used in the terrorist attack [today] will be banned," she said.

The ban includes any semi-automatic guns or shotguns that are capable of being used with a detachable magazine that holds more than five rounds. It also extends to accessories used to convert guns into what the government called "military-style" weapons.

It does not include semi-automatic .22 caliber or smaller guns that hold up to 10 rounds or semi-automatic and pump-action shotguns with non-detachable magazines that hold up to five rounds. The guns not banned are commonly used by farmers and hunters.

The government said the police

and military would be exempt as would businesses carrying out professional pest control. Access for international shooting competitions would also be considered.

There are nearly 250,000 licensed gun owners in New Zealand, which has a population of 5 million people. Officials estimate there are 1.5 million guns in the country.

Ardern's announcement comes as authorities announced that all 50 bodies from the attacks were formally identified and families were burying their loved ones.

At least nine funerals took place yesterday, including for a teenager, a youth soccer coach and a Muslim convert who loved connecting with other women at the mosque.

After Ardern's announcement, one of New Zealand's largest gun retailers, Hunting & Fishing New Zealand, reiterated its support of "any government measure to permanently ban such weapons."

"While we have sold them in the past to a small number of customers, last week's events have forced a reconsideration that has led us to believe such weapons of war have no place in our business — or our country," chief executive Darren Jacobs said in a statement.

Regardless of the ban, the company would no longer stock any assault-style firearms of any

category and would also stop selling firearms online, he said.

Although the exact weapons used in the mosque attacks have not been made public, images of them posted by the gunman show at least one of them to be a semi-automatic rifle similar to an AR-15 that is widely available in New Zealand. Semi-automatic refers to a firearm's ability to self-load, not only firing a bullet with each trigger pull, but also reloading and making the firearm capable of firing again.

People could hand over their guns under an amnesty

The military versions most resembling the AR-15 rifle are the M16 and M4 carbines, which can fire in semi-automatic mode, three-round burst mode or fully automatic mode.

Many different types of firearms, from pistols to rifles and shotguns, can be semi-automatic. Semi-automatic rifles like the AR-15 can often be modified with aftermarket parts, or accessories, to fire in fully automatic mode and instructions can often be found on the internet.

Polly Collins, 64, of Christchurch, was thrilled to hear of Ardern's announcement as she

visited a flower memorial for the victims.

"The prime minister is amazing," she said. "It's not like in America, where they have all these things and then they go 'Oh yeah, we'll deal with the gun laws,' and nothing's done."

In a post on Facebook, Christchurch United Football Club Academy Director Colin Williamson described Omar as "a beautiful human being with a tremendous heart and love for coaching."

Police Commissioner Mike Bush said all 50 victims had been identified as of yesterday and their families were being notified. Investigators also were trying to conclude their work at the two mosques.

"We are working to restore them in a way that is absolutely respectful," he said.

An Australian white supremacist, Brenton Harrison Tarrant, was arrested by police who ran him off the road while he was believed to be on his way to a third target. He had livestreamed the attack on Facebook and said in his manifesto he planned to attack three mosques.

Also, police said they'd inadvertently charged Tarrant with the murder of a person who is still alive.

Police said in a statement they had apologized to the person incorrectly named on the document and would change the charge sheet. They said the

charge remains valid, so there was no chance the suspect would be released as a result of the error.

Police did not offer further details of what went wrong or make anybody available for an interview.

The name of the person on the charging sheet has been suppressed by court order. Officials said more charges against Tarrant would follow.

Tarrant, 28, is next scheduled to appear in court on April 5, and Bush said investigations into him were continuing. Police have said they are certain Tarrant was the only gunman but are still investigating whether he had support.

Meanwhile, preparations were underway for a massive prayer service today to be led by the imam of one of the mosques where worshippers were killed.

Imam Gamal Fouda said he is expecting 3,000 to 4,000 people at the prayer service, including many who have come from abroad.

Workers at the Al Noor mosque have been trying feverishly to repair the destruction, Fouda said.

"They will bury the carpet," he said. "Because it is full of blood, and it's contaminated."

