

40 MILLION IS 'OPTIMAL NUMBER'



P3 TOURISM



HARD ROCK, GENTING IN BIDDING WAR FOR CROWN
A once-in-a-generation opportunity to buy established resorts in Australia could escalate into a bidding war

P4-5 GAMING



AN OFFER TAIWAN CAN AFFORD TO REFUSE
Liaison Office's Luo Ying Chun said in Taiwan that Macau will assist its engagement in the GBA project, if it wants

P9 GREATER BAY

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ANOTHER CRACK IN THE BORDER

Helpers exploit loophole to get double pay in China

P3 MDT EXCLUSIVE



WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA Police seized a haul of methamphetamine and heroin concealed in a truckload of bananas believed to have come from Myanmar. The drug shipment weighing 144.5 kilograms was seized in the city of Tongren in Guizhou province after a tipoff. More on p11



SOUTH KOREA In a major reversal, South Korea's Constitutional Court yesterday ordered the easing of the country's decades-old ban on most abortions, one of the strictest in the developed world. More on p13



THAILAND A small but deadly fire at one of Bangkok's biggest shopping malls may have started in a basement room before spreading to an eighth-floor document room because of a bad vent, officials said. Two people were killed in Wednesday's fire and 20 were injured. More on backpage

ASSANGE RESTRAINED IN LONDON COURT

WikiLeaks principal handcuffed



P15

times Extra

There are notable differences in health research findings on tobacco and marijuana, the juxtaposition strikes some as jarring after generations of people have gotten the message that smoking endangers their health.

times Extra

weekend Guide

INSIDE

Coutinho asks about non-local nurses

Lawmaker Pereira Coutinho has written an inquiry asking the local government to explain its plan for allowing non-local nurses to work in Macau. The lawmaker quoted some young local nurses who had expressed their unhappiness with the Health Bureau's plan. They worry the arrangement will affect local people's employment opportunities and salaries. Coutinho asked the government if the authority was considering a public consultation before making the proposal. He also wants the government to explain how it came to its research conclusions, which proposed hiring mainland nurses for only one-third of the salary paid to local nurses in public hospitals.

Coloane flood prevention plan passed

The Coloane Ferry Terminal flood prevention project was approved by the Urban Planning Committee earlier this week. The Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) proposed three flood control facilities be built at the terminal. In addition, the DSSOPT also proposed two landscape plans for Lai Chi Vun and Av. de Cinco de Outubro. The projects consist of building a lake between the ferry terminal and the avenue, and either a lake or a bank between Lai Chi Vun and the ferry terminal.

Lisboa Garden concept approved

The Urban Planning Committee has passed a draft plan for the previous Lisboa Garden land plot, which is located near the Estr. de Sete Tanques in Small Taipa Hill. Previously, a high-rise building project related to this land plot stirred up controversy in Macau. Recently, the land plot's developer submitted a new plan to the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT), with the height of the building reduced to 81.5 meters. During a previous public consultation regarding the land plot, the DSSOPT received 397 opinions, with most expressing the opinion that the government should protect the land plot's current landscape.



COURTS

TUI says government is not 'obliged' by public works' letters

Renato Marques

THE Court of Final Appeal (TUI) has ruled once more in favor of the government in another case regarding the retrieval of land plots that were not developed during the concession period.

This time, the TUI ruling is regarding plots C5 and C6 of Nam Van Lake, which had been leased in concession to Nam Van Development Company Ltd. under the management of two companies linked with it.

Referencing the resemblance of the case to others, the collective of judges led by judge Song Man Lei - and assisted by judges Sam Hou Fai and Viriato de Lima - ruled that although the delay in the development of the land plots could not be attributed to the developer, there is no margin in

the Land Law that allows for an extension on the period of a concession.

An appeal was presented, referencing letters issued by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT), in addition to other internal communication documents, stating that the projects presented were "considered approvable" but that the administrative procedures of the approval "needed to be temporarily suspended until the approval of the new urban plan for that area."

However, the ruling from the TUI noted that the DSSOPT letters could not be used as proof of the right of the concessionaire, since "the information or opinions expressed on such documents do not represent, nor oblige the MSAR," especially after the concession expiration date.

Previously, the executive director of Nam Van Development Company, Patrick Wong, claimed that the company did all they could to develop the land in the given time.

Wong claimed that the company has always fulfilled its duties and cooperated with the government via its representative in the former Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Lau Si Io.

In July 2016, Wong said to the Times, "we [are] not looking for compensation from money that belongs to Macau people. We are looking for a fair solution."

About a month later, on the sidelines of the Legislative Assembly Follow-up Committee on Land and Public Concession Affairs, Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário admitted to being aware of a government "land debt" which

amounted to almost 89,000 square meters.

The Secretary admitted that the debt was years overdue, reaffirming the government's intentions to repay it at that time.

Contrary to what was stated in 2016, the Secretary has since rejected the idea that the compensation will come in the form of any land in newly reclaimed areas, proposing that, as planned, this should be achieved through the allocation of existing, but idle land plots.

At the moment, the land plots attributed to the concessionaires in the cases of the Wynn and MGM swaps (which refer to plots C and D of Nam Van Lake) and those related to the exchange of land over the Seac Pai Van public housing are considered to be included in the government's land debt.

New Macau has a problem with land reclamation transparency

THE New Macau Association (ANM) has issued a statement accusing the government's process for reclaiming non-developed land plots after their lease expirations as lacking transparency.

The Association takes the example of the land plot concession for the "Ocean World" development in Taipa.

According to the state-

ment the government's process takes a long time, is often delayed without justification and both the Legislative Assembly (AL) and the public "know very little about it."

ANM said it had submitted a petition to the AL requesting an investigation into the case of Ocean World in early January. However, that request was refused by

AL president Ho Iat Seng, who said an investigation did not fall within the authority of the legislature, adding that such a case needed to be handled by another "competent authority."

But the reply did not satisfy the New Macau Association.

Speaking on behalf of ANM, member Rocky Chan argued that the "AL

has the authority to conduct hearings on matters of public interest and force the government and other people to testify or provide evidence."

He said it was wrong to suggest that the AL does not have the authority to investigate or follow-up the issue.

Chan accused Ho of "undermining the AL's authority and power to

monitor the current and the future administrations."

The democrat activist added that Ho appeared to be suggesting to society that the AL was intentionally avoiding sensitive matters.

Closing the statement, ANM notes it is continuing to work with lawmaker Sulu Sou to follow-up on matters related with land reclamation within the AL and in civil society, in order to strengthen the power of the Assembly to monitor government activities. **RM**

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SPECIAL REPORT

Migrant workers escape over the border seeking better pay – in China

Lynzy Valles

LOW-EARNING migrant workers in Macau are willing to take great risks to acquire a higher salary and better working conditions – some by escaping across the border to China.

According to those familiar with the matter, the high cost of living in the SAR as well as the absence of a standard minimum wage are contributing to the situation.

Some of these risk-takers resort to illegally overstaying and working in China as domestic helpers, as the pay is usually higher than an equivalent role in Macau.

These workers – particularly those proficient in English – are in demand on the mainland, especially among those with children learning the language.

Visas to China are not costly for the majority of the region's foreign workers, such as those from the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia.

In Macau, these nationals are able to acquire a visa, commonly known as the 144 visa, which is also open to a number of other nationalities.

This visa allows visitors to enter Zhuhai and come back on the same day for only MOP35 per person, but requires that they travel in a minimum group of three.

They are met with a "tour guide" at Gongbei Port of Entry, who then submits the visa paper that contains the applicants' names to the immigration officer.

These visa holders are required to travel back to Macau on the same day.

However, some migrant workers have used this visa to

enter Zhuhai without coming back, causing a headache for travel agencies in Macau.

