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Sulu Sou is appealing a decision made by Ho against what the democrat lawmaker called "secret meetings" of the rules committee

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

## WORLD BRIEFS



**BELT & ROAD** Panama sees a "big opportunity" in China's massive "Belt and Road" infrastructure initiative, President Juan Carlos Varela (pictured) said yesterday during a visit to Hong Kong amid ambitious plans and proposals for Chinese-built bridges and rail lines.



**CHINA**'s homegrown nuclear technology is gaining favor in the battle for the nation's next generation of reactors, according to a state-owned developer, as it seeks to move on after delays and cost blowouts from imported designs. **More on p8-9**



**THAILAND** The air hanging over the far north has become so polluted, the prime minister went to see in person what is being called a severe health crisis. Prayuth Chan-ocha arrived by helicopter at an army base in Chiang Mai, a popular tourist destination where seasonal haze has been unusually bad and prolonged this year.

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## FRENCH CONSUL ALEXANDRE GIORGINI

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BLOOMBERG



## LOVE OF COUNTRY

# On the road to national rejuvenation

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## IPM to offer master's in Portuguese translation

Macau Polytechnic Institute (IPM) is offering a master's program in Portuguese translation in the coming academic year, said IPM President Marcus Im following a language summit yesterday. The Institute is aiming to open the program in the hope of training talented individuals proficient in both Chinese and Portuguese, and is expecting a 10 percent increase in the number of master's students. The Language Big Data Alliance Summit yesterday was about challenges faced by the language industry in the era of Big Data and Artificial Intelligence.

## 5,400 measles shots arrive in Macau

The spread of measles has slowed recently but lines of citizens are still waiting for vaccines, said Health Bureau chief Lei Chion. According to Lei, a batch of 5,400 shots arrived in Macau yesterday evening. He believes it is sufficient to vaccinate the high-risk population, adding that the entire staff cohort at the two hospitals are immune. Previous tests showed that above 95 percent of citizens are immune to measles, even though the Bureau has ordered another batch of 10,000 shots with an uncertain arrival time.

## Macau Customs to trial sign language interpretation

The Macau Customs commenced a trial provision of sign language interpretation services through live video yesterday to enhance communications with the hearing and speaking impaired communities. Collaborating with the Macau Deaf Association, the service was first launched at the Customs Headquarters. When the need arises and with the consent of the help-seekers, interpretation can be conducted through live video by duty staff at the Deaf Association so that Customs staff can better understand help-seekers' needs. The service is available from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Mondays to Saturdays.

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

# Sulu Sou appeals rejection of 'secret meetings' complaint

Renato Marques

**L**AWMAKER Sulu Sou is appealing to the Legislative Assembly (AL) Executive Board regarding a March 19 decision made by the president, Ho Iat Seng, rejecting Sou's complaint against what the democrat lawmaker called the "secret meetings" of the Committee on House Rules.

The protest was in relation to a committee meeting that was held without notice given to the lawmakers - except those who were part of the Committee itself - and addressed topics regarding the AL plenary session in which the amendments to the "Rights of Assembly and Demonstration Law" were voted upon.

At the time, Sou proposed

that instead of transferring the prior warning and definition of times, spaces and routes of demonstrations from the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (now the Municipal Affairs Bureau) to the Public Security Police Force, they should be transferred directly to the Chief Executive.

On this occasion, Ho said that since the lawmaker's request had not been submitted at least five days prior to the session, it could not be addressed by the plenary, further noting that they could therefore only vote on whether the proposal ought to be returned to the First Standing Committee for detailed scrutiny.

Ho thus questioned the legality of Sou's written appeal and forwarded it to the com-

mittee for further analysis. When not all members of the Legislative Assembly were informed of the committee's first meeting, Sou decried that the legislature was holding "secret meetings."

In response the committee chairperson argued that all

meetings of the Committee on House Rules are by default "preparatory for the opinion the committee must issue."

The chairperson said that all the procedures held so far have been perfectly legal.

In a letter addressed to the Executive Board to which the Times had access, Sou argues that there is no such thing as a "preparatory meeting."

A statement issued earlier by Sou reaffirms the need to have a "procedural battle" to protect the interests of all lawmakers and to ensure similar decisions do not happen again at future plenary sessions. He also wants to ensure that a fair and effective legal system is installed to protect the interests of both lawmakers and citizens.

**The democrat lawmaker reaffirms the need to ensure similar decisions do not happen again at future plenary sessions**

RENATO MARQUES



Renato Marques

### COURTS

**P**RO-DEMOCRACY activist Scott Chiang is scheduled to return to court on April 30 after his appeal earlier this year was upheld. The trial is to be repeated after Chiang, sentenced in 2018 alongside Sulu Sou for an illegal demonstration, saw his sentence revoked in an appeal to the Court of Second Instance (TSI).

The TSI found that Macau's Court of First Instance (TJB) had found Sou and Chiang

## Scott Chiang's trial to be repeated on April 30

guilty of a crime different to that which they had been charged with in the first place. At the time, Sou and Chiang were being tried on charges of aggravated disobedience for allegedly disrespecting the orders from police authorities during a street protest held in May

2016 against a controversial RMB100,000 subsidy approved by the Macao Foundation to the University of Jinan.

However, following a highly publicized trial that resulted in the historical decision of the Legislative Assembly (AL) suspending Sou's mandate as a lawmaker

in order for him to be present in court, both defendants were fined for unlawful assembly, a crime with which they had never been charged.

While Sou opted to accept the penalty and not appeal in order to see his post reinstalled at the AL, Chiang appealed the decision

in Macau's second court.

The collective of judges then decided to revoke the sentence of the TSI and called for a retrial of Chiang to allow the defendant to present a defense for the crime that he had originally been charged with. The TSI ruling states that the crime of aggravated disobedience was unproven.

The TSI has ordered a retrial, scheduled to commence on April 30 at 10 a.m. to remedy the incomplete first trial.

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## NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION

## Exhibition to highlight Macau responsibility on 'road to national rejuvenation'

**T**HE SAR government is set to hold the second National Security Education Exhibition with a focus this year set on four key themes: "the road to national rejuvenation", "staying alert to the challenges ahead", "safety and development", and "our responsibilities."

According to a statement issued by the government, the exhibition will help the community to better understand the importance of national security.

National security education has been addressed by Chinese president Xi Jinping, who stressed the importance of the topic and urging for enhanced community awareness.

Xi noted that national security promotion involves co-opting the civilian population to fulfill their patriotic duty and be on the lookout for anything that could undermine the country's stability.

The president previously outlined that "national security is of paramount importance for the people to live and work in peace and for realizing the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation."

In the SAR, the Chief Executive



A training camp for university students to learn more about protocols for raising the national flag of China, under guidance from the People's Liberation Army Macau Garrison

— head of Macau's National Security Committee — emphasized that the city's education in national security should be strengthened via different types of publicity and educational campaigns in the community and in schools.

In particular, awareness about

the legal aspects of national security should be promoted to the wider community, with all relevant departments taking proactive measures to prevent and combat different types of illegal activities that may harm national security or social stability.

The committee's goal was to be-

ter implement the National Security Law, upholding President Xi Jinping's major principle of "comprehensive national security."

In April 2018, the government cooperated with the Liaison Office to organize the first National Security Education Exhibition

in the region, where the late director Zheng Xiaoson urged the region improve its legal system to ensure a more effective enforcement of the local national security law.

The local government is currently working on new legislation to cover the proper etiquette for handling the country's flag, emblem and anthem.

Among many other provisions, the proposal suggests that fines may be issued when national symbols are used for commercial purposes or for "undue ends," such as private funerals, or when the national flag is deliberately altered, damaged, stepped on or set alight. Intentionally changing the lyrics or music of the anthem in a public place will constitute an offence, as will other forms of obvious disrespect.

Having already been discussed by the 1st Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly, it is due to be submitted to the general legislature later this year for further consideration.

The National Security Education Exhibition will be held at the exhibition hall of the Handover Gifts Museum of Macau between April 15 and May 15. LV

## GAMING | ANALYSIS

## After sturdy March, analysts cynical on April

Daniel Beittler

**A**NALYSTS predict Macau gross gaming revenue will fare poorly this month, declining at a rate of between 2 and 8 percent. The prediction comes as March revenue came in much higher than market expectations, causing stocks of Macau casino operators to climb.

March recorded the strongest revenue posting of the year to date at MOP25.84 billion, according to information released Monday by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, declining 0.4 percent year-on-year but up 1.85 percent from February. The result rounds out the first quarter with a 0.5 percent year-on-

-year contraction.

However, gaming analysts remain cautious on April, citing concerns about the irregularity of year-on-year comparison periods, in part due to the worsening of China-U.S. trade tensions starting from the second half of last year.

Japanese brokerage Nomura said that it expects a decline of between 3 to 8 percent in April "against a tough comparison period a year earlier."

Gross gaming revenue in April 2018 soared 27.6 percent year-on-year to reach MOP25.72 billion, but that was mostly attributed to an exceptionally weak first quarter in 2017. The average monthly take in

2018 stood at about MOP25.2 billion, while it is tracking at an average of MOP25.5 billion per month this year.

Union Gaming's Grant Govertsen is forecasting gross gaming revenue for April to hold at the MOP25 billion level, slightly lower than last month. On that basis, he forecasts a 2.8 percent year-on-year decline by month-end.

Also citing difficult comparison periods, JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) is betting on a 5 to 7 percent decrease, while Sanford C. Bernstein expects a contraction of between 2 and 4 percent year-on-year. Bernstein analysts suggested that although March showed signs of a

rebound, it remains "unclear how sustainable" that would be in the coming months.

Prospects for the summer are mixed, partly because of traditionally weak June, which was the second-poorest month of both 2018 and 2017, and the lowest earner in 2016.

The consensus view suggests that the coming months will see a slight contraction or zero growth at best, while gross gaming revenues will likely pick up in the closing quarter of the year. For the analysts, a repeat of last year's 14 percent growth is probably off the table for 2019, but moderate single-digit growth is attainable.

## IAS to launch autism center in 2020



Choi Sio Un

Staff reporter

**A**dedicated center for high-functioning autistic citizens is expected in late 2020, according to the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS).

Following an event on autism, Choi Sio Un, head of the department of social solidarity of the IAS told the media that the Bureau is working on a dedicated care center for autistic citizens aged 16 and above who are not mentally handicapped.

The center will be opened to help such citizens better cope with regular social life. Specialized support in areas of interpersonal communications and vocational development will be provided at the center.