Fouda said that he expects the mosque to be ready to open again by next week and that some skilled workers had offered their services for free. **AP**

TV canal macau



FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Água de Mar
15:50	Zig Zag
16:05	Conversa da Treta
16:30	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
17:25	Arquitectarte
17:55	Ministério do Tempo
18:50	TDM Talk Show (Repetição)
19:25	Livros com João Guedes (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Sinais de Vida
22:00	Contentor 13
22:30	Portugal Culto e Oculto - Estreia
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Resumo Qualificação EURO 2020
00:10	Diário de Um Novo Mundo
01:45	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:30	RTPi Directo

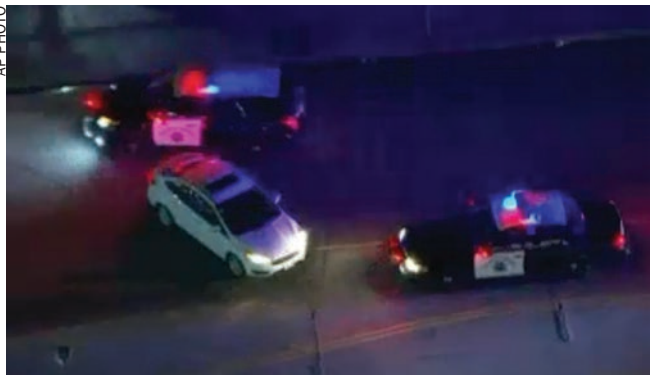
SATURDAY

10:30	Zig Zag
10:50	Beo and Peno Sr.2
11:00	Chai Chai
11:30	Portugal Selvagem
12:00	Visita Guiada Sr.2
12:30	Culinária Portuguesa
12:45	Culinária Portuguesa
13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
14:30	IPMA - International Portuguese Music Awards
15:45	Linha da Frente
16:20	Mendes.Come
17:40	Animais Anónimos
18:20	Joker
19:05	Cosido à Mão Sr.2 - Estreia
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Parker
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Cá Por Casa Sr.2
00:55	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:40	RTPi Directo

Offbeat

LA-AREA PURSUIT SUSPECT
BREAKDANCES BEFORE SURRENDERING

AP PHOTO



Law-breaking turned into breakdancing at the end of a Southern California vehicle pursuit. TV news helicopters were overhead Tuesday night when a suspect pursued by the California Highway Patrol finally surrendered, but broke out into a 10-second dance before being handcuffed. The pursuit began in the Calabasas area and headed east on U.S. 101 into Los Angeles, then north on Interstate 405 where the motorist exited the freeway in the San Fernando Valley. A CHP cruiser finally bumped the car and spun it out. The driver got out with hands up but did not appear to be fully complying with officers pointing guns at him. As the scene became illuminated by a law enforcement helicopter's spotlight, the driver suddenly busted a move before being busted.

cinema



CINETEATRO

21 - 27 Mar



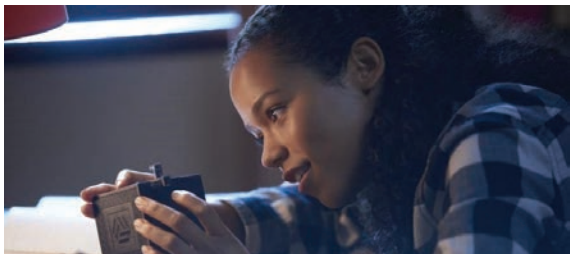
US
ROOM 1
2:30, 4:45, 9:30pm
Director: Jordan Peele
Starring: Lupita Nyong'o, Winston Duke, Elisabeth Moss
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 116min



CAPTAIN MARVEL
ROOM 1
7:15pm
Director: Anna Boden, Ryan Fleck
Starring: Brie Larson, Samuel L. Jackson, Ben Mendelsohn
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 124min



MASQUERADE HOTEL
ROOM 2
2:15, 4:45, 9:15pm
Director: Masayuki Suzuki
Starring: Takuya Kimura, Masami Nagasawa, Nozomi de Lencquesaing
Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)
Duration: 133min



ESCAPE ROOM
ROOM 2
9:45pm
Director: Adam Robitel
Starring: Taylor Russell, Logan Miller, Jay Ellis
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 99min