Earlier this month, two Indonesian nationals working in the city opted not to return to Macau after applying for the 144 visa. The travel agency owner assumed they opted to illegally work in China, similar to other cases in previous years.

As seen on a social media post, these two workers' visas in the SAR are set to end in May and December this year.

Jonathan Aquino, owner of Chinoy Travel & Tours, revealed that the travel agency he is affiliated with in China has decided to temporarily forbid Indonesian nationals from acquiring the visa – particularly those aged 18 to 59 years old.

They fear that their permission to issue the visa will be terminated if more cases appear.

"The problem for now is that they have not discussed what our penalty would be since it is usually Chinese immigration that decide. Usually the penalty would be in form of cash [fines]," Aquino explained.

He said that such escapes from Macau to China have been occurring more regularly in the past few years, and therefore his agency has tightened visa requirements.

A refundable security deposit of MOP2,000 is needed for a group, while tourists are only allowed to hold the visa when accompanied by a local resident or a blue card holder.

"Ninety-nine percent of those who never came back have taken up work [in China]," said Aquino.

According to the Times' sources, these workers can earn RMB5,000 to RMB6,500 per

month. That is significantly higher than Macau's average salary for domestic workers, and the difference is magnified by the low cost of living on the mainland.

One migrant worker from the Philippines told the Times that monthly salaries could go up to RMB7,500 upon changing employer after a year.

However, these workers also find themselves in uncertain situations as many job agencies try to exploit the market.

According to Chinese-language media, many employers in China are being charged high fees by agents to acquire a household worker, with some paying up to RMB20,000.

For some agents, these fees include introducing a helper and dealing with their visa issues, while for other agents, it only covers the finding of an employee.

Daniel Beitler

IN response to widespread discussion on whether the city is fast approaching the maximum number of visitors it can comfortably accommodate, the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) has issued a statement clarifying how its research on Macau's "tourism carrying capacity" ought to be interpreted.

The research showed that the city was able to receive up to 110,000 tourists per day, or 40 million per year, compared to the 35.8 million

TOURISM

IFT clarifies 40 million visitors not maximum, but optimal number

visitor arrivals recorded last year.

In its statement yesterday, the IFT stressed that its research was intended to act as an estimate of the "optimal tourism carrying capacity," taking into account the "social and psychological carrying capacity" and "physical capacity of tourism facilities."

The education institu-

tion added that this is the estimated maximum the city can accommodate without negatively impacting the cultural and natural environment, such as the city's architecture, heritage and community, as well as visitor experiences.

However, "optimal tourism carrying capacity is a dynamic concept, which changes with the

change in visitation volume, tourist behavior, and the supply and demand of tourism infrastructure and products."

The findings have been discussed among government officials, lawmakers and the wider public at a time when concerns of over-tourism in Macau are rife.

And Macau might be welcoming 40 million

arrivals per year sooner than previously thought.

Last year's influx of 35.8 million tourists represented an almost 10% rise from 32.6 million in 2017, according to official data. Meanwhile, the number of visitors in January 2019 rose 24.9% year-on-year, while those in February increased by 15.5% year-on-year.

Responding to me-

dia reports that raised concerns about the city breaching the 110,000 visitor per day suggested maximum, the IFT said that too much attention was paid to the 21 of 104 days when the barrier was broken and not enough was given to the 83 days when the number of visitors was less than 110,000.

The IFT said that a more astute concern stemming from the research is the imbalance in visitation, with exceptional surges during peak travel periods and an excessive concentration of people at certain attractions.

GAMING

Casino bidding war looms as Wynn backs

Angus Whitley & Daniela Wei

FORCED to anchor in licensed clusters in Las Vegas and Macau, the world's biggest casino operators rarely get a free shot at expansion. That's why a once-in-a-generation opportunity to buy established resorts in Australia could escalate into a bidding war.

Crown Resorts Ltd., controlled by billionaire James Packer - the one-time fiancé of singer Mariah Carey - this week disclosed a AUD9.99 billion (USD7.12 billion) takeover offer from Wynn Resorts Ltd. and said the two companies were discussing a deal. The talks were short-lived. Wynn said they were revealed too soon and ended negotiations.

The discussions were initially reported in the Australian Financial Review, a local newspaper, and confirmed shortly later by Crown. It looked like a tried-and-tested play to root out a higher bidder - until Wynn walked away.

But with Crown now known to be on the market, Packer may yet land a deal. After surging 20 percent on the talks with Wynn, Crown stock lost only 9.1 percent when the discussions collapsed. With the Wynn talks on hold for now, rival suitors such as Hard Rock



International Inc. and Malaysia's Genting Bhd. may engage, said Deutsche Bank AG.

A representative for Crown, which owns casinos in Mel-

bourne and Perth and is building a third in Sydney, declined to comment on the leaked talks with Wynn or why they broke down so abruptly.

RARE DEAL

Governments worldwide typically keep a tight grip on new gaming licenses, which partly explains why it's so

rare for a casino company to sell up. A takeover of Crown at the price proposed by Wynn would be the industry's biggest acquisition in more

ATLANTIC CITY

Union: Protect casino workers from hedge fund neglect

THE nation's largest casino workers union is asking gambling regulators to protect employees from neglect by hedge funds or private equity firms seeking short-term returns from casino ownership.

Unite Here approached gambling regulators in three states, asking them to keep workers in mind when approving Wall Street firms for ownership or management changes regarding casinos. The request was made to regulators in New Jersey, Nevada and Ohio.

Bob McDevitt, president of the union's Local 54 in Atlantic City, said private equity ownership has been disastrous for his city's casino industry, with shutdowns and job losses attributable to the firms' pursuit of short-term profits. He cited private equity ownership components of Caesars Entertainment, which owns the Caesars,

Harrah's and Bally's casinos in Atlantic City, and MGM Resorts International, which owns the Borgata.

He said such firms prize the quick extraction of profits from properties for the benefit of investors, often to the detriment of workers and their communities. Caesars Entertainment, for example, shut down the still-profitable Showboat casino in Atlantic City in 2014 because it was not deemed profitable enough.

"We were devastated," said Cindy Pemberton, who worked at the Showboat for 27 years. "No one would have thought that a profitable casino would close down. Many of my other co-workers never found jobs. Some have lost their homes and have to rely on state assistance to get through."

McDevitt said private equity "has been a disas-

ter for Caesars Entertainment, the workers and for Atlantic City. No one should have a license to strip money out of someone's pocket. We've been down this road before. Casinos were closed and thousands of jobs were lost. We don't want to go through another five to 10 years of vanishing jobs so a few guys can make money."

He cited several recent transactions in which hedge funds or private equity investors were able to affect far-reaching changes in casino companies while holding relatively small percentages of the firms, including Carl Icahn winning three board seats at Caesars Entertainment and effectively gaining the right to select its next CEO.

Under the control of Apollo Global Management and TPG Capital following a leveraged



buyout in 2008, McDevitt said Caesars was left a "disastrous level of debt" that ended in the casino company's bankruptcy.

Messages seeking comment from MGM, Caesars Entertainment and Icahn were not immediately returned.

As recently as 2010, nine of the 11 casinos operating in Atlantic City were owned by hedge funds or private equity firms. Four of them - the Showboat,

the Atlantic Club, Trump Plaza and the Trump Taj Mahal - were shut down, although the Taj Mahal was bought by Hard Rock and reopened last summer.

McDevitt said state casino regulators have the power - and the responsibility - to keep employees in mind when approving ownership or management change requests made by the casinos' corporate owners. He cited the case of

the Tropicana, whose former owner was stripped of his casino license in 2017 after letting the property deteriorate while drastically cutting investment in it.

James Plousis, chairman of the New Jersey Casino Control Commission, said his agency will carefully review each request it gets. "We will do our due diligence on all these applications as they come forward," he said. **MDT/AP**

away from Australia deal

than a decade, according to Bloomberg data going back to 2007.