As Choi introduced, many autistic people have a narrow range of interests or are fond of repeti-

tive actions. Therefore, special training schemes will be available at the center to stimulate their interest in order for them to acquire certain skills.

Support for parents of autistic children will also be offered at the future center, including counseling, childcare instruction and parent-child communications.

The center is under planning. Construction is expected to commence in early 2020, and it will be located in the public housing project at Fai Chi Kei.

Meanwhile, the Macau Autism Association is organizing a series of events this month to commemorate World Autism Awareness Day, such as art appreciation excursions and art training workshops. St. Paul's Ruins and the Macau Tower will also be illuminated in blue, which is the symbolic color of autism care.





EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
CONSUL GENERAL ALEXANDRE GIORGINI

# There are 'romantic and historical links

Paulo Coutinho

**A**LEXANDRE Giorgini is a happy man in the place he was meant to be, since coming to China was a long-time aspiration.

In his maiden interview with Macau media, Giorgini reveals that he "studied this country a lot, especially when I was a student at Moscow State University."

Last summer, his dream came true: he was appointed Consul General of France for Hong Kong and Macau for the biggest role in his 20-year diplomatic career.

Prior to his assignment to the SARs, Alexandre Giorgini was Deputy Director of Communication and Press and Deputy Spokesperson at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His first assignment abroad was in Rome, after which he served as political counselor at the French Embassy in Moscow, Russia from 2008 to 2012.

He studied history at Sciences Po where he discovered a passion for history and historical figures, particularly Napoleon. France is commemorating the famous emperor's 250th anniversary this year, and the consulate's website is very active posting regular trivia and facts on Napoleon.

The French diplomat supports the development of democracy in both SARs "in the legal framework of the Basic Laws" and has shown a real interest in the Greater Bay Area projects, which already attracted French companies.

Recently, he visited Macau and discussed ways of cooperating with local authorities in the fields of heritage conservation, fashion and, bien sûr, gastronomy.

**Macau Daily Times (MDT) - You have recently been on a visit to Macau where you met some officials from the local administration. Can you tell us the purpose and the results of those meetings?**

**Alexandre Giorgini (AG)** - After taking office last September, I paid several courtesy visits to Macau officials. I had the pleasure of meeting Chief Executive Fernando Chui in October, and last month I had very fruitful meetings with Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam, as well as officials from the Cultural Affairs Bureau. We discussed the many different aspects of our bilate-



ral relations and both parties are committed to stepping up our cooperation, especially in the economic and cultural sectors.

**Our exports to Macau grew by 33 percent in 2018 to 823 million euros.**

We have a flourishing trade partnership with Macau. Our exports to Macau grew by 33 percent in 2018 to 823 million euros, and France is currently the territory's third supplier of goods. French products and services are already visible in all aspects of Macau life: luxury products, wine and gastronomy, of course, but also utilities, water supply and infrastructure. With the support of the France Macau Chamber of Commerce, we look forward to the many opportunities that lie ahead as Macau is emerging as one of the wealthiest places in the world.

We also wish to deepen our cultural cooperation with Macau, particularly in sectors such as cinema, fashion and design. In addition, France has an acknowledged expertise in heritage preservation, so

we hope to cooperate with the Macau authorities to enhance the city's rich cultural heritage. Finally, Macau has a very vibrant culinary scene, so it is a perfect place to develop stronger links with French gastronomy.

**MDT - How often do you visit Macau and keep contact with the French community?**

**AG** - I try to visit Macau at least once a month. I exchange regularly with our partner institutions, such as Alliance Française, and with our contact points and representatives of the French community. My residence is in Hong Kong, but I am also accredited for Macau and my team is [as well]. We have an officer visiting every month to provide administrative services to our compatriots.

**MDT - What are the major problems your nationals face in Macau?**

**AG** - From what I have heard and what I have been witnessing myself, the French who live here are very happy in Macau.

The Alliance Française of Macau (AFM) was founded in 1987 and has been doing a great job of organizing events for the French community and Macau citizens to enjoy. We are very happy that more and more people, especially young children, aim to learn

French. However, the [AFM] current premises have become too small as the association has been growing over the years. So, we need to think ahead to find a bigger, more appropriate place.

There is no French school in Macau, so parents send their children to English-speaking schools or homeschool them with distance-learning material provided by the French Ministry of Education (CNED).

**MDT - Leading up to Le French May and other yearly events promoted or supported by the Consulate, the Chamber of Commerce and Alliance Française, what can we expect in terms of French activities in town?**

**AG** - In the upcoming months, highlights include "Le French May" [featuring] events such as a chamber music concert by the "Ensemble Ouranos", formed by five young musicians from the Paris Conservatory, on 25 May 2019 at the Dom Pedro V Theatre.

The Alliance Française is also very active, with many events to promote French culture with exhibitions, movie screenings and concerts. Furthermore, French artists and writers will participate in many local events such as the Script Road, the Macau Literary Festival.

Obviously, we are looking forward to Bastille Day in July, the Alliance Française's Baroque Music Festival in November with a special programme to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Macau's handover, and the France Macau Chamber of Commerce's annual charity gala in January!

**MDT - Hong Kong's French community is the second largest in Asia after Singapore. Besides the huge gap in numbers, what specifically differentiates the Macau and HK communities?**

**AG** - Both communities are young, half of them being under 35 years old. A majority of them have settled in the region for the long term, as half of them have also been living in either Macau or Hong Kong for more than five years.

Their profiles are very diverse, with expatriates assigned in the region by French companies, entrepreneurs who chose to start their business in Macau or Hong Kong, or young graduates looking for a first professional experience abroad.

Obviously, Hong Kong being an international finance center, many French people working in the financial sector pursue their career in Hong Kong, whereas in Macau, most French people work in the luxury, catering or hotel industry.



# between France and Macau'

**MDT - Do you see a growth trend in the French community in Macau as the city pursues its vision of becoming a more international city? Why?**

**AG -** The figures have been growing steadily in the past few years. Macau is attractive to the French because it offers many business opportunities, but also because it provides a very pleasant living environment. There is also a cultural proximity linked to Portugal's heritage in Macau's culture, tradition and cuisine. As a matter of fact, many French people are of Portuguese descent and they feel pretty much at home when they settle here.

We stand ready to support any cultural projects to enhance Macau as an international hub.

**MDT - Macau and Hong Kong were given "starring roles" in the ambitious**

**Greater Bay Area (GBA) project. Some observers see a risk here concerning the maintenance of Macau and Hong Kong's autonomous status, and a possible threat to the "two systems" backdrop. What is your view on the GBA?**

**AG -** I am personally following this project very closely. France is very attached to Macau and Hong Kong's unique specificities, which are a key factor behind their attractiveness for foreign investments. We are looking into what opportunities the Greater Bay Area project could offer to French companies.

**MDT - Are France and its communities in China engaged in the GBA initiative? How so?**

**AG -** French companies have been contributing to the infrastructure projects of the GBA initiative. Dragages-Bouygues Construction was involved in the construction of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau mega-bridge, as well as the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link subsea tunnel section which will connect Lantau island with Shenzhen

**Parents send their children to English-speaking schools or homeschool them with distance-learning material.**

through Hong Kong New Territories.

On March 21 and 22, 100 representatives of French business in Greater China met in Hong Kong to discuss the GBA initiative and how our companies could take part in the development plan.

**MDT - Speaking of politics, what is your view on political reforms in Macau and in HK? Do you support the development of democracy?**

**AG -** France is committed to the stability and the prosperi-

ty of Macau and Hong Kong. We are attached to the "one country, two systems" principle which we believe is a key factor in their attractiveness. We support democratic reforms in both special administrative regions, in accordance with their Basic Laws and the wishes of the people of Macau and Hong Kong.

We will follow the upcoming election process with great interest, as well as what will be organized by the Macau authorities for the 20th anniversary of the handover. There will be a great interest in Macau in this special year!

**MDT - On a more personal note, you were miles away from China - except for learning Mandarin in Moscow - when you landed this job, which looks like a promotion in your career. It must have been - and must still be - challenging for you. Is it?**

**AG -** I have been willing to come to China for a long time. I studied this country a lot, especially when I was a student at Moscow State University and had the opportunity to make an exchange with Beijing Beida University. China's

diversity and the challenges that the country is facing are fascinating. So, I did not think twice when I was offered this posting at the Consulate General in Hong Kong and Macau. Representing my country in this vibrant environment is indeed a great challenge!

**MDT - What was the biggest surprise and the biggest disappointment upon arrival to Macau for the first time?**

**AG -** Obviously, I was amazed by the city's dynamism when I first set foot in Macau. I was impressed by the city's architecture, and also by the contrast between its heritage buildings and modern complexes. I haven't gotten to meet many Portuguese speakers yet, but I would be happy to, as I really appreciate this language that I learned during my first diplomatic experience in Brazil.

On a more personal note, I had the pleasant surprise to discover some traces of French explorer Louis de Rienzi in Macau. This man, who was a soldier in the Napoleonic army, stayed in Macau in 1827, and he left a beautiful poem honoring Portuguese poet Luis de Camões. This can still be seen on a tablet in the Camões Garden and grotto! I was very moved to see that even on the occasion of a family walk in a park, you can discover romantic and historical links between France and Macau!

## French communities highlights

Hong Kong has the second largest French community in any Asian city, after Singapore, with nearly **14,000 people** registered at the consulate. However, the real population is estimated at over 20,000 members.

Two-thirds of the community are **under 40 years old**, and almost one-third is under 18. In the past ten years, the profile of the French community has been rejuvenated, with more young graduates and creators of start-ups coming to settle in Hong Kong. About two-thirds of French people have been living in HK for at least five years.

In Macau, **about 240 French people** are registered with the consulate, approximately half of whom are **under 35 years old**, with another half having been in Macau for more than five years. Half of them live in the Macau peninsula.

## The French soldier-writer who loved Camões

**J**UST last Saturday (March 30), France was celebrating the 230th anniversary of the birth of explorer Louis de Rienzi, the Napoleonic soldier who engraved a poem in stone dedicated to Portugal's greatest poet at the Camões grotto.

Like Camões, Rienzi led a very adventurous and romantic life.

After serving as a captain in Napoleon's armies and fighting in the Greek independence war, Rienzi traveled to Asia and stayed in Macau from 1827 to 1829. Being a great admirer of Luis Vaz de Camões - who was sent to Macau during his third exile in the 1560s - Rienzi wrote a poem in 1827 (on the day of his own birthday) to pay him a tribute.