I WANT TO EAT YOUR PANCREAS
ROOM 3
7:30pm
Director: Shin'ichirô Ushijima
Starring: Mahiro Takasugi, Lynn, Yukiyo Fujii
Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)
Duration: 108min

KAMEN RIDER HEISEI GENERATIONS FPREVER
ROOM 3
2:30, 4:30, 9:30pm
Director: Kyohei Yamaguchi
Starring: Eiji Akaso, Shunsuke Daitô, Nayuta Fukuzaki
Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)
Duration: 100min

this day in history



1963 PROFUMO DENIES AFFAIR
WITH MODEL

The Secretary of State for War, John Profumo, has denied any impropriety with the model, Christine Keeler. Allegations were made yesterday by three MPs in the House of Commons, that Mr Profumo was in some way connected to the disappearance of Miss Keeler, who was due to appear as a witness in a trial at the Old Bailey. But in a personal statement to the House today, Mr Profumo, 48, categorically denied the accusations and warned that he would not hesitate to issue writs for libel and slander if the allegations were made outside the House of Commons. He said: "There was no impropriety whatever in my acquaintance with Miss Keeler and I have made the statement because of what was said yesterday in the House by three honourable members whose remarks were protected by privilege." He went on to explain that he and his wife, the actress Valerie Hobson, had met 20-year-old Christine Margaret Keeler at Cliveden, Berkshire, in July 1961. The couple had been invited by Dr Stephen Ward, a London osteopath, to his country cottage on the Cliveden estate near the River Thames. Also at the cottage was Captain Eugene Ivanov, a naval attaché at the Russian Embassy in London. It is understood Miss Keeler was having an affair with Captain Ivanov at the time. Rumours began to circulate that Mr Profumo had begun an affair with the young model soon after their meeting and that secret information on nuclear weapons could have been passed via Miss Keeler to Captain Ivanov. These rumours were the basis of the allegations made by MPs George Wigg, for Dudley, Richard Crossman, for Coventry East, and Barbara Castle, for Blackburn, yesterday. But in today's statement Mr Profumo said that between July and December 1961 he had met Miss Keeler about half a dozen times at Dr Ward's flat when he had called to see him, but stressed there was "no impropriety whatsoever" in the relationship. He added he had not seen Miss Keeler since December 1961 and had no part in her disappearance. Miss Keeler had been due to appear at the Central Criminal Court as a witness in a shooting trial. But the Secretary of State for War was steadfast in his denial: "Any suggestion that I was in any way connected with or responsible for her absence from the trial at the Old Bailey is wholly and completely untrue."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

On 5 June 1963 Profumo resigned from the government after admitting he had lied to Parliament about his relationship with Christine Keeler. Three days later Dr Stephen Ward was arrested and charged with living off immoral earnings. His trial took place the following month. He was found guilty on two charges but he did not live to hear the verdict because he took a fatal drug overdose the night before the judge finished summing up and died four days later. Many believe Stephen Ward was made a scapegoat to save the government from embarrassment. The Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, asked Lord Denning, to conduct an inquiry into security aspects of the Profumo affair. Lord Denning criticised the government for failing to deal with the affair more quickly, but concluded that national security had not been compromised. In December 1963 Christine Keeler was arrested and charged with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice and perjury in an unrelated court case. She was sentenced to nine months imprisonment after pleading guilty to the charges. The scandal rocked Harold Macmillan's Conservative government to its core and eventually led to its downfall when Labour, led by Harold Wilson, came to power in October 1964. John Profumo died in March 2006. After leaving politics he dedicated his life to helping the poor and disadvantaged in the East End of London. He was given a CBE in 1975 for services to charity.

YOUR STARS

Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Someone needs your help -- but they may not know how to ask you. Make sure that you're really paying attention as you move through the day, as you can score bonus karma points!

Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

You need to really hunker down and focus on communication today -- in all its creative forms. Your energy is better spent on poetry than on drafting that email to get a new job.

Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Nothing is quite clear today -- you need to take a big step back before you can make sense of anything. That could work to your advantage, though, as you may spot details you'd never have seen otherwise.