Beyond Wynn, Crown also might be a match for other companies with casino operations in Singapore or Macau because of the potential synergies, said David Bonnet, managing partner at Delta State Holdings Ltd. specializing in hospitality and gaming consulting.

“For businesses already operating in the region, it makes sense too to consider the deal,” said Bonnet. “Acquisition is the only way to enter a monopoly-style market.”

‘OVERSEAS OPPORTUNITIES’

Suncity Group Holdings Ltd. has been expanding outside Macau in recent years and is building a casino in Vietnam. It said it wants to head offshore but Wynn’s offer for Crown was too high.

“We actively keep our eyes on overseas opportunities around the region as the footprint expansion can help

create more synergies among our businesses in each gaming hub,” said Andrew Lo, executive director of Suncity.

Genting, with resorts stretching from the U.S. to Singapore, has experience of the Australian market. In 2012, it owned about 10 percent of Crown’s rival in Australia, Star Entertainment Group Ltd. before a 2017 sell down. A company representative declined to comment.

Hard Rock International, which has casino resorts across North America, is one of the many companies with designs on a casino license in Japan. The company did not respond to a request for comment.

A corporate retreat by Packer has looked more likely since late 2016, when a crackdown in China resulted in 19 current and former Crown staff being convicted of illegally promoting gambling on the mainland. In the same year, he had an ugly public break up with Carey.

Crown is now almost so-

lely focused on its domestic market. Packer quit the board of Crown in March 2018 due to mental health issues and stepped down as a director of his private investment company three months later.

For Wynn, the Crown deal would have represented a chance to catch up to competitors who already have footholds in Asia beyond Macau. Unlike Las Vegas Sands Corp., which has a resort in Singapore, or Melco Resorts & Entertainment Ltd., who’s built a ‘City of Dreams’ in Manila, Wynn is currently confined to the Chinese territory, where expansion is approaching its limit. And they’re all fiercely competing for an operating license in Japan, seen as the region’s next gambling goldmine.

Given its need for growth beyond Macau and the few options available, Wynn may yet return to negotiate a deal with the Melbourne-based company, Sanford C. Bernstein analyst Vitaly Umansky wrote in a note. **Bloomberg**

MASSACHUSETTS

Wynn Resorts suggests banning Steve Wynn from properties

WYNN Resorts is looking to do nearly anything to keep the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) happy. Its latest suggestion was to ban Steve Wynn, its co-founder, from entering any of their properties, reports the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

If the MGC takes up that offer, Steve Wynn would be prohibited from both the Wynn Las Vegas and Encore Las Vegas, the Macau locations operated by Wynn Resorts, as well as the new Boston project at the heart of the MGC case.

That’s not their only offer though. In their 49-page legal brief, Wynn Resorts offered 12 other suggestions to avoid losing their license.

Those suggestions include a compliance committee to investigate sexual assault claims, an annual audit of their policies, routine discrimination and harassment training for their staff, to

stay away from Steve Wynn’s lawyers, and to otherwise keep the MGC in the loop on every complaint raised.

One of the suggested concessions that didn’t make the cut was for CEO Matt Maddox to lose his job. As Steve Wynn’s handpicked successor and right hand man for several years, The Boston Globe’s Joan Vennoch argued he should be forced to resign, as he carries a reminder of Steve’s bad behavior, and likely helped conceal it in some manner.

These 13 new suggestions of Wynn will all go over fairly well, argues Calvin Ayre, but the big question is if they go far enough.

Based on the events of Elaine Wynn’s testimony day, Maddox isn’t a favorite of the MGC, and with the Globe pushing for his resignation as well, that might just be what it takes for Wynn to keep its license. **DB**

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THE PARISIAN MACAO

EDUCATION

USJ reapplies for permission to recruit mainland students

Lynzy Valles

THE University of Saint Joseph has applied for permission to enroll mainland students at the university yet again, but this time with different approach.

According to Fr. Peter Stilwell, university rector, the institute's previous applications in mainland China have all been denied.

This time, USJ has specifically applied for permission to recruit masters students into select programs, including design and history, and heritage programs, and is currently awaiting approval of the application.

The rector also noted that fewer local students were attending the university.

"USJ has always been negotiating with the SAR government regarding recruiting mainland students," the rector said yesterday, on the sidelines of the USJ's annual career day held on its green campus.

Fifty public and private enterprises participated in the career day.

The one-day event featured a series of seminars, along with a keynote speech presented by Tai Kin Ip, director of the Macao Economic Bureau, who spoke on the Greater

Bay Area and the Macau SAR's economic diversification.

There were seminars on the policies and business 'incubator' services in Hengqin, presenting opportunities on the island, and tips on how to apply for public sector roles, held by the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau.

According to the university, the career day offered information on different positions in different sectors including education, gaming, hotels, insurance, banking, social services and entertainment production amongst others.

Several rooms were made vacant for the annual event to accommodate services such as the proofreading of student's CVs and mock interviews for students, in addition to booths for local firms and enterprises.

This year, some 400 students will graduate from their bachelors, masters or associated degrees.

The USJ will also hold its open day tomorrow, in a bid to showcase its offerings for the upcoming academic year to the public.

The private university has opened applications for its undergraduate and postgraduate programs, due by April 30.

ARTS | EXHIBITION

Works of Michelangelo,

Staff reporters

A joint exhibition presented by the Macao Museum of Art (MAM) and the British Museum bringing the original drawings of 42 Renaissance artists to Macau was officially opened last night at a ceremony held at MAM.

Presenting works from renowned figures including Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael, the exhibition seeks to highlight the achievements of Italian art during this period. According to organizers, some 52 drawings will be on display by 42 artists from the Renaissance period in the 15th and 16th centuries.

The touring works of art come from the British Museum, which regularly loans pieces from its collection to other museums around the world.

"Last year we lent 4,700

objects because we're passionate about sharing the collection as much as we can," said Sarah Vowles, the British Museum curator of this exhibition, who attended yesterday's official opening.

This is remarkable, she said, because many of the objects – including the drawings on display at MAM – "are so precious that we can't expose them to the light very often."

The exhibition is divided into six sections: "The Human Figure," "Movement," "Light," "Costume and Drapery," "The Natural World" and "Storytelling." The sections combine to examine some of the themes that characterize Renaissance art.

The exhibition also acts as the debuting program of a series of exhibitions celebrating the 20th anniversary of both MAM and the establishment of the Macau SAR.

Margarida Saraiva, the

local curator of this particular exhibition, said that she has always wanted to collaborate with the British Museum. Yesterday she said she was pleased to "finally have the chance to bring this desire into reality."


The University of Saint Joseph's Creative Industries Faculty has also had a role in bringing this exhibition to reality. Both Saraiva and Prof. Gerald Estadieu of the University are fond of presenting such art to the visually challenged.

A rendering of the drawings made by a 3D printer will allow the visually challenged to have a sense of the artworks by touching them.

As Saraiva explained, "we had the desire to explore other senses beyond vision. So we were in touch with the university, which has been working with 3D printing."


Moreover, the museum has reserved a wall for

AD



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da Vinci, Raphael arrive



visitors to show their own drawing talent, because “the first drawing in history of humanity was made on a stone wall.”

Yesterday’s ceremony was

attended by senior government officials, including Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam, President of the Cultural Affairs Bureau Mok Ian Ian, and

Macao Government Tourism Office chief Helena de Senna Fernandes.

The exhibition will run until the end of June. Admission is free-of-charge.

ECONOMY

IMF slashes its Macau growth expectations

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) has lowered its growth forecast for Macau less than two months after it commended the city’s authorities for their prudent management of the economy.