He displayed it on a tablet in the Camões grotto next to the bust at the very location where the famous poem "Os Lusíadas" was purportedly written. Praising his talent and feeling compassion for his exile, Rienzi wrote: "Le temps qui détruit tout agrandira sa gloire" (time, that destroys everything, will magnify its glory).

The act of admiration wasn't without controversy. In his unpublished book about French travelers' accounts of Macau during the 17-19th centuries, historian Ivo Carneiro de Sousa mentions two travelers who described Rienzi's "graffiti" at the grotto.

In 1859, Jean-Baptiste Benoît Eyriès from Marseille wrote in his depiction of Macau that, "The Camões grotto, the sacred asylum of the poet, was plastered: inscriptions in Chinese and even in French were engraved

there. One of the authors of this sacrilege was one of our compatriots, Louis de Rienzi, who traveled around China around 1826. Then an Englishman, jealous of French glory, covered the verses with a new layer of plaster."

Historian and Orientalist Carneiro de Sousa considers it "a bad poem," but recognizes the important works written by Rienzi on his voyages in Oceania.

As Rienzi returned to France intending to publish stories about his travels to Egypt, Abyssinia, China and the Philippines, he boarded the Dourado, a Portuguese vessel which wrecked on the east coast of Bintang, Indonesia.

In an instant, the fruits of years of labor suddenly vanished for Rienzi, as his research as well as a vast collection of collected antiquities went to the sea. Among them were statues, inscriptions, manuscripts, arms, astronomical instruments, and remains he brought from the ruins of Petra in Arabia, and Syre and Assab in Abyssinia, along with plans and drawings of the places that he was the first to visit. He nevertheless made his way back to Paris where he published some books about China and Oceania, and told the stories of his travels at academies such as the "Société de Géographie."

Louis Grégoire Domeny de Rienzi, born in Cavaillon, on March 30 1789, was a descendant of medieval Italian statesman Cola di Rienzo, and that explains his signature in Camões grotto:

L' Humble Louis De Rienzi, Français d' ori-

gine Romaine, voyageur religieux, soldat et poète [expatré] - soldier, poet, exiled...

The adventurous poetry lover decided to end his life tragically, as he committed suicide by shooting himself in the gardens of a Versailles hospice in 1843. **PC**





## HK's Carrie Lam digging in over extradition

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam is refusing to back down after fugitive Joseph Lau's legal challenge to a proposed extradition plan on Monday. The plan will allow for the transfer of fugitives to jurisdictions that the city has no agreement with, such as mainland China, Macau or Taiwan. Lau is wanted in Macau after he was sentenced in absentia by a local court in 2014 for his involvement in a land bribery scandal. Earlier, Lam watered down the proposal in response to concerns aired by businesses in the city, removing nine white-collar crimes from a list of 46 extraditable offences.

## Macau's cross-border traffic grows by 3.1 percent

Cross-border vehicle traffic of Macau grew by 3.1 percent year-on-year to 373,500 trips in February, with nearly 20,000 trips crossing the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) said on Monday. In the first two months of 2019, cross-border vehicular traffic rose by 6 percent year-on-year to 830,600 trips. The DSEC information also showed that the total number of licensed motor vehicles was about 239,300 at the end of February, down slightly by 0.4 percent year-on-year. Light motorcycles (25,600) dropped by 10.3 percent whereas light automobiles (108,200) and heavy motorcycles (97,900) rose by 1 percent and 1.2 percent respectively.

## Guangzhou eases limitation on scattering ashes

Guangzhou, provincial capital of Guangdong, started to ease the limitation on ashes of the deceased being scattering into the sea as of Monday to allow more people to participate in the activity. The city noted that the service is not only open to local permanent residents but also to the deceased without local household registration who died and were cremated in the city, according to the city's civil affairs bureau. In 1988, Guangzhou was the first in the country to launch the ceremonial scattering of ashes in the sea. By the end of 2018, the ashes of over 24,000 people in Guangzhou were scattered into the sea.

# Art Basel Hong Kong attracts record 88,000 visitors

**T**HE 7th Art Basel Hong Kong has ended with 242 galleries presenting works by renowned and up-to-date artists from around the world.

The five-day fair, which ended on Sunday, attracted a record 88,000 visitors.

Collectors from 70 countries and regions and representatives from more than 130 top international art galleries and institutions attended the fair. Collectors, mainly from China, South Korea and the United States, recorded strong sales at all levels of the market.

"Our sales record is impressive, with Asian and Western collectors keen on gallery artists. The art market has continued to lean towards Asia in recent years, and we have met a number of new collectors and sold a range of works to local organizations," said Alex Logsdail, the international director of Leeson Gallery.

At this year's exhibition, the East and West art galleries are working side by side, presenting high-quality works and excellent projects. Eight Asian art galleries made their debuts at

COURTESY ART BASEL



the exhibition. Five of them participated in the main exhibition areas, including Beijing Art Now Gallery, Galerie du Monde from China's Hong Kong, Tang Contemporary Art, and so on.

"I am impressed by the outstanding performance of the Asian galleries, which enables visitors to learn about the rich historical heritage of the region. The exhibition is a unique opportunity to explore the world of art in depth, thanks to the work of leading artists from all over Asia," Director Asia for Art

Basel's show in Hong Kong Adeleine Ooi also said.

Almine Rech Gallery has been involved since the first Hong Kong exhibition. Almine Rech, owner of this gallery, said he was delighted to see the show evolve both in terms of the quality of the work and the diversity of the collectors.

At the same time, Hong Kong hosted a number of cultural events such as Art Central, Asia Contemporary Art Show and Spring Auction held by some auction houses. The booming

art market in Hong Kong has become an international focus for some time.

"Hong Kong's cultural activities are on the rise and many museums and foundations have organized first-class exhibitions to give visitors a rich artistic experience," Sadie Coles, owner of the Sadie Coles HQ Gallery, said on Saturday.

Art Basel was founded in 1970 in Basel, Switzerland, and landed in Hong Kong in 2013. It is held annually in Basel, Miami and Hong Kong. **DB/Xinhua**

## SCIENCE | HONG KONG

# Thirteen new ant species discovered

**A**N addition of 13 new ant species, with three totally new to science, have been recorded in Hong Kong, researchers from the University of Hong Kong said in an announcement this week.

In two separate articles recently published in Zookeys and Asian Myrmecology, Benoit Guenard, an assistant professor from the university's School of Biological Sciences, and his team expanded the knowledge on Hong Kong ants by adding 13 species to the 174 species officially recorded.

The three brand new species, new to science and thus far known only from Hong Kong, are of the genus *Strumigenys*. They are tiny, measuring only 2-4 mm long but are astounding predators of the small ar-

thropods living in the forest leaf-litter. They can open their mandibles widely and snap their prey with the fast-closing movement of their mandibles.

Another five species of *Strumigenys* are newly recorded from Hong Kong, but had already been described from other Asian regions; the rest of the five species are non-native to Hong Kong, four belonging to the *Strumigenys* genus, and one, *Brachymyrmex patagonicus*, are recorded for the first time in Asia.

According to the university, *Brachymyrmex patagonicus* is an urban pest well-known for its ability to enter and establish nests within a wide range of buildings, like hospitals, hotels, schools, and houses, and colonise various

rooms such as kitchens, offices, and laundry rooms, but also more sensitive areas such as infirmary and neonatal units.

If the population of *Brachymyrmex patagonicus* in Hong Kong was to proliferate, it would most likely induce an increase in pest management costs; and more harmful for the environment and populations, a more frequent use of pesticides.

Last year, Macau researcher Leong Chi Man discovered a rare ant genus in Ilha Verde, together with two other academics. The unique characteristic of the species is a large hook in the mouth.

The name *Leptanilla macauensis* was approved by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. **DB/Xinhua**

# International resort island approved for Hengqin

Staff reporter

**C**HINA'S State Council has recently approved the plan submitted by Hengqin to develop an island of 106.4 square kilometers with international resorts.

According to the approval, the administration of Hengqin can utilize its land and territorial waters for the development.

The plan of transforming Hengqin into an international leisure and tourism island was approved in principle by the State Council. Along with the approval is the definition of Hengqin's territorial waters.

The State Council requires Hengqin to develop the island abiding to the latest instructions given by the Chinese Communist Party. In addition, it should be developed in such a way that it follows the central strategy for development of the Greater Bay Area.

For example, the island should also help to drive the diversification of Macau's economy, the approval document notes.

In the course of the development, Hengqin must adhere to a series of guiding instructions given by the Central Government.

The tourism industry welcomes the approval. Online travel agency Ctrip of China expects the approval to further invigorate the tourism industry of Hengqin.

Hengqin Island is the largest of the 146 islands under the administration of Zhuhai. Its size is three times that of Macau.



## FORUM

MDT/Macauhub

**T**HE ports of Mozambique, Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe will be linked to the Chinese 'Belt and Road' initiative, which will have a "central hub" in East Africa, wrote researcher Paul Nantulya.

The researcher, in a study for the Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, said that East Africa, as central hub in the Chinese strategy, will be linked by "planned and/or operating ports, pipelines, railways and power stations built and financed by Chinese companies and lenders."

The importance of the region is highlighted by the already inaugurated Mombasa-Nairobi railway, as well as the electric railway line from Addis Ababa to Djibouti, where China has established its first naval base abroad and has interests in a deepwater strategic port.

According to Nantulya, the Silk Road will connect with the planned Chinese port infrastructure in Sudan, Mauritania, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Gambia, Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cameroon, Angola and Namibia.

Another route links Djibouti to Gwadar, Hambantota, Colombo, Myanmar and Hong Kong, "The final arc of this corridor connects Walvis Bay to the Chinese port clusters in Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya before also con-

# Príncipe ports linked to the China Belt and Road initiative



necting to Gwadar."

"These revitalized trade routes help China to diversify its supply chains and create a Blue Economic Passage to connect Africa to new shipping lanes in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar," Nantulya said.

The researcher also wrote that

the Belt and Road initiative, "also increases Beijing's control over critical global supply chains and its ability to redirect the flow of international trade," and that, "initiatives to open new shipping lines and expand strategic access to China's ports around the world," are central to those efforts.

In 2017, Chinese state-owned enterprises – already active in 40 ports in Africa, Asia and Europe – announced plans to buy or obtain stakes in nine foreign ports, all located in regions where China plans to develop new sea routes, including São Tomé and Príncipe, where a new deep-

water port is planned.