Libra

Sep.23-Oct. 22

You need to stay flexible and enjoy life's little treasures -- there's no sense in walling over every little thing that goes wrong today! All should return to balance soon, and no one knows that better than you.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Try something totally new today -- it could be almost anything! Your personal energy is somewhat restless and seeking new inspiration. A new friend, a random website or even a cloud can give it to you!

Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Take a chance on that new volunteer opportunity or charity pitch, even if it doesn't quite seem right -- you can always back off later if it falls apart. You need to give back on a day like today.

Taurus

April 20-May 20

You finally get that one friend or family member who's been so odd lately -- and the explanation is likely simpler than you would have thought. Just reach out and let them know you're savvy.

Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You need to enjoy what you've got today -- your energy is terrific, and almost anything you choose to do should make life sweeter and more enjoyable for you and your people. Go for it!

Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Not much gets done today -- which could mean that you just need to deal with a backlog later. There's nothing wrong with that, especially as fighting too hard against today's pace could result in moving backward!

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Your artistic license just got renewed -- make the most of it! All this great energy should make you a hit with your colleagues or friends, as long as you're free with your ideas.

Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You have got to make social connections today -- though not necessarily new ones. Reach out to old friends (even old flames, possibly) to see if you've still got anything to talk about.

Pisces

Feb.19-Mar. 20

You've got to rethink things a bit -- but your great energy helps you do just that with ease. See if you can get your friends to pitch you new ideas for transformative activities. Use them all!

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

		1			7	6		4
6			5	1				
	3	2		8				
	2				4			7
	1		6		8			3
7			3					5
				4		9	2	
					9	5		3
3		8	7			5		

Easy+

	5	3	9					
			6		3			5
	7			1				8
6	2		8					
		9		7		8		
					6		4	1
2					1		8	
3	9			5		2		
					3	4	9	

Medium

9		5	6					2
			2			5	8	4
		7		8				
7	2							8
			7	6	9			
5							1	9
				7		3		
1	7	3			6			
	5				3	4		2

Hard

	3					2		
6				4				
				1				
1							4	6
			2				7	
			3					1
		3	5			8		
4								
	2							

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Chicago mayor Emanuel; 5- Lively; 9- Sonja Henie's birthplace; 13- Converse competitor; 14- One of the 12 tribes of Israel; 15- Capital of Calvados; 16- Gentleness; 18- Hue; 19- Incept; 20- Thick soup of crabmeat; 22- Cordwood measure; 23- Physicist Enrico; 24- The Beatles' "Back in the ___"; 26- Attract; 31- Possess, to Burns; 34- Comfortable state; 37- Cravat; 38- Like afterschool activities; 42- Pretend; 43- Adverse fate; 44- Is doubled?; 45- Ample; 47- Body shops?; 50- Lofty nest; 53- Rib; 57- Savior; 61- John of "Full House"; 62- Lofty; 63- Lacking teeth; 65- "The ___ Dead", classic horror movie; 66- Nursemaid; 67- "Comus" composer Thomas; 68- Golfer Ballesteros; 69- Arrow poison; 70- Resting places;

DOWN: 1- "Caddyshack" director Harold; 2- ___-garde; 3- Pivot; 4- Capital of Lesotho; 5- Place; 6- Draw forth; 7- "M*A*S*H" name; 8- Louise's cohort; 9- Twice tetra-; 10- Travel on water; 11- Carson's successor; 12- Not duped by; 14- Deep black; 17- Manipulates; 21- Purple bloomer; 23- Impostor; 25- Short time; 27- Fighting Tigers' sch.; 28- Arthur Ashe's alma mater; 29- Surf sound; 30- French 101 verb; 31- Assist; 32- Jump on the ice; 33- Major ending; 35- Hit letters; 36- Irregularly notched; 39- Director Howard; 40- Architectural piers; 41- Mischievous fairy; 46- Aden native; 48- Aleutian island; 49- Aquanaut's base; 51- V-shaped fortification; 52- Papas of "Zorba the Greek"; 54- Love, to Luigi; 55- In good condition; 56- Much of Mississippi?; 57- AAA recommendations; 58- Overhang; 59- 554, in stone; 60- Model Macpherson; 61- Filthy place; 64- Compass dir;



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PJ (Picket) 28 557 775

PSP 28 573 333

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

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HKD 7,111 sq ft
Four Bedroom Apartment
Ref: 19015574