The latest World Economic Outlook report was released earlier this week. It projects that growth in the Macau SAR economy will slow to 4.3% this year, down from the forecast of 5.3% in the February assessment.

Annual growth in the city will slow a further 10 basis points to 4.2% in 2020 and 4.1% in 2024.

In the February assessment, the IMF warned that Macau faces several medium-term risks, including the diminishing spending power of mainland tourists and the possibility that gaming revenue tax, which provides the bulk of government income, will be unable to keep up with mounting social welfare costs incurred by an ageing population.

The assessment found that

risks to the Macau economy are “tilted to the downside” and “mainly emanating from mainland China.”

Last year, the economy grew 4.7% following a 5.6% expansion in 2018 and 9.7% in 2017, fueled by the recovery of the city’s gaming sector.

The latest forecasts indicate that growth will continue to decelerate in the coming years.

The IMF had reported earlier that growth in the Macau economy should settle at about 5% per year in the medium term. However, following the latest forecasts, which are almost 1 percentage point lower than the medium term estimate by 2024, it is not clear whether the figure will be revised.

In other areas of the economy, the rolling inflation rate, measured by the average of the last 12 months over the previous preceding 12 months, is forecast to fluctuate between 2.5% this year and 2.7% in 2020, with the unemployment rate remaining at 1.8% in both years. **DB**

AD

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SPORT

Women's Volleyball returns to Forum next month

Renato Marques

THE FIVB Women's Volleyball Nations League will return to the Macao Forum volleyball court next month.

A replacement of the former FIVB World Grand Prix, the event will be held in the same format as last year, with a total of 16 teams competing, comprised of 12 core teams and four challenger squads. The teams will compete in 20 countries and regions during the six-week tournament. The event has two stages - a preliminary round during the first five weeks of the event, and a final round to decide the winner during the last week of the tournament, held from July 3 to 7 in Nanjing. Like last year's season, Macau is one of the hosts for the second week of the preliminary round.

The Macao Forum will once more be the stage for the local event which will run for three consecutive days, from May 28



to 30 (Tuesday to Thursday) with teams from China, Belgium, Korea and Thailand competing. The local official sponsor of the event, Galaxy Entertainment Group, is also unchanged from

previous tournaments.

This year, aside from the regular China "home" team (currently the world number two team), spectators will see current world number 19 team

Belgium, and two of the most successful Asian nations in the sport, Korea and Thailand. The competition format remains unchanged, with two matches each day of the three-day event.

Belgium will play Korea in the opening match on May 28. Korea will also play the final game of the local event when they face China on the evening of May 30.

Tickets will be on sale from 11 a.m. on April 16 at 15 designated Circle K convenience stores in Macau, as well as through the official website of the event (www.macaovnl.com). Tickets cost MOP150 per day (two matches included). Spectators wishing to purchase bundled tickets for all the days of the event will receive a 30% discount.

During last week's press conference announcing the event, Sports Bureau president Pun Weng Kun and Galaxy Entertainment Group director Philip Cheng signed a sponsorship agreement for the event in the amount of MOP3 million.

Including the previous competition format, Macau has hosted 22 FIVB events in total since 1994.

In 25 years of hosting, Macau has been chosen to host the final round only on two occasions, in 2001 and 2011.

In 2018, the first Nations League competition was won by the U.S., with Turkey and China coming second and third respectively in the final round held in Nanjing.

AD



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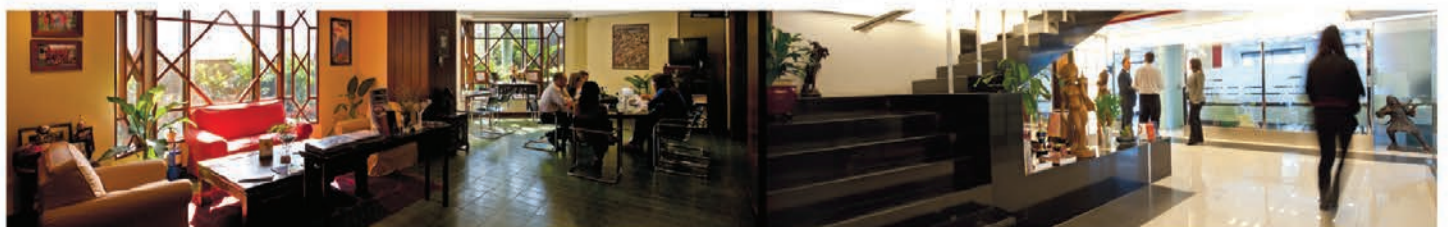
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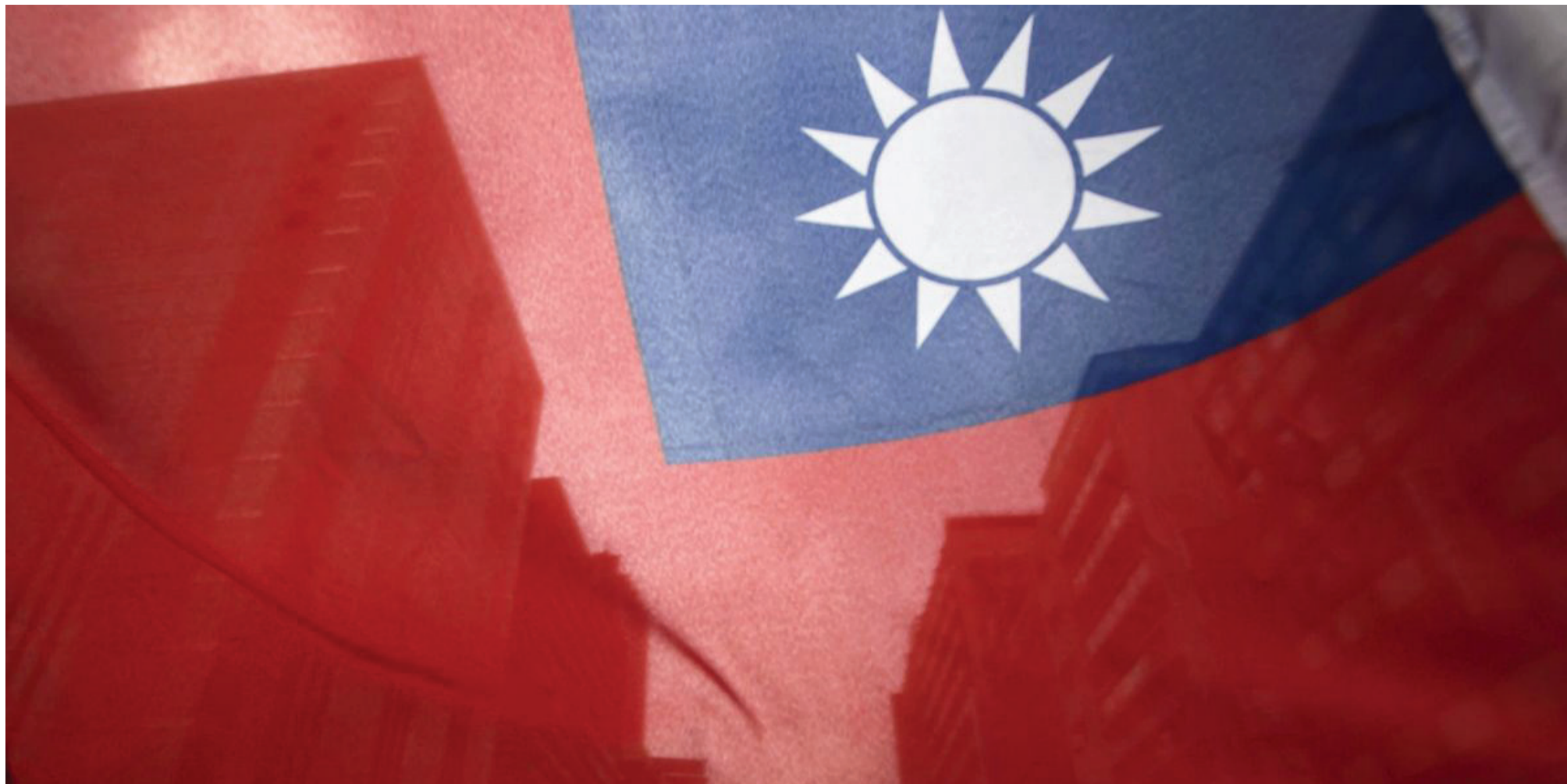
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Liaison Office official calls for Taiwan's participation in GBA

AN official from the Liaison Office in Macau proposed that Taiwan participate in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) plan, according to a report by Taiwan's United Daily News.