In Africa, discussions on the Belt and Road have focused on supporting the continent's infrastructure needs, which the World Bank says require USD170 billion a year over 10 years.

Nantulya added that parliaments, public officials and other supervisory bodies in African countries should actively follow up negotiations with China so that negotiators are more receptive to local demands.

The initiative, he said, may have benefits for African countries, but "much will depend on the relationship between China and Africa being placed on an equal footing," as the Belt and Road is "first and foremost a Chinese geopolitical project to promote China's big strategy."

"The challenge for Africa is to define where its interests converge with those of China, where they diverge, and how areas of convergence can be shaped to advance African development priorities," the researcher concluded.

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**C**HINA'S homegrown nuclear technology is gaining favor in the battle for the nation's next generation of reactors, according to a state-owned developer, as it seeks to move on after delays and cost blowouts from imported designs.

China's reactor, known as the Hualong One, will be faster and easier to repair and maintain than competing foreign designs because it will be made domestically, according to Chen Hua, chief executive officer of China National Nuclear Power Co., which builds and operates nuclear power projects in the country.

"We prefer the Hualong One," Chen said in an interview Monday on the sidelines of a nuclear conference in Beijing.

The global nuclear industry has been awaiting a revival in China after cost overruns and stricter regulation after the 2011 Fukushima disaster in Japan stalled approvals and construction of new units. The country's expanding energy demand growth and drive for cleaner energy have been a magnet for Western reactor makers, including Westinghouse Electric Co. from the U.S. and France's Electricite de France SA.

Their marquee third-generation reactors - the AP1000 and

# Made-in-China reactor gains favor



A worker walks at the China Guangdong Nuclear Power Group Co. atomic plant in Taishan

EPR, respectively - started commercial operations in China in recent months. However they face competition domestically, as state-run China National Nu-

clear Corp., the parent of CNNP, and China General Nuclear Power Corp. promote the production and export of Hualong One.

## SANMEN TROUBLES

CNNP operates the Sanmen project in Zhejiang province, which uses Westinghouse's AP1000 design. After starting

commercial operations at the No. 2 reactor in November, it has since been suspended after a problem with its coolant pump was detected near the

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# at home, US tech falters



end of last year.

Westinghouse is currently examining the defect at Sanmen No. 2 and will be responsible for the cost of fixing it as

the unit is still under warranty, Chen said, adding that repairs may take as long as eight months. A China-based Westinghouse spokesman declined to comment, and representatives in the U.S. didn't respond to requests for comment Monday.

Curtiss-Wright Corp., the U.S. company that made the pump, is working with Westinghouse to determine the cause of the problem. Its liability, "if any, is limited to the cost of repairing a part," up to the cost of replacing the entire pump, according to a statement Monday. There are 12 other pumps in operation at three other AP1000 reactors in China.

The race to build more reactors in China may intensify as it ended a three-year freeze on reactor approvals this year, clearing the construction of four Hualong One units. The decision was seen as an indication of China's future preference, BloombergNEF analyst Hanyang Wei said.

## 'DEAD IN CHINA'

China is expected to build more than 30 Hualong One

nuclear reactors based on project approvals and development plans, Hualong International Nuclear Power Technology Corp. Deputy General Manager Xian Chunyu said at a conference in Beijing on Tuesday, without specifying a time frame. The nation may approve as many as 10 nuclear units this year, none of which will be AP1000s, according to the China Nuclear Energy Association.

"The AP1000 is dead in China, and it may very well be dead all over the world," Chris Gadowski, lead nuclear analyst for BloombergNEF, said in an interview. "I don't know who would place an order for a new AP1000."

Chen said third-generation designs are similar in costs, but ultimately the choice will boil down to which technology has a better support system and see costs fall the fastest.

## IN THE RUNNING

That's not to say the AP1000 is completely out of the race, according to Chen, who said the company may still use it in

future reactors. He called the technology an "advanced idea" and forecast it may take another eight years for it to reach commercial scale. China is also developing an upgraded version, called the CAP1400.

"It's like a really good car, super advanced, but what happens if you don't have enough spare parts," Chen said. "So you might prefer something more mature. If there are any issues, you're able to fix it."

EDF said yesterday it's in discussions with China about the potential for more EPR reactors in the country. The French nuclear giant partnered with CGN to build Taishan No. 1 and 2 in Guangdong province, and sees "room" for EPR development in China and at Taishan.

"Sites for nuclear are getting scarce so it's good to consider high capacity power plants," Fabrice Fourcade, chairman of EDF China, said in an interview. "At the moment the only one available before CAP1400 comes into operation is EPR." **Bloomberg**

## corporate bits



### SANDS CARES AMBASSADORS PARTICIPATE IN GREEN WEEK, SPORTS CARNIVAL

Sands Cares Ambassadors recently supported two local government initiatives: the 38th Macau Green Week – Green Walk and Tree Planting Activity and the Women's Sports Carnival 2019, the gaming operator said in a statement.

In line with the annual Green Week, organized by the Municipal Affairs Bureau, around 40 Sands Cares Ambassadors hiked along the Grand Taipa Hiking Trail and replanted trees on Taipa Grande Hill.

About 20 Sands Cares Ambassadors went to the Tap Seac Multi-sport Pavilion to participate in the Women's Sports Carnival 2019, according to the gaming operator, in support of the government's initiative to promote health and wellness.

Organized by the Sports Bureau and the Women's Association of Macau, the event aims to promote the benefits of sports and to encourage the cultivation of a lifelong exercise habit.

AD



## Breakfast Briefing

Thursday 4 April  
with

**Guest Speaker: Eric Fong**  
Director of Marketing Department  
CAM - Macau International Airport

## Macau International Airport (MIA) Future development and planning

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## FOREST FIRE

# 30 firefighters killed while battling blaze in western mountains

**FIREFIGHTERS** yesterday contained a blaze high in the rugged forested mountains of western China that claimed the lives of 30 colleagues, in one of the worst disasters for the emergency services in recent years.

Open flames had been extinguished and only a few areas continued to emit smoke with no further threat of the fire spreading, state media reported.

The bodies of the dead firefighters were transported to the town of Xichang in Sichuan province, where residents presented flowers as a sign of mourning and respect. Some of the bodies could only be identified through DNA, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

Three helicopters brought in reinforcements to fully extinguish the blaze.

Changing winds Sunday apparently trapped 27 firefighters and three helpers who were battling the blaze in a remote area at an altitude of 3,800 meters, according to the Ministry of

Emergency Management. Despite attempts at a rescue, all 30 were confirmed dead on Monday afternoon.

The Xinhua News Agency quoted firefighting official Xie Shi'en as saying wind, dry air and combustible material created an explosive effect where the men were working.

"Among all scenarios in a fire, an explosive blaze is the most dangerous, and also very rarely seen," Xie said.

The fire advanced so quickly that trees on the ridge were consumed within seconds, surviving firefighter Wang Xin told Xinhua.

"All of a sudden, we heard a huge explosive sound from the ridge and saw a wall of flame rocket up. It was as if someone triggered a huge flamethrower," Wang said.

Most of the dead were in their 20s, although at least two were teenagers, according to state media reports. One had recently married.

China has been battling forest fires in recent weeks in various par-

AP PHOTO



ts of the vast country, including on the outskirts of Beijing, fed by dry weather and high winds across many northern areas.

The death toll appeared to be the worst among Chinese firefighters since 2015, when an explosion at a chemical wa-

rehouse in the port of Tianjin killed 173 people, most of them firefighters and other first responders. **AP**

## Beijing said to name Peng to lead USD941b sovereign fund

**CHINA** has named a new chairman for its USD941 billion sovereign wealth fund, people with knowledge of the matter said, ending a two-year stretch without a top leader.

Peng Chun, the chairman of Bank of Communications Co., was tapped to lead Beijing-based China Investment Corp., the people said. The 57-year-old replaces Ding Xuedong, who left in February 2017 for the State Council. Ju Weimin was named general manager, replacing Tu Guangshao, who's retiring, the people said, asking not to be named as the appointments aren't public yet.

Peng's appointment may put an end to a period of uncertainty at CIC during which several senior executives departed. Besides replacing those managers, a key task for Peng and Ju is tweaking an investment approach that has

BLOOMBERG



Peng Chun

at times been vulnerable to swings in public markets.

The appointments were announced to a small group of CIC executives yesterday, two of the people said. An email sent to CIC's press office didn't receive an immediate response.

CIC has been under pressure to diversify investments and reduce its exposure to volatile public markets. Created in 2007 to pursue higher returns on China's then surging foreign-exchange reserves (a stockpile that has shrunk 23 percent from its 2014 peak),

the fund hasn't received any further capital injections from the government since 2012.

To that end, CIC plans to boost alternative and direct investments to 45 percent or more of its overseas portfolio in three years to seek more stable returns, Tu said a year ago. While the fund reported its best annual return on overseas investments in 2017, last year's performance was "certainly"

worse because of global market fluctuations, Tu said in an interview at China's annual legislative meetings in Beijing last month.

Some of CIC's senior departures have included Zhang Qing, the executive vice president at direct investment arm CIC Capital, and Winston Ma Wenyan, the former head of CIC's North America office.

Peng, who has a master's degree in economics from a school that was run by the central bank, served as vice president of CIC for more than three years before being appointed president of BoCom in October 2013. He became chairman of the Shanghai-based lender in February 2018. BoCom boosted its profit by 4.6 percent in 2018, the fastest pace in four years.

His appointment adds to a string of recent management changes at China's top banks and financial regulators. In the latest example, China Construction Bank Corp. named Liu Guiping to replace retiring President Wang Zuji last month. **Bloomberg**

## 23 children sickened in suspected poisoning

A kindergarten teacher has been arrested in eastern China after 23 students were sickened in a suspected act of deliberate poisoning, police said yesterday.

The teacher, identified by the surname Wang, is believed to have adulterated the children's food with sodium nitrite, the Jiaozuo city police said on their official microblog.

Overexposure to sodium nitrite can be toxic and possibly fatal. Police said they were still looking for a motive in last week's incident.

Schoolchildren in China have been the target of often fatal attacks by people bearing grudges or considered mentally ill.

In 2002, 42 people, mostly schoolchildren, died after eating snacks laced with rat poison in the eastern city of Nanjing. The killer, who apparently was jealous of his rivals' thriving business, was swiftly sentenced to death and executed. **AP**

**Peng's appointment may put an end to a period of uncertainty at CIC**



# Xi fails to calm Europe as Juncker takes another swipe at China

Alexander Weber

**E**UROPEAN Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker stepped up his criticism of Chinese trade practices just days after President Xi Jinping sought to soothe European concerns in Paris.