4 Storey Commercial Building
Coloane
Commercial Building
HKD 168,000 / 4003 sq ft
Ref: 17040646

Lake View Tower
Taipa
1,497 sq ft / HKD 11.82 M
HKD 7,900 sq ft
Two Bedroom Apartment
Ref: 19015572

Nova Park, Taipa
Taipa
Two Bedroom Apartment
HKD 16,400 / 1134 sq ft
Ref: 17020638

Ocean Garden Elm Court
Taipa
1,610 sq ft / HKD 10.8 M
HKD 6,708 sq ft
Three Bedroom Apartment
Ref: 18105563

Car Park, The Manhattan
Taipa
Single Car Park
HKD 2,000
Ref: 1505507R



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Rob Harris

FOOTBALL

FIFA will only allow natural grass fields at the 2023 Women's World Cup.

The stipulation is contained in requirements sent to bidding nations and follows controversy over the use of artificial turf at the 2015 tournament in Canada.

Some players launched a gender discrimination case — which was later withdrawn — over FIFA's use of turf four years ago because men's World Cup games have always been on grass. They claimed the artificial surface is less forgiving than grass and impacts the game because of concerns over injury. They also claimed balls travel and bounce differently on artificial turf. FIFA said it wanted the same surface in every stadium.

This year's 24-team tournament in France will not have any artificial pitches at the nine venues. FIFA has made it clear such surfaces won't be acceptable in 2023, either. What is permitted is the hybrid system used at many leading stadiums where millions of synthetic grass fibers are woven in between and beneath the natural grass.

"The pitch shall feature a natural grass playing surface," FIFA's bidding requirements state. "Hybrid-grass systems are considered natural grass according to FIFA's requirements and hybrid reinforcement should be considered for

AP PHOTO



stadium pitches."

FIFA also is asking bidders to ensure that each training ground has at least one grass field.

There is record interest in hosting the 2023 tournament, with nine countries having expressed their intent to bid.

The most intriguing bid is by South Korea, which wants to combine with North Korea. But FIFA now includes an evaluation on hu-

man rights and worker conditions when assessing Women's World Cup bidders, just like the new requirements for prospective hosts of the men's tournament. That could prove problematic for North Korea, which would also have to provide visas in a "non-discriminatory manner" while currently being one of the most closed countries in the world.

From Asia, there also is interest

in hosting from Australia and Japan. There are three potential bidders from South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Colombia. New Zealand and South Africa are also pursuing becoming candidates ahead of the April 16 deadline to register a bid. FIFA set an Oct. 4 deadline to submit bid books.

The 37-member FIFA Council will pick the host in March next year after inspectors produce bid

evaluation reports.

The bidding document also states that the opening game and final must be played in venues with at least 55,000 seats. For other games up to the quarterfinals, 20,000 seats are required. The semifinals must be played in 35,000-capacity venues.

In the technical evaluation, five aspects of infrastructure will be given grades between zero and five: stadiums, team and referee facilities, accommodation, the international broadcast center site and other competition-related sites. There's also a score on commercial matters, including revenue and costs projections.

"The scores received may have a bearing on whether or not the bid is eligible for consideration by, or presentation to, the FIFA Council," the bidding documents state. "FIFA reserves the right to deem the bid ineligible on the basis that a bid does not achieve the minimum scores" of 2.0 for the overall mark, or stadiums, accommodation and facilities for teams and referees. **AP**

AP PHOTO



FOOTBALL

Cannavaro's first game with China ends in 1-0 loss to Thailand

FABIO Cannavaro's first game as coach of China ended in a 1-0 loss to Thailand in the opening match of the four-nation China Cup yesterday.

The Italian great, who also coaches Chinese club Guangzhou Evergrande,

succeeded Marcello Lippi as national team coach this month.

Chanathip Songkrasin scored the lone goal in the first half to give Thailand the victory.