While meeting with a Taiwanese media representative in Macau earlier this week, Luo Ying Chun, deputy head of the Taiwan affairs division at the

Liaison Office in Macau, told Taiwanese media that Macau will provide assistance to Taiwan for the island to participate in the development of the GBA, and to share in the "great benefits" to be had.

As usual, the Chinese official emphasized the advantages of the one country two systems principle for Macau.

He said that Macau's deve-

lopment cannot be separated from the central government's strong support, and that the one country two systems principle is being implemented in Macau smoothly. Moreover, he expressed that Macau residents are deeply impressed by the benefits of one country two systems.

Regarding the Taiwan-Macau relationship, Luo said that

non-governmental exchanges between the two have been very close.

He referenced statistics about the Taiwan-Macau relationship. For instance, there were 1.06 million Taiwanese visitors to Macau in 2019, 147,000 Macau visitors to Taiwan and over 200 exchange activities held by Macau and Taiwan residents.

Luo argued that "Taiwan compatriots" should not stand by and be absent; they should seize the opportunity and actively participate in the GBA.

In March, Sheng Jiuyuan, director of the Taiwan Research Centre at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, said that by joining the GBA, Taiwan could enjoy 10 economic benefits, with the greatest being the signing of free trade agreements with other countries.

In turn, it is also believed that mainland China will be able to assist Taiwan in building industries such as finance, education, logistics, biotechnology and green energy. **JZ**

Shenwan Hongyuan seeks up to USD1.3 billion in HK listing

Crystal Tse

SHENWAN Hongyuan Group Co., China's sixth largest brokerage by market value, is seeking to raise as much as HKD9.8 billion (USD1.3 billion) in a Hong Kong listing.

The company is offering 2.5 billion shares at HKD3.63 to HKD3.93 apiece in the share sale, according to terms for the deal obtained by Bloomberg. It aims to price the offering April 18 before beginning trading April 26, the terms show.

A \$1.3 billion deal would be the largest first-time share sale in Hong Kong this year amid a relatively slow start, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Companies have raised \$2.7 billion via first-time share sales in Hong Kong this year, compared to \$3.1 billion during the same period last year, the data show.

The offering has attracted 13 cornerstone investors which agreed to subscribe for a total of about \$829 million of stock, or about 69 percent of

the base offering assuming mid-point pricing, the terms show.

The asset management arm of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd. agreed to invest in \$300 million of shares, while Huaxia Life Insurance Co. will buy \$100 million of them, the terms show. China Life Insurance (Group) Co. and China Reinsurance (Group) Corp. are also among the cornerstone investors.

Shenwan Hongyuan plans to use some of the proceeds to develop its securities busi-

ness and international business, as well as making principal investments, according to a preliminary prospectus.

The brokerage's Shenzhen-listed shares jumped 14 percent in the past year, while the CSI 300 Index rose 3.4 percent during the same period. Shenwan Hongyuan Capital, Goldman Sachs Group Inc., ICBC International Holdings Ltd. and ABC International Holdings Ltd. are joint sponsors for the Hong Kong share sale, the prospectus shows. **Bloomberg**

2,381 endangered dolphins live in south China river estuary

Atotal of 2,381 Chinese white dolphins, an endangered species, have been identified as living in the Pearl River Estuary, local authorities said yesterday, according to Xinhua.

As of 2011, the administration of the Pearl River Estuary Chinese White Dolphin Reserve, has continued to monitor the dolphins and found that their numbers in the Pearl River Estuary accounted for a half of the total population of the species in China, said sources within the administration.

The current Chinese White Dolphin population in the Pearl River consists of six generations of the dolphin, in-

cluding the early infancy and infancy stage, juvenile stage, adolescence stage, mature stage and senile stage, the sources said.

The dolphin, which is under state protection, can be found in just a handful of coastal areas, with the Pearl River Estuary a major habitat in China.

Recent developments in the Pearl River Estuary, such as the construction of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, raised concerns about the population of Chinese White Dolphins. It was reported by environmental and ecological activists that the population has been shrinking. **DB**

REAL ESTATE MATTERS

Generational real estate: are you planning for your family?

Sam Lee is a marketing manager and property consultant at JML Property. JML was established in 1994 and offers Investment Property & Homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.

www.JMLProperty.com info@JMLProperty.com



SAM LEE

Estate planning involves distributing your assets to people or causes according to your wishes should anything happen to you. This helps minimize legal complications and tax issues.

Whilst this planning applies to more than just property or 'real estate', property is usually at the center of an individual's wealth or assets. Although it can be irksome to think about, putting together an estate plan is something that should be done by everybody, not just the wealthy. The earlier the better!

Planning your estate whilst you are in good mental and physical health provides a sense of security for your family. What would happen if you were no longer here? You can imagine what effect this would have on your family. You can save your loved ones the further distress of guessing what you wanted, or possibly even disputing distribution of assets with other parties.

Estate plans made during an

illness that may affect your capacity to think straight can be challenged, complicating matters for beneficiaries. The better we prepare for such an eventuality beforehand, the easier it is on the family should something happen.

STEPS IN PLANNING YOUR ESTATE:

- 1. Take stock of all your material possessions (technically referred to as 'estate'), and determine their value. Typical items comprising the estate include: house(s) and land; bikes, cars, etc; cash-in-hand; savings accounts, pension accounts; certificates of deposits; stocks, bonds, and mutual funds; insurance and annuities; employee benefits; jewelry, furniture, art collections; ownership rights/interests in businesses; and claims against others. Mind you, the list is not exhaustive and your debts and obligations to others are also a part of your estate.
2. Line up the details of your

beneficiaries' names, addresses, and ages. In addition, you should determine who should be the trustees/guardians in case the beneficiaries are minors at the time of planning the estate.

- 3. Identify an executor of the estate. This can be done with the help of a lawyer or legal advisor.

- 4. Prepare any legal documents such as divorce decrees, previous wills, deeds of real estate property, and latest tax returns before you consult a professional estate planner.

Though small estates might be easy to plan, it is advisable to take the help of professional estate planners, including lawyers and CPAs, to explore all the possibilities to reduce tax incidence.

As a last side-note, estate planning is not a one-time affair. Any change in your marital status, death of beneficiaries, a birth of a child, or changes in the law will require a review of the plan.



HONG KONG

Tencent resists equity slump to trade near HKD400

AFTER powering Hong Kong's equity benchmark into a bull market, Tencent Holdings Ltd. stood out as the only bright spot in the city yesterday.

The Internet giant rose as much as 3 percent, briefly trading above HKD400 for the first time in 10 months, after winning regulatory approval for one of its mobile games in China. It was one of the only two gainers on the Hang Seng Index, which fell 0.9 percent at

the midday break. The shares are now approaching HKD405 - the price at which a major shareholder cut its stake last year that then triggered a wave of selling in the stock.