At the March 26 meeting, held together with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the EU side explained that “it can’t stay like this, that Chinese companies have free access to our markets in Europe, but we don’t to the markets in China,” Juncker told lawmakers in the German state of Saarland on Monday.

He also said Chinese investments in the continent can make it harder in the EU to



agree on foreign policy. “One country isn’t able to condemn Chinese human rights policy because Chinese investors are

involved in one of their ports,” Juncker said. “It can’t work like this.”

Europe has become more vo-

cal in its criticism of China as of late, calling the country a partner as well as an economic competitor and a “systemic rival”

on governance. Concerns are mounting over China’s growing influence, predatory investments and possible hacking of 5G data networks.

The EU has also been divided over China’s Belt and Road infrastructure project, which some see as a threat to sovereignty. Italy’s populist government last month signed on to the initiative, brushing off the concerns.

Juncker said he’s not against the project “as long as the conditions are right.” If European companies can profit from it and “if you don’t only meet Chinese workers on these construction sites but also European workers, then this is all feasible,” he said.

On a trip to Europe last month, Xi sought to lay to rest suspicions about his global plans.

“We cannot let mutual suspicion get the better of us,” Xi said at a joint news conference with Juncker, Macron and Merkel. “We must not always be guarded against each other and worry that they may do something behind our back. That is very important. That is something we need to avoid.” **Bloomberg**

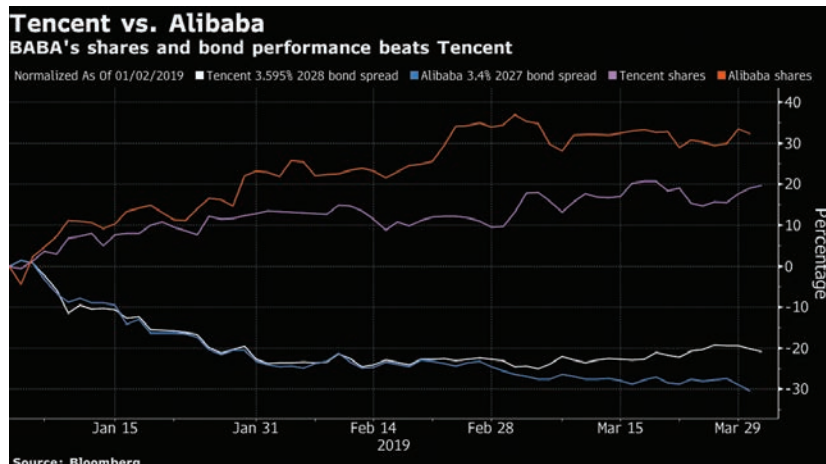
## Tencent is said to plan Asia’s biggest dollar bond this year

Carrie Hong & Lulu Yilun Chen

**T**ENCENT Holdings Ltd. is planning to raise around USD5 billion through a dollar bond sale today, according to people familiar with the matter.

China’s social media leader received an issuance quota of \$6 billion from China’s National Development and Reform Commission, people who aren’t authorized to speak publicly and asked not to be identified said. Once priced this could become the biggest dollar bond offering in Asia excluding Japan so far this year, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Tencent declined to comment in an emailed statement.

It plans to use about \$3 billion of the new bond proceeds to retire maturing debt, including the \$2 billion notes that are due in May, a company executive said in an invest-



tor call yesterday. Tencent last came to the dollar bond market in January 2018 when it priced \$5 billion four-part offering. The spread over treasuries on those bonds has risen since pricing, with premium on its 10-year tranche up by about 35 basis points.

Tencent is recovering from a bruising year of regulatory crackdowns as game approvals slowly resume. The company missed the mark on its earnings in the December quarter by most in a decade. To weather slowdowns in its core

business and the economy, the owner of WeChat is spending billions to sustain growth with investments in everything from cloud and entertainment to retail.

Tencent’s executives said during an earnings call in March that the company plans to continue to spend big for content acquirement and production as it locks horns with Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. and iQiyi Inc. for viewer time.

The WeChat operator overhauled its structure in September to capture opportunities

in what founder Pony Ma brands the emergence of an “industrial internet.” It set up a cloud and smart industries division to spearhead its investments in areas from retail, connected cities and security to education, manufacturing and healthcare. The spending spree is diversifying its revenue make-up.

The company has hired Deutsche Bank AG, HSBC Holdings Plc, Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Morgan Stanley to arrange fixed income investor calls from yesterday. **Bloomberg**



## World trade forecasts slashed again amid US-China standoff

Jamey Keaten, Geneva

**T**HE World Trade Organization has cut its forecast for trade growth this year by more than a percentage point, to 2.6 percent, due to an economic slowdown and amid a trade conflict between the United States and China.

The downgrade — from 3.7 percent forecast issued in September — reflects how quickly the prospects for global business are fading as, among other things, the U.S. and China struggle to agree on how to lift tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars-worth of trade.

“With trade tensions running high, no one should be surprised by this outlook,” WTO Director-General Roberto Azevedo said yesterday.

Beyond the trade war, the WTO has cited weaker economic growth in North America, Europe and Asia — largely as the effect of fiscal stimulus by the Trump administration wears off. It noted a “phase-out” of monetary stimulus in Europe and China’s efforts to shift its economy away

from its traditional reliance on manufacturing and investment toward services and consumption.

In 2018, trade grew by just 3 percent — far below the WTO’s forecast for 3.9 percent, which had itself been downgraded last year. And next year, the Geneva-based trade body expects only a small uptick in trade growth by volume next year, to 3 percent.

The WTO oversees international trade rules and settles disputes between countries. The Trump administration has also been critical of the WTO, accusing it of being “unfair” with the United States.

The U.S. has slowly squeezed the WTO by blocking appointments to its dispute settlement group, the Appellate Body, which could in December fall below the minimum number of members required.

Azevedo pointed to the “fundamental importance of the rules-based trading system,” saying that its weakening would “be an historic mistake with repercussions for jobs, growth and stability around the world.” **AP**



AP PHOTO



KIM JONG NAM

# Detailed and public, murder may never be solved

Eileen Ng & Eric Talmadge, Kuala Lumpur

**T**HE murder of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's estranged half brother at an airport in Malaysia was brazen, intricately orchestrated and, thanks to scores of security cameras, witnessed by millions around the world.

The real masterminds behind the killing, however, may never be brought to justice.

The murder charge was dropped against an Indonesian woman, who was freed last month. Her co-defendant, a Vietnamese woman who is the only suspect in custody, pleaded guilty — not to murder, but to the lesser charge of using a deadly weapon to cause injury — and will be freed as early as next month.

Her guilty plea and sentencing on Monday concluded more than two years of legal proceedings. But it cleared up none of the mystery.

Here's a look back at the crime, the missing masterminds and the ending.

## THE CRIME

On Feb. 13, 2017, when Kim Jong Nam appeared at a check-in counter at a Kuala Lumpur airport terminal, he was jumped by two women who smeared something on his face. He soon began to feel ill, found his way to a medical station and was taken by ambulance to a hospital. He was dead within a matter of hours.

The women — Indonesian Siti Aisyah and Doan Thi Huong of Vietnam — were arrested soon afterward.

Huong was seen on security

video wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with "LOL" across the chest. The video, and video of the chubby, blue jean-clad victim staggering around before his death, went viral.

From the start, this was obviously no ordinary crime.

Aisyah and Huong were accused of using VX nerve agent, a poison developed for military use, and the victim was the eldest son of the late North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, and half brother of current leader Kim Jong Un.

## Investigations into Kim's death led to a diplomatic spat between Malaysia and North Korea

For a time, Kim Jong Nam had been seen, at least by outside experts, as a potential heir to the country's leadership. But he was caught, and humiliated, trying to enter Japan in 1998 to visit Tokyo Disneyland. He ended up in de facto exile, spending most of his time in Macau, a Chinese territory famous for its casinos.

By the time of his death, he wasn't part of the North Korean political scene. But his freedom to reside in Macau indicated he had some Chinese support. It's possible he was seen by some as a viable replacement if Kim Jong Un were ever to be removed from power.

Soon after Kim Jong Nam's murder, his son, Kim Han Sol, appeared in a YouTube video in which he claimed he, his mother and sister were under the protective care of a group calling itself "Cheollima Civil Defense."

The same group is believed to be behind an attack on the North Korean Embassy in Madrid last month in which 10 people allegedly shackled and gagged embassy staff before escaping with computers, hard drives and documents.

## THE MISSING MASTERMINDS

Malaysian officials have never officially accused North Korea of involvement in Kim's death. North Korea has denied any involvement.

But prosecutors made it clear throughout the trial they suspected a North Korean connection.

Four North Korean suspects were seen on airport security video discarding their belongings and changing their clothing after the attack. The North Korean Embassy has also been implicated, with an embassy official helping obtain flights out of Malaysia for the four men, and using the name of one of its citizens to buy a car that took the suspects to the airport.

At Malaysia's request, Interpol issued a "red notice" for the four North Koreans wanted in connection with the killing.

Investigators said the North Korean suspects met the women at the airport and were believed to have provided them with the VX nerve agent used in the murder.

The North Koreans are suspec-

ted of scouting and training the women, who say they thought they were taking part in a candid camera-style prank show for television. Malaysian police believe the North Korean suspects flew out of the country the day of the killing and returned to Pyongyang.

Investigations into Kim's death led to a diplomatic spat between Malaysia and North Korea. Malaysia scrapped visa-free entry for North Koreans and expelled North Korean Ambassador Kang Chol after he rejected Malaysia's investigation and insisted the victim was an ordinary citizen who died of a heart attack. Kang Chol also accused Kuala Lumpur of colluding with outside forces to defame North Korea.

North Korea then banned Malaysians in its country from leaving, entrapping three diplomats and six of their family members. The nine Malaysians were only allowed to fly back after Malaysia released Kim's body to North Korea and allowed the North Koreans to leave, including an embassy official and a North Korean Air Koryo employee wanted by police for questioning over Kim's death.

Following last year's summit between President Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un in Singapore, Malaysia's government has said it may re-establish ties with North Korea and reopen its embassy in Pyongyang.

## THE ENDING

With the North Korean suspects missing, the two women were left to face the charges.

After some high-level lobbying by Indonesia's government, the

Malaysian attorney general decided to drop the murder case against Aisyah on March 11.