Cannavaro, who captained Italy to the 2006

World Cup title, will get another chance for a win on Monday against either Uruguay or Uzbekistan. But he has said he is unsure how long he will stay in charge of the national team once the China Cup is over. **AP**

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opinion

Kapok
Eric Sautedé



IMAGES SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Upon return from Beijing, Macao's political heavyweights staged a highly official debriefing conference highlighting key points from their study trip and their studious participation in what is commonly referred as the "two sessions". Interestingly enough, this was done in front of the very same people who, for the most part, had also attended these sessions - delegates to the assemblies, high officials, important businessmen and patriotic smooth operators from Macao.

That this was redundant or even overly repetitive for most of the audience is beyond the point: what matters is that the message gets hammered. The world gets BuzzFeed-like reports candidly spelled out by Xinhua "reporters" Katie Capstick and Roisin Timmins, or even a rap video about the two sessions, and we get ineloquent speeches listing the "four tasks" and the "four supports", with threatening undertones of dire consequences if stability and social harmony are put to the test.

Ironically, it shows that beyond the catchy nickname of the "two sessions" lies the fact that these eminent figures just wasted more than two weeks attending a rubber-stamp assembly for some (the National People's Congress) and a toothless advisory body for others (the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference). Premier Li Keqiang's report was approved by 2,945 members of the NPC, with only three abstentions and no disapproval, so one could even argue that the rubber-stamping has worsened as Mr Li's first work report back in 2014 was disavowed by 378 delegates!

On the task side, Chui Sai On insisted, first, on maintaining Macao's overall stability, especially by organizing "legal, impartial, equitable, honest and smooth" elections for the next Chief Executive (far too many adjectives for an uncompetitive selection process), while successfully celebrating the 20th anniversary of the handover (can you see the millions flowing from the Macao Foundation to these patriotic communal associations?). Secondly, he insisted on ensuring the healthy and sustainable economic development of Macao, with the people's livelihood at heart (Ouh la la, gaming concessionaires might be asked to dedicate more than 10% of their operations to non-gaming activities and then divert part of their war chest to open more casinos in Portuguese-speaking countries!). Thirdly, he focused on promoting the development of the Greater Bay Area (the insistence on the 49 points that concern Macao in the master plan are chilling as it will be unpatriotic not to implement them!); and finally, on making sure the youth of Macao, whose future will necessarily depend on their "love for the nation and love for Macao" (anything scarier than that?), is properly trained and educated.

The "four supports" articulated by Fu Ziyang, the director of the Liaison Office, strictly echoed the four tasks delineated by Chui, as if one should not go without the other if the "superiority and vitality" of the "one country, two systems" formula is to be fully demonstrated. Even more anaemic were the speeches of Ma lao Lai, a standing committee member of the CPPCC for Macao, whose main contribution was to praise the united front work of the Conference to efficiently promote "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era", whereas Ho lat Seng, the only standing committee member of the NPC for Macao, self-congratulated himself and fellow Macao delegates for having introduced no less than 78 recommendations in the NPC, supposedly all highly appreciated by the staff of the General Office of the Assembly. Former CE Edmund Ho tried to steal the show by warning that all acts committed against "unity and stability" should be banned, but his position also contradicted his earlier claim that he believed "the people of Macao had the wisdom and ability to elect" the right person as the new Chief Executive: since when are the "Macao people" voting in that election?

Ultimately, the real takeaway lies in this family photo, in which the only ones talking are the representatives of the three families that have run Macao since the 1960s, anointing the future CE in front of the central authorities' representative. The race is on!

THE BZZZ DUTCH SUSPECT IN TRAM SHOOTING TO FACE TERRORISM CHARGE

The main suspect in a deadly tram shooting in the Dutch city of Utrecht will be charged with offenses including multiple murder or manslaughter with a terrorist intent, prosecutors said.

Investigations so far into the shooting that left three dead and three seriously injured indicate that the shooter acted alone, prosecutors said in a written statement.

The main suspect, identified by police as Gokmen Tanis, a 37-year-old man of Turkish descent, also faces charges of attempted murder or

manslaughter and making threats with a terrorist intent.

The prosecution office statement adds that investigations are continuing into whether the suspect's actions "flowed from personal problems combined with a radicalized ideology."

The team investigating the shooting will ask a forensic psychiatry and psychology institute to carry out a personality test on the suspect.

Tanis is to appear before an investigating judge tomorrow.