Sentiment over Tencent had been improving after its first licenses to operate new games in China, and amid optimism over new businesses. The rally has seen the stock outperform the Hang Seng Index by the most since July and just 5.4 percent short of analysts'

price targets. After plunging 23 percent last year on a run of bad news including a rare profit decline and a regulatory crackdown on gaming, brokerages had trimmed their 12-month price forecasts.

Tencent's 55 percent rally since its October low has pushed the stock's 14-day relative strength index to the highest since January 2018, above the 70 level that signals an asset may be overbought to some traders. Bloomberg

AD

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CHINA said yesterday that trade talks with the U.S. are “moving forward” after nine rounds of consultations aimed at ending a standoff that has shaken the world economic outlook.

The latest discussions had achieved “new substantial progress,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said at a daily news briefing.

“We also feel that the consultation is moving forward. We hope that the two sides can continue to work together to properly address each other’s concerns on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit,” Lu said.

Lu’s comments were echoed by those from Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng, who said “new progress” had been made at the talks.

Gao said the sides were now in “close communications with all effective approaches.”

“They will spare no efforts for the negotiations and working toward the direction of implementing the important consensus reached by both leaders,” Gao said at a weekly briefing.

The three days of talks in Washington last week dealt with issues including technology transfer, intellectual property rights protection, non-tariff measures, agriculture and enforcement of agreements.

Leading the delegations are U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He. White House press secretary Sarah Sanders earlier said “significant work remains” before an agreement can be reached.

The dispute centers on the



Feb. 15, 2019, file photo, Chinese Vice Premier Liu He (right) U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin (left) and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer

Government says trade talks with US ‘moving forward’

Trump administration’s allegations that China steals technology and coerces U.S. companies to hand over trade secrets — all part of Beijing’s zeal to overtake U.S. technological dominance. To pressure China, the United States

has imposed tariffs on USD250 billion in Chinese goods. The Chinese have counterpunched by taxing \$110 billion in U.S. imports.

Forecasters at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, among others, have down-

graded their outlook for the global economy in part because the U.S.-China rift is damaging trade and causing businesses to slow investment until they know how the dispute will end.

Tensions have eased somewhat

since Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in Buenos Aires late last year and the administration ended up suspending its plans to raise tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese imports to buy time for negotiations. **AP**

AVIATION

Reports: Chinese carrier asking Boeing for compensation

ONE of China’s three major state-owned airlines has joined carriers that are asking Boeing Co. for compensation after suspending use of its 737 Max jetliner following two fatal crashes.

Executives of China Eastern Airlines Ltd. said at a news conference that the carrier has “lodged claims” with Boeing over the disruption, according to Chinese news reports.

The reports by state television, the China Youth Daily and other outlets gave no financial details. But they said the impact on China Eastern was limited because the suspension came

during a slow travel period.

A public relations manager for China Eastern who would give only his surname, Ye, declined to give further details.

China was among the first governments to order carriers to suspend use of the 737 Max last month following crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia that killed a total of 346 people.

China is, along with North America and Europe, one of the biggest global markets for jetliners. That makes how Chinese carriers and regulators react to Boeing’s problems critical for the company.

Investigators sug-

gested a flight-control system was to blame for both 737 Max crashes. Boeing says it is working on new software to get planes back in the air.

On Thursday, China’s biggest aircraft leasing company said it will decide how to proceed with planned 737 Max purchases once it sees how Boeing resolves potential problems.

State-owned China Aircraft Leasing Group Holdings Ltd. has ordered 100 737 Max planes but suffered no immediate disruption because it has none in its fleet, said a company spokeswoman, Song Xuan. The company

buys Boeing, Airbus and other foreign aircraft and leases them to Chinese carriers.

“We expect there might be a little bit of delay in delivery, but that is not for sure,” said Song.

Boeing estimates Chinese carriers will buy 7,700 jetliners over the next two decades.

The Chinese government alternates orders between Boeing and Airbus in order to maintain competition and hold down prices.

A state-owned manufacturer also is developing a Chinese competitor to the 737 and Airbus’s A320. **AP**

Police seize drug shipment concealed in banana truck

CHINESE police have seized a haul of methamphetamine and heroin concealed in a truckload of bananas believed to have come from Myanmar.

State media reported yesterday that the drug shipment weighing 144.5 kilograms was seized in the city of Tongren in the southern province of Guizhou after a tipoff.

The shipment was believed to have originated in Myanmar and crossed the border into China’s Yunnan province on Saturday.

One suspect was arrested in the seizure which took place Saturday. Yunnan borders the infamous “Golden Triangle” drug producing region where the borders of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos meet.

The U.N.’s anti-drug agency said last month that production of methamphetamine is skyrocketing in Southeast Asia, with prices dropping and usage expanding. China prosecutes drug

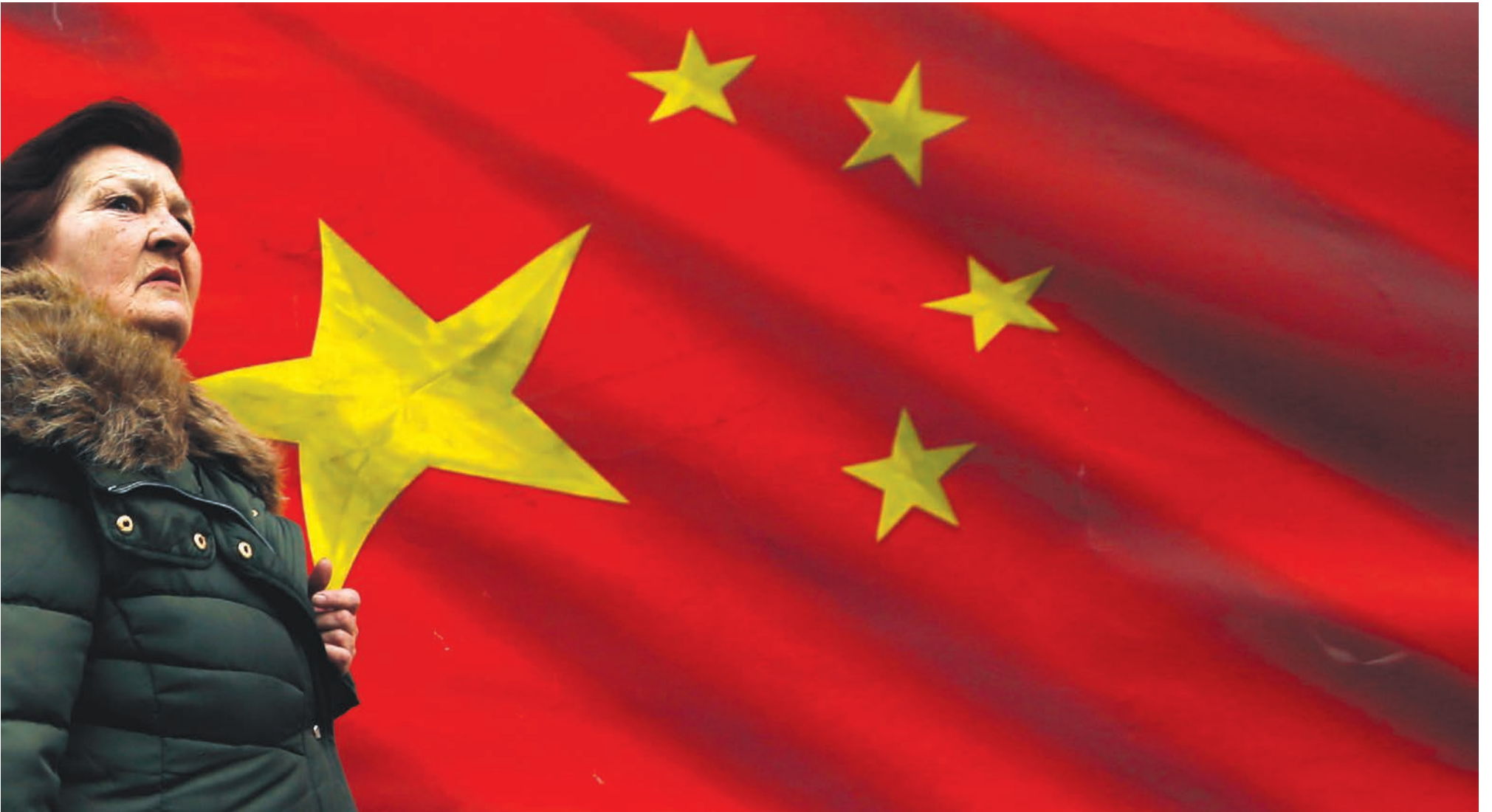
crimes harshly but remains a major market due partly to rising incomes in the country of 1.4 billion people.