Aisyah, 26, cried and hugged her Vietnamese co-defendant before leaving the courtroom. She was driven away in an Indonesian Embassy car and then flown back to Jakarta, where she thanked the president and other officials for their help.

"I feel happy, very happy that I cannot express in words," she told reporters at Jakarta's airport. "After this I just want to gather with my family."

Huong, 30, also sought to be released after Aisyah was freed, but prosecutors rejected her request.

Both had faced a murder charge that carried the death penalty if they were convicted. Prosecutors on Monday said they were offering Huong a reduced charge, and High Court judge Azmi Ariffin sentenced her to three years and four months from the day she was arrested, telling her she was "very, very lucky" and wishing her "all the best."

Vietnamese officials in the courtroom cheered when the decision was announced.

Her lawyer, Hisyam Teh Poh Teik, said she is expected to be freed by the first week of May, after a one-third reduction in her sentence for good behavior. He said four North Korean suspects still at large were the "real assassins."

As she was being escorted out of the court building, Huong shouted to reporters: "It's very good. I love you." She told reporters earlier that she wants to "sing and act" when she returns to Vietnam. **AP**



Trevor Marshallsea, Sydney

## AUSTRALIA

**T**HE Australian lawmaker who had an egg cracked on his head by a teenage boy for his comments about last month's New Zealand mosque shootings faced a stinging attack yesterday in the first sitting of Australia's Parliament since the attacks.

Independent Sen. Fraser Anning was the target of widespread condemnation after the Christchurch shootings, in which 50 people died, when he blamed the massacre on immigration policies that he said allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand.

Australian white supremacist Brenton Tarrant has been charged with murder in the shootings.

After his comments, Anning faced more criticism for physically striking the teenager who cracked an egg on his head at a Melbourne public appearance — 17-year-old Will Connolly, who became known around the world as "Egg Boy."

Anning will face an official censure motion in Parliament today for the comments, which caused more than a million people to sign an online petition calling for his removal from the national legislature.

But when Parliament resumed in Canberra following a monthlong break, one senior fellow lawmaker took the opportunity to lash out at Anning.

Echoing Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison's comment

that Anning should be charged for striking Connolly, acting government Senate leader Simon Birmingham attacked Anning for his lack of humanity after the shootings.

## [Anning] blamed the massacre on immigration policies that he said allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand

"The lack of compassion you have shown demonstrates, frankly, a basic lack of basic humanity," Birmingham told Anning, adding that his conduct "betrays the rights you have to freedom of speech."

Birmingham said Anning acted

AP PHOTO



in a way that would potentially fuel more acts of terrorism and violence.

"You have failed the test of character I would expect of anybody who is elected to this place," he said.

Birmingham's outburst came after Anning arrived at Parliament saying he had "no remorse" over his comments. Anning then used the Senate's question time to bring

up the egging incident. He quizzed the government about its response to the episode, asking whether it believed politically motivated violence was acceptable in some circumstances.

Birmingham accused Anning of drawing a comparison between his comments about the Christchurch massacre and the egging incident, and said it was an "appalling comparison."

Today's censure motion against Anning has support from both sides of Parliament.

After New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern previously called Anning's comments on the shootings "a disgrace," her deputy Winston Peters called Anning a "jingoistic moron."


"I would call him a four-flushing, jingoistic moron, but you already know that in Australia," Peters said in a television interview with Australia's Sky News.

Immediately after Anning's response to the massacre last month, Morrison said the comments were "appalling and they're ugly and they have no place in Australia."

Anning came under blistering criticism over tweets within hours of the massacre, including one that said, "Does anyone still dispute the link between Muslim immigration and violence?"


"The real cause of the bloodshed on New Zealand streets today is the immigration program which allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand in the first place," he said in a later statement. **AP**

AD



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USA

# Second woman recounts unwanted touching by Biden

Thomas Beaumont & Stephen Braun, Washington

**A**IDES to Joe Biden are striking a more aggressive tone as the former vice president faces scrutiny over his past behavior toward women.

In a statement yesterday [local time], Biden spokesman Bill Russo blasted "right wing trolls" from "the dark recesses of the internet" for conflating images of Biden embracing acquaintances, colleagues and friends in his official capacity during swearing-in ceremonies with uninvited touching.

The move came on a day in which a second woman said Biden had acted inappropriately, touching her face with both hands and rubbing noses with her in 2009. The allegation by Amy Lappos, a former aide to Democratic Rep. Jim Hines of Connecticut, followed a magazine essay by former Nevada politician Lucy Flores, who wrote that Bi-

AP PHOTO



den kissed her on the back of the head in 2014.

The developments underscored the challenge facing Biden should he decide to seek the White House. Following historic wins in the 2018 midterms, Democratic politics is dominated by energy from women. The allegations could leave the 76-year-old Biden, long known for his affectionate mannerisms, appearing out of touch with the party as the

Democratic presidential primary begins.

Lappos told The Associated Press that she and other Himes aides were helping out at a fundraiser in a private home in Hartford, Connecticut, in October 2009 when Biden entered the kitchen to thank the group for pitching in.

"After he finished speaking, he stopped to talk to us about how important a congressional staff

is, which I thought was awesome," Lappos said.

She said she was stunned as Biden moved toward her.

"He wrapped both his hands around my face and pulled me in," said Lappos, who is now 43. "I thought, 'Oh, God, he's going to kiss me.' Instead, he rubbed noses with me." Biden said nothing, she said, then moved off. She said the experience left her feeling "weird and uncomfortable" and was "absolutely disrespectful of my personal boundaries."

The Hartford Courant first reported Lappos' assertion.

Russo didn't directly respond to Lappos, instead referring to a Sunday statement in which Biden said he doesn't believe he has acted inappropriately during his long public life. The former vice president said in that statement: "We have arrived at an important time when women feel they can and should relate their experiences, and men should pay

attention. And I will."

Biden hasn't made a final decision on whether to run for the White House. But aides who weren't authorized to discuss internal conversations and spoke on condition of anonymity said there were no signs that his team was slowing its preparations for a campaign.

Asked by the AP about the accusations against Biden, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said, "I don't think that this disqualifies him from running for president, not at all." She declined to elaborate.

Biden's potential Democratic rivals haven't rushed to back him up. Over the weekend, presidential candidates Elizabeth Warren and Kirsten Gillibrand came closest to calling out the former vice president. Warren said Biden "needs to give an answer" about what occurred. Gillibrand said, "If Vice President Biden becomes a candidate, this is a topic he'll have to engage on further."

Ultraviolet, a women's advocacy group, tweeted: "Joe Biden cannot paint himself as a champion of women and then refuse to listen and learn from a woman who says his actions demeaned her. Good intentions don't matter if the actions are inappropriate. Do better, Joe. And thank you @LucyFlores for coming forward." AP

AD



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Mike Corder, Amsterdam

## AMSTERDAM

**T**HE city of Amsterdam's latest attempt to rein in the nuisance of over-tourism by banning guided tours of the red light district has run into opposition from some of the people it is intended to protect: sex workers.

The Dutch capital plans to ban such tours, saying they are disrespectful and contribute to congestion in the narrow, canal-side streets where scantily-clad sex workers sit behind windows to attract customers.

The first step in the new policy was taken Monday night in the red light district, with tours banned from 7 p.m.

On a recent Friday night, the problem was clear to see: Tourists bathed in a red glow emanating from the windows and peep shows' neon lights were packed shoulder to shoulder as they shuffled through the alleys.

But sex workers' union Proud questions whether banning tours will reduce tourist numbers and argues that guides educate visitors and encourage them to behave more respectfully toward the women.

"It could also be that now there are no guides that people just wander into the area themselves and gawk at the women behind the window and take photos be-

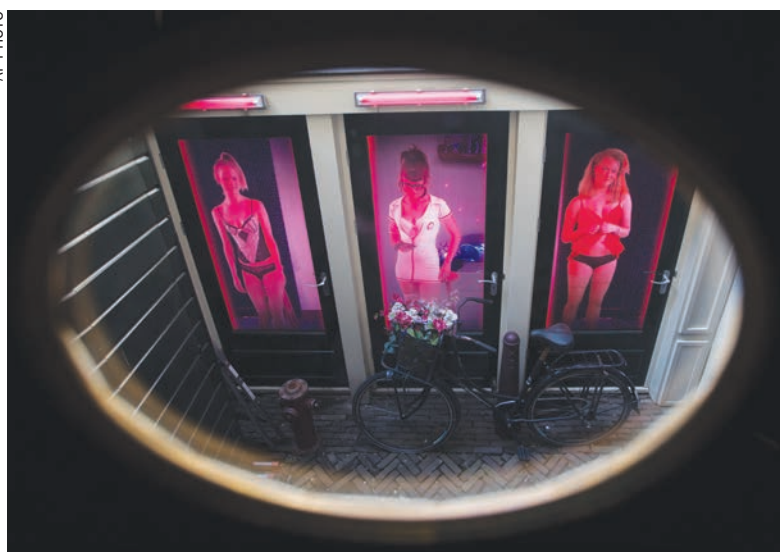
cause there is no one anymore to inform them how to behave or what the rules of the game are in this area," said a sex worker who goes by the name of Velvet and is the advocacy coordinator for Proud. Velvet declined to give her real name, saying that because of the stigma attached to sex work, most sex workers use a working name or pseudonym to protect their privacy and safety.

Amsterdam's Prostitution Information Center, which is housed in the same building as Proud, offers its own red light district tours.

The total ban on guided tours, which is planned to come into full force on Jan. 1, is another step in the city's campaign to reduce the problems associated with over-tourism and part of a broader package of measures reining in tours in the city.

Bobien van Aalst of the Dutch tour guide association Guidor slammed the ban on tours, not just to the red light district but

AP PHOTO



to other historic parts of the city. She said it means guides won't be able to explain to tourists where Rembrandt van Rijn painted one of his first famous works or where the painter's wife is buried.

"I mean it's like in Paris if you're forbidding [tours] to go to the Arc de Triomphe or the Eiffel Tower," she said.

City Hall says that more than 1,000 tour groups per week now operate around the Old Church Square in the heart of the red light district.

"Yeah, there's really over-tourism there — too crowded. I mean there were evenings where [...] residents basically couldn't leave their homes anymore be-

cause the alleys were blocked," the city's deputy mayor, Udo Kock, told The Associated Press.