AP PHOTO



MY FIRST BLUE JEANS

Levi Strauss readies for prime time in the public markets

Anne D'innocenzio, New York

LEVI Strauss & Co., which gave America its first pair of blue jeans, is public again, for the second time.

The 166-year-old company, which owns the Dockers and Denizen brands, previously went public in 1971, but the namesake founder's descendants took it private again in 1985.

The stock, which is listed under the ticker "LEVI," opened for trading yesterday up 31 percent on very strong demand and recently changed hands at USD22.90, up \$5.90. The offering priced at \$17, above an originally expected range of \$14 to \$16.

The New York Stock Exchange community, including more than 300 traders, suspended its "no jeans allowed" policy to celebrate Levi Strauss returning to the public markets. More than 120 employees from Levi's global offices, including its CEO Chip Bergh, took part in the event, wearing jeans and donning white T-shirt with the company's red bat wing logo.

The IPO comes as the iconic brand is staging a comeback under Bergh even as it faces increasing competition and a changing retail landscape. Women are opting for yoga pants or other comfortable athletic sportswear that can be worn every day. And the brand is also contending with a shrinking number of department stores, once its traditional venue of distribution.

But since assuming the helm in 2011, Bergh has refashioned the brand and image. It didn't chase after the yoga trend but rather focused on enhancing the fit of its women's jeans with stretchier fabrics. Bergh also has created buzz with partnerships with celebrities like Justin Timberlake while increasing Levi's marketing at events like Coachella, where Beyonce performed in the brand's cut-off shorts.

At the same time, Levi's has been expanding online and juggling between selling to low-end and high-end stores

At the same time, Levi's has been expanding online and juggling between selling to low-end and high-end stores. It's also been opening its own stores.

All of that has helped Levi Strauss turn in a 14 percent increase in sales to \$5.6 billion for the year ended Nov. 25, 2018.

"Focusing on product improvements and diversification have been excellent moves," said Ken Perkins,

president of Retail Metrics, a retail research firm. "There's a lot of competition, but Levi's has always been the brand in denim."

The timing might be right for Levi's. Jeans sales appear to be on an upswing in the U.S., increasing 2.2 percent to \$16.7 billion last year after four straight years of declines, according to data from Euromonitor.

"Things go in waves," says Marie Driscoll, managing director of luxury and fashion at Coresight Research. "The athleisure trend made denim not as comfortable. But denim brands have responded by adding stretch."

It wasn't long ago when Levi's was struggling with a big debt load and had grown too reliant on department stores. During its worst slump, the company's sales went from \$6.8 billion in 1997, when it helped to drive the Casual Friday trend with its Dockers khakis, to \$4.07 billion in 2004.

Levi's is hoping to prove to Wall Street there's staying power for a legacy name that dates back to 1853 when its namesake founder started a wholesales dry goods business in San Francisco. Strauss and tailor Jacob Davis invented jeans 20 years later after receiving a patent to create cotton denim workpants with copper rivets in certain areas like the pocket corner to make them stronger. By the 1920s, Levi's original 501 jeans had become top-selling men's workpants, according to its corporate website. AP

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	30-50 Good	
High Density Residential Area	20-40 Good	
Ambient	25-45 Good	

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

AP PHOTO



TERRORISM Authorities in Austria say the alleged Christchurch mosque gunman visited the country, but are declining to provide further details. Earlier this week Hungarian authorities said the suspect, Brenton Tarrant, visited Hungary as a tourist last November by train from Romania. [More on p15](#)

AP PHOTO



USA President Donald Trump will sign an executive order today requiring U.S. colleges to certify that they protect free speech on their campuses or risk losing federal research funding, White House officials said.

AP PHOTO



BREXIT European Union leaders said yesterday they were likely to grant Britain a short delay in its departure from the bloc if May's cabinet wins parliamentary support next week for its EU divorce deal. But warned that both Britain and the EU are heading toward a disruptive no-deal Brexit if lawmakers spurn the agreement again.

AP PHOTO



AFRICA A week after Cyclone Idai hit coastal Mozambique's city of Beira (pictured), and swept across the country to Zimbabwe, the death, damage and flooding continues in southern Africa, making it one of the most destructive natural disasters in the region's recent history.