Earlier this month, customs agents in the semi-autonomy Chinese territory of Hong Kong seized a massive haul of cocaine with an estimated street value of USD13 million and arrested one suspect.

As a major Asian port city, Hong Kong is considered a key transit point for contraband from illegal drugs to endangered wildlife parts. Much of that is bound for mainland China or Southeast Asia where drug laws tend to be much stricter.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials have repeatedly pointed to China as the main source of synthetic opioids shipped into the country directly by mail or transported via Mexico. China denies that claim, but said this month it would begin regulating all fentanyl-related drugs as a class of controlled substances. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Region's spreading influence in Eastern Europe worries West

Dusan Stojanovic, Belgrade

COAL-POWERED plants, mobile networks, major bridges, roads and railways: Chinese investments have been booming throughout Central and Eastern Europe's cash-strapped developing countries, even as European Union officials scramble to counter Beijing's mounting economic and political influence on the continent.

EU member Croatia is hosted a summit yesterday between China and 16 regional countries — the 8th so far — that focused on expanding business and other links between China and the region, which Beijing sees as a gateway into Europe.

The gathering in Dubrovnik of the so-called 16+1 initiative consists of Central and Eastern European countries that have endorsed China's ambitious global "Belt and Road" investment project, which has triggered concerns among some key EU states about increased Chinese political and economic clout in the region.

China has already invested billions of dollars in various infrastructure projects in Central and Eastern Europe. Western leaders worry that further investment in the states that are EU members — or those hoping to join — could mean lower environmental and other stan-

dards than those in the rest of the bloc.

Thorny issues include the flouting of EU competition rules, potential over-borrowing by some of the states, the quality of constructions, and security concerns over high-speed 5G network technology supplied by Chinese companies. Critics also say that in return for allowing Chinese expansion into the region, Beijing should give better reciprocal access for European companies to Chinese markets.

Top Chinese officials have sought to alleviate EU fears of unfair competition from Chinese state-controlled companies, which benefit from the government's financial backing. Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed during a recent visit to Paris to work with European leaders to seek fairer international trade rules.

Of the 16 participating countries — Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia — 11 are EU member states, and the remaining five want to join.

Beijing has marketed its expanding initiative as a way to give some of Europe's neediest countries a financial boost, helping them gain access to more trade and investment. That has been mostly welcomed by the Central

and Eastern European nations.

Linda Tjia, an expert on Chinese development strategy at the City University of Hong Kong, said there is no evidence to support concerns that Beijing is harboring "neo-colonial" goals to exploit Eastern Europe, Africa and other developing economies.

Beijing should give better reciprocal access for European companies to Chinese markets

European leaders "have to somehow show their people they are trying to protect national interests," Tjia said.

Major Chinese-led infrastructure projects in the region include a planned high-speed railway from the Hungarian capital, Budapest, to Belgrade in neighboring Serbia. The line will link up with the Chinese-controlled port of Piraeus in Greece as an entry point for Chinese goods to Central and Eastern Europe.

The project has drawn scru-

tiny from the EU because Chinese state-owned banks would provide financing, and Chinese companies would supply technology and the actual building. That conflicts with EU rules requiring public works to be broken into segments small enough to attract multiple bidders.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, whose own government often has been criticized for anti-democratic policies, says Hungary's relations with China should be based on "mutual respect."

Hungary last year did not sign an EU report criticizing China's human rights record and business policies.

In Serbia, an EU membership candidate, Chinese companies are building major bridges and highways. They are also constructing a large coal-powered electricity plant even as China is trying to curb pollution at home by implementing renewable energy projects and reducing the use of lignite, by far the most polluting fossil fuel.

Serbian analyst Mijat Lakicevic said the strategically-located Balkan country situated between East and West is a perfect place where "China can realize its economic concept, the way it wants to enter [Eastern European] markets," without much concern over fair bidding pro-

cesses or pollution standards.

Bosnia, a potential EU candidate, is at odds with the bloc over its decision to issue a public guarantee for a 600-million euro (USD676 million) loan from China's Export-Import Bank to expand Bosnia's largest coal-fired power plant.

EU's energy watchdog has warned that the move could eventually harm Bosnia's bid to join the EU because the agreement violates EU's subsidy and environment rules. Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn has said the issue "raises serious questions" about the Balkan country's "commitment to international treaties [and] European rules."

Chinese companies are also involved in the construction of a \$380-million Peljesac bridge in Croatia, which links two coastal parts over the Adriatic Sea, as well as a highway linking the Adriatic in Montenegro to neighboring Serbia.

In the Czech Republic, the National Cyber and Information Security Agency followed U.S. authorities' warning against the use of hardware or software made by Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE. That, however, did not change Czech President Milos Zeman's positive stance toward Huawei.

Zeman publicly criticized the Czech watchdog, saying it harms the Czech Republic's business interests as it could affect Huawei's plan to invest \$370 million in 5G networks in the Czech Republic.

U.S. officials mounted an international campaign to keep Huawei gear out of any foreign 5G network that might carry sensitive U.S. intelligence. **AP**

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul,

SOUTH KOREA

Court orders easing of decades-old abortion ban

IN a major reversal, South Korea's Constitutional Court yesterday ordered the easing of the country's decades-old ban on most abortions, one of the strictest in the developed world.

Abortions have been largely illegal in South Korea since 1953, though convictions for violating the restrictions are rare. Still, the illegality of abortions forces women to seek out unauthorized and often expensive procedures to end their pregnancies, creating a social stigma that makes them feel like criminals.

The court's nine-justice panel said that the parliament must map out legislation to ease the current regulations by the end of 2020. It said the current abortion law was incompatible with the constitution and would be repealed if parliament fails to come up with new legislation by then.

The ruling is final and cannot be appealed, court officials said, but current regulations will remain in effect until they are replaced or repealed.

An easing of the law could open up the door to more abortions for social and economic reasons. Current exceptions to the law only allow abortions when a woman is pregnant through rape or incest, when a pregnancy se-

riously jeopardizes her health, or when she or her male partner has certain diseases.

A woman in South Korea can be punished with up to one year in prison for having an illegal abortion, and a doctor can get up to two years in prison for performing an unauthorized abortion.

Yesterday's verdict was a response to an appeal filed in February 2017 by an obstetrician charged with carrying out about 70 unauthorized abortions from 2013-2017 at the request or approval of pregnant women.

Most other countries in the 36-member Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the so-called most developed countries, allow abortions for broad social and economic reasons. South Korea is one of only five OECD member states that don't allow such abortions, according to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family.

The South Korean public has been sharply split over the abor-

AP PHOTO



tion law. There have been heated panel discussions on TV and internet programs; activists, both for and against, have for months stood with placards near the court. Dozens gathered yesterday.

After the ruling, women's rights activists cheered. Some shook their placards and shouted: "Abolish the anti-abortion law!"

Roseann Rife, Amnesty International's East Asia research di-

rector, called the ruling "a major step forward for the human rights of women and girls in South Korea."