People who work in Amsterdam's sex industry question whether there are more tourists, or whether similar numbers are squeezing into a red light district that has shrunk in recent years as hundreds of the sex workers' windows have been shuttered in an attempt to diversify the narrow streets.

Kock acknowledges that not everybody is happy, but says many others are pleased that the city is tackling the tours.

The red light district is a tourist magnet, especially after dark, with crowds of people waiting to get into sex shows and visiting the Red Light Secrets Museum of Prostitution, where you can experience the windows from a sex worker's perspective by sitting on a stool in front of a "window" onto which images are projected of men walking past and peering in. **AP**

AD

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Exemplos de Arquitectura Efêmera ou de Baixo Custo

Orador

**Prof. Eng. Marco Imperadori Ph.D.**

Professor do Politécnico di Milano

Data

03 / 04 / 2019

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Inglês

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## what's ON



### PHOTO-SCRIPTS

TIME: 10am-7pm (closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: June 2, 2019

VENUE: Macao Contemporary Art Center - Navy Yard No.1

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

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

DISCOVER MACAU: MUSEUM OF TAIPA AND COLOANE HISTORY

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Mondays)

ADDRESS: Rua Correia da Silva, Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

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

## Offbeat

### IN SWEDEN, NAKED POLICEMAN ARRESTS FUGITIVE IN SAUNA

There's no escape from the long arm of the law in Sweden. Not even sitting naked in a sauna.

Police spokeswoman Carina Skagerlind says an off-duty police officer found himself sitting in the same sauna in Rinkeby, a Stockholm suburb, as a fugitive who had dodged a jail sentence for aggravated assault, among other offenses.

Skagerlind says after recognizing each other, "the naked police officer calmly told the man that he should consider himself arrested."

She said Tuesday the officer called colleagues to pick up the fugitive, adding "the arrest was undramatic and the wanted man didn't try to flee."

The officer was praised for the March 29 arrest and police warned fugitives on Facebook: "We are everywhere. Even if you do not see us, we are there."

## TV canal macau



13:00 TDM News (Repetição)

13:30 Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)

15:00 Água de Mar

15:45 Zig Zag

16:20 Conversa da Treta

16:45 Quem Quer Ser Milionário

17:40 Palcos Agora

18:10 Estórias do Tempo da Outra Senhora

19:00 TDM Entrevista (Repetição)

19:35 Os Nossos Dias Sr.2

20:30 Telejornal

21:15 Montra do Lilau

21:50 LiteratAqui

22:20 Network Negócios

23:15 TDM News

23:50 5 Para a Meia-Noite

01:35 Telejornal (Repetição)

02:20 RTPi Directo

## cinema



### CINETEATRO

29 - 31Mar



#### DUMBO

ROOM 1

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

Director: Tim Burton

Starring: Colin Farrell, Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 112min

#### EXTREME JOB

ROOM 2

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

Director: Byeong-heon Lee

Starring: Gong-Myoung, Lee Hanee, Jun-seok Heo

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 111min

#### US

ROOM 2

7:15pm

Director: Jordan Peele

Starring: Lupita Nyong'o, Winston Duke, Elisabeth Moss

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 116min



#### SHAZAM!

ROOM 3

2:30pm

Director: David F. Sandberg

Starring: Zachary Levi, Djimon Hounsou, Michelle Borth

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 132min

#### LOVE LIVE! SUNSHINE

SCHOOL IDOL MOVIE - OVER THE RAINBOW

ROOM 3

5:00, 7:15pm

Director: Kazuo Sakai

#### 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

## this day in history



### 1993 GRAND NATIONAL ENDS IN 'SHAMBLES'

The Grand National has ended in chaos after a series of events at the start which reduced the world-famous horse race to a shambles.

An estimated 300 million people around the world were watching the race, held at the Aintree racecourse in Liverpool, live on television, when 30 of the 39 riders failed to realise a false start had been called and set off around the racetrack.

The Jockey Club was forced to declare the race void after several riders completed both laps of the gruelling 30-obstacle course and passed the finish line before they realised their mistake.

Aintree has said it is unlikely the race will be re-run, and bookmakers are faced with repaying the £75 million in bets placed on the race.

The disastrous sequence of events began seconds before the race was due to start, when protestors got onto the track near the first fence.

They were spotted, and after a delay, the race officials asked horses and riders to line up again.

Then there were two false starts caused by horses getting tangled up with the starting tape. On the second false start, the recall flag, which signals riders to pull up once they have started, was not waved, and all but nine riders raced away.

The recall man, Ken Evans, is being interviewed by stewards to find out why he did not wave his flag.

The crowd shouted frantically at the jockeys to get them to stop, and officials tried desperately to flag them down from the side of the track, but without success.

In the end, 11 riders had completed the first circuit before pulling up, and seven never realised anything was wrong, racing right to the finish line in the four-and-a-half-mile (7 km) race.

Esha Ness, a 50-1 outsider trained by Jenny Pitman and ridden by John White, crossed the line first. "I could see there were only a few horses around, but I thought the others had fallen or something," White said after the race.

Mrs Pitman, who became the first woman to train a first Grand National winner in 1983 with Corbiere, was devastated.

"This is no Grand National, even though I have won it," she said.

The owner of Esha Ness, Patrick Bancroft, is understood to be considering suing Aintree over the £76,000 prize money for first place.

David Pipe, spokesman for The Jockey Club, said there would be an urgent inquiry into the incident.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Doubts over the competence of the recall man, Ken Evans, were quickly dispelled.

Recordings of the race showed that Keith Brown, the starter, raised the red flag which was to give him the signal that a false start had been declared - but crucially, did not unfurl it, making it almost impossible to spot.

Ironically, those horses which completed the course did so in the second-fastest time in the race's history.

The only other time the race has failed to run since it began in 1839 was during the Second World War, from 1941-45, although it was postponed in 1997 after a suspected IRA bomb warning.

Trainer Jenny Pitman went on to win the Grand National again in 1995, with Royal Athlete. She was awarded the OBE in 1998 and retired from racing in 1999.



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 wailing 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

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CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Cries of discovery; 5- Shampoo brand; 10- Entr' \_\_\_\_; 14- Not of the cloth; 15- Weill's wife; 16- \_\_\_\_ Rabbit; 17- Director Wertmuller; 18- Deep black; 19- Adriatic seaport; 20- Female graduate; 22- Clay products; 24- Faux \_\_\_\_; 25- Drive- \_\_\_\_; 26- Inclined to silence; 30- \_\_\_\_-foot oil; 35- The whole enchilada; 36- Squeal; 37- Emcee's job; 38- Unlawful liquor; 41- Continued a subscription; 43- Crescents; 44- Son of, in Arabic names; 45- Towing org.; 46- "A Passage to India" heroine; 47- Misers; 50- Rotate; 53- \_\_\_\_ Lingus (Irish carrier); 54- Fine sheer fabric; 58- Unpowered aircraft; 62- School session; 63- Japanese porcelain; 66- Shrivelled, without moisture; 67- \_\_\_\_ go bragh; 68- Fatted fowl; 69- Novelist Hunter; 70- NASA failure; 71- Imitating; 72- Mediocre;

DOWN: 1- \_\_\_\_ breve; 2- Salute; 3- Hokkaido native; 4- Shrimp dish; 5- Gratification; 6- Confederate soldier; 7- Rock producer Brian; 8- Execute illegally; 9- Stratum; 10- "Dancing Queen" quartet; 11- Jam-pack; 12- Actress Hatcher; 13- Slang expert Partridge; 21- Writer Hentoff; 23- Confrontation; 25- Explosive stuff; 26- Small hand drum; 27- For all to hear; 28- Duplicate; 29- Joplin song; 31- U-turn from WSW; 32- Fighting; 33- Tire pattern; 34- Fountain treats; 39- Business card abbr.; 40- Atty.-to-be exams; 41- Slugger's stat; 42- Pleasing; 44- Hotel offering overnight accommodation; 48- Hair stuff; 49- Gets up; 51- City on the Mohawk; 52- Chart anew; 54- Bingo call; 55- Prefix with space; 56- Math branch; 57- \_\_\_\_ expert, but...; 59- "Whip It" band; 60- Notable times; 61- City in Western Nevada; 64- Bee: Prefix; 65- Jockey Turcotte;

Yesterday's solution

P	S	A	T		R	O	B	B		G	E	E	S	E
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G	U	A	T	E	M	A	L	A		A	S	S	E	T
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O	U	T		E	V	E	R	L	A	S	T	I	N	G
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F	L	U	O	R	E	S	C	E	N	T		E	A	R
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The advertisement features a background of overlapping squares and diamonds in shades of orange, grey, and white, some with dashed outlines. In the top right corner is the KTRANZ logo, consisting of a stylized 'K' in a red square followed by the text 'KTRANZ' in bold and 'TRANSLATIONS LIMITED' in a smaller font below it. The main headline, 'ACCURATE, TIMELY & COMPETITIVE TRANSLATIONS', is centered in a large, bold, dark red font. Below this, on the right side, is the 'Languages:' section, listing English, Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, French, Arabic, and Russian. On the left side, the 'Services' section lists translations, proofreading, copywriting, data input, and news monitoring. A red-bordered box in the center contains the text 'We translate +10,000 words a day'. At the bottom left, contact information for Ms. Amy Yang is provided, including email and phone/fax numbers. The bottom of the page features the company's address in Macau SAR.

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Dennis Passa

**T**HIS combination might well turn out to be legendary. It doesn't get much better in this sport than an Oscar-winning Hollywood actor and a veteran, high-profile coach teaming up in Australia's National Rugby League.

So far Russell Crowe and Wayne Bennett are doing OK as an owner-coach combination, which some may consider to be two beautiful minds in a gladiatorial kind of sport.

It's only three matches into the new season, but the Bennett-coached and Crowe-owned South Sydney Rabbitohs are one of only two unbeaten teams along with the Melbourne Storm.

Bennett, who will turn 70 next New Year's Day, is regarded as one of the greatest coaches of all time, having coached more than 800 top-flight games since 1987 and winning more than 500 of those. He's won an NRL-record seven premierships — six of them at the Brisbane Broncos, where he was the foundation coach, and one with the Dragons. He also has won the annual State of Origin series with Queensland and the World Cup with Australia. And he's also had success working with the national teams New Zealand and England, jobs he says he took to ensure the international health of the game.

After 25 seasons across two stints with the Broncos, though, his tenure with the Queensland state-based club ended in rather unceremonious circumstances. After a month of back-and-forth media speculation last November, it turned out to be a coaching swap — Bennett moved to the Rabbitohs and the then-South Sydney coach Anthony Seibold moved to the Broncos. Seibold and the Broncos have won one match and lost two to start the season.

Brisbane Broncos chief executive Paul White, upset by media reports that Bennett had already been speaking to South Sydney players well ahead of the expect-

AP PHOTO



South Sydney Rabbitohs rugby league head coach Wayne Bennett attends a training session in Sydney

## RUGBY

# Hollywood star Russell Crowe, coach Bennett team up in NRL

ted coaching change, fired Bennett by voice-mail.

"I made multiple phone calls and I unfortunately had to communicate that decision via voice message and then over email," White said.

Bennett said at his first media conference at Souths on Dec. 4 that he "knew what the ending would be."

"No, I'm not sad," Bennett said after his Broncos exit. "Right now, I'm on my way to Sydney, I'm going to a new club and I'm pretty excited about all that."

South Sydney is as well. Australian media reports that the Rabbitohs, known as the "Bunnies," have picked up several million dollars in new sponsorships since Bennett's move was announced, as well as several thousand

new season ticket holders.

None of that would come from Bennett's pronouncements as coach. He has an avowed dislike of his media commitments, and the media in general. Whoever invented the word "taciturn" might have been thinking of Bennett, a country boy who moved to Brisbane to further his playing career before cutting his teeth in coaching with the Queensland Police Academy team.

But Bennett, who signed a two-year deal, was glowing in his praise of Crowe.

Crowe, who was overseas shooting a movie, left the negotiations for acquiring Bennett to Souths' general manager of football Shane Richardson.

"I love what he's done for the club," Bennett told Fairfax Me-

dia about Crowe. "Without his support, South Sydney wouldn't be where they are today."

"He wears his heart on his sleeve and he's brought back a lot of history to the club. He's made the players proud of the club again, want to play for the club."

South Sydney, one of the oldest rugby league clubs in the world, spent two years in NRL exile in 2000 and 2001 as the sport's administrators tried to restructure a national competition that had high concentration of teams based in Australia's biggest city. But financial support, a public groundswell and successful court challenge helped get them back into the league. Crowe's love of the sport had a lot to do with that once he took over part-ownership of the team in the

wake of its reinstatement into the league.

"I admire people for doing that. It's like when the Broncos started, the original four directors came in there and put it all on the line. That's what Russell has done," with South Sydney, Bennett said.

Fans of both teams will be looking to two dates in May when the clubs meet for the first time this season. The Broncos travel to play the Rabbitohs at Sydney's Olympic stadium on May 2, and the teams have a return date in Brisbane on May 17.

By then, Bennett and Crowe may have had a chance to enhance their star-power status as a serious force in this year's NRL competition. **AP**

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opinion

**Animal Farm**

Albano Martins



**LOCAL CHALLENGES!**

Whilst completely absorbed by the closure of the Canidrome, although much has happened in the last eight months, most of that time I experienced the same old problems which in many cases smelled of xenophobia.

Macau is China and an integral part of the Greater Bay Area that draws it in, even while Macau puts on all the brakes.

It was China that gave Macau the kind of relief we see today, and with it many problems, of course, because there is no growth without problems. Macau, however, insists on strangulating itself with them! Unfortunately, these problems are the fault of those who could have decisively acted but instead did nothing, and so they fall to us, without consideration or pity.

At the end of the Portuguese Administration there was no money even to entice a cock to crow. Yet today, many roosters and chickens formulate speeches of very dubious quality and half-breed patriotism, which when squeezed produce nothing.

China propelled Macau into a period of economic expansion, which with some exceptions, further filled the pockets of many people, although many modest workers have seen their situation little altered.

For this contribution we can count and count on the non-resident workers, mostly Chinese national citizens, who, contrary to what is stated, do not have the same rights as local citizens.

Macau wants the benefits of the Greater Bay Area but as for the “costs” of integration, it seems to be whistling on the side. When they need to confront these challenges, they cling to the fears they have created, because next to them is Greater China, now a great power that has grown on its own merits!

Our citizens can drive in China but Chinese nationals must stay across the border for numerous “smart” reasons not worth remembering.

This is China, for better or for worse. They want only the best for themselves, with the bad to remain on the other side. Some even think that a worker should eat in the bathroom, depending on his “class”. Others demand that all possible jobs, should be exclusively for them, so that they, the local residents, should have access to them in case of distress - as if unemployment at 1.7 percent has ever been a problem! Anyone who wants to work here has unlimited work opportunities! In the last years of the Portuguese Administration the unemployment rate was around seven percent!

This rhetoric against the mutual recognition of driving licenses, and barriers created against the entry of professionals from abroad are a mere exercise in abdication of competitiveness, as is well noted by the CCAC - they are scatter-gun exercises. With this attitude, one of these days, they will kill the goose that laid the golden egg. Without that goose Macau has almost nothing to give.

Macau people must prepare for competition. The world of the future will not be easy for anyone. It is a world of rapid and challenging changes!

Of course, we expect a change that is based on a set of values, on more equality and greater brotherhood - values which much of the West appears to conspire against: the political class clings to the pot and forgets its people. Freedom itself is often taken to the extreme of the unacceptable in the West.

Anyway, China is going to be a challenge, but primarily a challenge to the Chinese themselves - an internal challenge, it must be. A new cold war, however, seems to be dawning on the horizon; hopefully it will not happen. Extremism spreads.

It is no longer enough for mankind to exploit the forests and animals. Now all that is left is to do away with the foolish species that destroyed it all: mankind itself!

**THE SINGAPORE CARRIER GROUNDS TWO BOEING 787-10 JETS AFTER CHECKS**

Singapore Airlines has grounded two of its Boeing 787-10 aircraft due to engine issues, the carrier said yesterday.

It said in a statement that “premature blade deterioration was found on some engines” of its 787-10 fleet at recent routine inspections.

“Pending engine replacements, two SIA 787-10 aircraft have been removed from service,” it said.

The carrier said it would operate other aircraft on the affected routes to minimize disruption. It

said some flights were disrupted but gave no details.

Singapore Airlines said it was consulting engine manufacturer Rolls-Royce and the relevant authorities for next steps and any precautionary measures.

SIA became the first carrier in the world to fly the 787-10, beginning last year. The 337-seat aircraft includes 301 seats in economy and 36 lie-flat seats in business class.



This combination photo shows actress Lori Loughlin (left) and actress Felicity Huffman

**Parents could face tax charges, big fines in admissions scam**

Alanna Durkin Richer, Boston

A wide-ranging college admissions cheating scheme allowed wealthy parents not only to get their kids into sought-after schools but to write off the bribes on their taxes, federal authorities say.

Now some parents who are already facing possible prison time could be hit with additional criminal charges and stiff financial penalties, experts say.

And a slew of others who paid into the foundation that an admissions consultant used to mask the bribes, but haven't been charged in the scam, are also sure to face IRS scrutiny.

The IRS has “been known as the follow the money crowd since the days of Al Capone so they will be following those lists and that money very carefully,” said Mark Matthews, a former deputy commissioner of the agency who's now an attorney at Caplin & Drysdale in Washington.

Consultant Rick Singer funneled millions of dollars from parents through his tax-exempt organization and then used it to pay coaches and other insiders to designate applicants as athletic recruits or cheat on entrance exams, prosecutors allege.

Among the 33 prominent parents charged in the case are Hollywood stars Lori Loughlin and Felicity Huffman, who haven't publicly commented on the case. The actresses and others — including Loughlin's fashion

designer husband Mossimo Giannulli — are scheduled to make their initial appearances this week in Boston federal court.

The parents' bribes were disguised as “donations” to the Key Worldwide Foundation, which purported “to provide education that would normally be unattainable to underprivileged students, not only attainable but realistic.”

Singer's foundation sent the parents letters thanking them for the donation that claimed “no goods or services were exchanged,” allowing many of them to deduct the payments from their taxes as charitable contributions, prosecutors say.

**The IRS has been known ‘as the follow the money crowd since the days of Al Capone’**

After Singer began cooperating with investigators in September in the hopes of getting a lenient sentence, the FBI had him call the parents and pretend that his foundation was being audited by the IRS in an attempt to get them to admit their involvement in the scheme.

“So what I want to make sure is that you and I are both on the same page because what I'm going to tell

them is that you made a 50K donation to my foundation for underserved kids and not that [the proctor] took the test for [your daughter]...” Singer told one parent, according to court documents.

“Dude, dude, what do you think, I'm a moron?” Augustin Huneus, Jr. a Napa Valley, California, vintner, replied. An email was sent to Huneus' attorney on Monday.

The IRS, which has been investigating the criminal case jointly with the FBI, has said it is looking into the parents' payments.

Though prosecutors outlined the tax deduction scheme when the parents were arrested last month, none of them have been charged with tax evasion. Some experts suspect officials are holding the additional charge, among others, over the parents in an attempt to convince them to quickly plead guilty.

To convict them of tax crimes, prosecutors would have to prove that they not only purposely underpaid, but knew they were breaking the law when they did. If may be a difficult sell, but parents could try to argue that their statements on the phone calls don't prove that they knew the deductions were illegal.

“Ignorance is no excuse for breaking the law, but in the tax area is it,” said Philip Hackney, who worked in the IRS' office of the chief counsel and now teaches at the University of Pittsburg School of Law. **AP**

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	65-95 Moderate	
High Density Residential Area	35-55 Good	
Ambient	65-95 Moderate	

SOURCE: DSMG

**WORLD BRIEFS**



**THAILAND's** influential army chief Gen. Apirat Kongsompong warned that the military will fight any moves that threaten the country's system of constitutional monarchy with the king as head of state, in an apparent threat directed at supporters of a new anti-junta party.



**INDIA's** main opposition Congress party led by Rahul Gandhi (pictured) has released its election manifesto ahead of a multiphase general election that begins April 11. The 48-year-old grandson of Indira Gandhi blasted the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party for working “to divide the nation and spread hatred.”



**NEW ZEALAND** lawmakers yesterday voted overwhelmingly in favor of new gun restrictions during the first stage of a bill they hope to rush into law by the end of next week. The bill would ban the types of weapons a gunman used to kill 50 people at two mosques last month. **More on p13**

**FINLAND** A Portuguese surveillance aircraft is suspected of having violated the Nordic country's airspace, the Finnish defense ministry said yesterday. The aircraft made the alleged airspace violation on Monday southwest of the capital Helsinki. Finnish authorities informed Portugal about the violation, and officials are looking into it.