Also outside the court were anti-abortion advocates, some of whom cried. Some held placards carrying images of fetuses and messages such as "Who can speak for me?" and "Don't kill me, please."

Housewife Mok Youn-hee was in tears and said she was "hear-

tbroken" by the court decision.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea expressed "deep regret" over the verdict.

It's not clear exactly how many abortions take place in South Korea. In a recent survey of 10,000 women aged between 15 and 44, about 7.6%, or 756 respondents, said they had undergone an abortion.

Activists say most abortions in South Korea, whether lawful or unlawful, take place at registered hospitals. But it's not easy to find hospitals offering illegal abortions and they usually charge high prices because the procedures are not covered by medical insurance programs.

Ham Sooyeon, leader of the nonprofit Korea Pro-Life group, said before the ruling that rather than easing the abortion restrictions, South Korea should find ways to improve support systems for poor, single mothers and their children and change public views on single mothers. **AP**

AD

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Russia moves to expand state control of internet

James Ellingworth, Moscow

RUSSIAN lawmakers approved yesterday a bill that would expand government control over the internet and whose opponents fear heralds a new era of widespread censorship.

The bill would install equipment to route Russian internet traffic through servers in the

country. That would increase the powers of state agencies and make it harder for users to circumvent government restrictions.

The proposed move sparked protests of several thousand people in Moscow last month. Opponents argue it would allow the state to control the flow of information and enforce blocks

on messaging applications which refuse to hand over data.

The bill's backers have sought to play down the expanded powers for controlling traffic. Instead, they say it's a defense measure in case Russia is cut off from the internet by the United States or other hostile powers.

Nikolai Zemtsov, a lawmaker who backed the bill, told The

Associated Press a future Russia could cooperate with ex-Soviet countries on a "Runet" where news from critical Western media was restricted.

"It could be that in our limited, sovereign internet we will only be stronger," he said.

The bill passed by 322-15 in a second reading in the lower house of parliament.

The Russian government is taking a page from China's playbook

The second reading is when amendments are finalized, and is usually the most important. The bill must pass a third reading and the upper house before being signed into law by President Vladimir Putin.

Since last year, Russian authorities have been trying to block the messaging app Telegram, which has refused to hand over users' encrypted messages in defiance of a court order.

Telegram's traffic used millions of different internet protocol addresses, meaning attempts to block it resembled a game of whack-a-mole. Many unrelated apps, online stores and even

Volvo car repair services were temporarily knocked offline last year before Russian officials eased their pressure. The new law could make a block easier.

Russia already requires certain personal information about Russian citizens to be stored on servers in the country. That measure led to the social network LinkedIn being blocked in 2016.

By moving to exert more control of the internet, which is not overseen by a central authority, the Russian government is taking a page from China's playbook.

China subjects its 700 million internet users to extensive monitoring and tight controls. Beijing has a system of automated filters — known as the "Great Firewall" — to block political content as well as sites related to gambling and pornography. Chinese users are prevented blocked from using Western internet sites such as Facebook, Google and Twitter, leaving the market open for homegrown giants like Tencent.

Chinese regulators have ratcheted up control on local microblogs such as Weibo, ordering them to set up a mechanism to remove false information. They've also been cracking down on virtual private networks — software that can be used to get around internet filters by creating encrypted links between computers and blocked sites. AP

AD

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Danica Kirka, London

UK

WikiLeaks' Assange arrested at Ecuador embassy in London

BBRITISH police arrested WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange at the Ecuadorian embassy in London yesterday, after the South American nation decided to revoke the political asylum that had given him sanctuary for almost seven years.

London police said they were invited into the embassy by Ecuador's ambassador. Assange took refuge in the embassy in 2012 after he was released on bail while facing extradition to Sweden on sexual assault allegations that have since been dropped.

Assange has been under U.S. Justice Department scrutiny for years for Wikileaks' role in publishing thousands of government secrets and was an important figure in the special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe as investigators examined how WikiLeaks obtained emails stolen from Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign and Democratic groups.

Ecuador's president, Lenin Moreno, said his government made a "sovereign decision" to revoke Assange's political asylum due to "repeated violations to international conventions and daily-life."

"Today I announce that that the discourteous and aggressive behavior of Mr. Julian Assan-



Police carry WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange from the Ecuadorian embassy in London after he was arrested

ge, the hostile and threatening declarations of its allied organization, against Ecuador, and especially the transgression of international treaties, have led the situation to a point where the asylum of Mr. Assange is unsustainable and no longer viable," Moreno said in a video

released on Twitter.

Video posted online by Ruptly, a news service of Russia Today, showed several men in suits carrying Assange out of the embassy building and loading him into a police van while uniformed British police officers formed a passageway. Assange sported a full

beard and slicked-back grey hair.

His lawyer, Jennifer Robinson, said in tweet that he had been arrested for breaching his bail conditions and in relation to a U.S. extradition request.

Prosecutors in the Eastern District of Virginia have inadvertently disclosed the existence of a sealed criminal complaint against Assange, though no details have been publicly announced.

WikiLeaks quickly drew attention to U.S. interest in Assange.

"Powerful actors, including CIA, are engaged in a sophisticated effort to de-humanise, de-legitimize and imprison him," said in a tweet over a photo of Assange's smiling face.

Assange had not come out of the embassy for almost seven years because he feared arrest and extradition to the United States for publishing thousands of classified military and diplomatic cables through WikiLeaks. Although Sweden has dropped the sexual assault case that first led to Assange's arrest in Britain, U.K. autho-

rities said he would be rearrested if he ever left the embassy because he skipped bail in the original case.

London's Metropolitan Police Service said Assange was taken into "custody at a central London police station where he will remain, before being presented before Westminster Magistrates' Court as soon as is possible."

His arrest came a day after WikiLeaks accused the Ecuador's government of an "extensive spying operation" against Assange.

WikiLeaks claims that meetings with lawyers and a doctor inside the embassy over the past year were secretly filmed.

WikiLeaks said in a tweeted statement that Ecuador illegally terminated Assange's political asylum "in violation of international law."

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt thanked Moreno for breaking the impasse, saying on Twitter that Assange "is no hero and no one is above the law." AP

AD



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FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Água de Mar
15:45	Zig Zag
16:05	Conversa da Treta
16:30	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
17:30	Arquitectarte
18:00	Ministério do Tempo
18:50	TDM Talk Show (Repetição)
19:25	Livros com João Guedes (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Sinais de Vida
22:00	Contentor 13
22:30	Portugal Culto e Oculto
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Resumo Liga Europa 2018/2019
00:10	Um Amor de Perdição
02:05	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:50	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

11 - 16 Apr



SHAZAM

ROOM 1

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

Director: David F. Sandberg

Starring: Zachary Levi, Djimon Hounsou, Michelle Borth

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 132min



THE UPSIDE

ROOM 2

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

Director: Neil Burger

Starring: Kevin Hart, Bryan Cranston, Nicole Kidman

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 126min



US

ROOM 2

7:15pm

Director: Jordan Peele

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

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 116min



BREAKTHROUGH

ROOM 3

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

Director: Roxann Dawson

Starring: Chrissy Metz, Topher Grace, Josh Lucas

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 116min



P STORM

ROOM 2

9:30pm

Director: David Lam

Starring: Chrissie Chau, Louis Koo, Kevin Cheng

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 96min

this day in history



1975 US PULLS OUT OF CAMBODIA

The US has admitted defeat in Cambodia and removed its remaining embassy personnel from the capital, Phnom Penh.

Early this morning 276 people were airlifted from a football field near the embassy by a fleet of 30 helicopters.

Those on the airlift included 159 Cambodians who had worked with the Americans.

Foreign journalists who had been covering the civil war between the communist Khmer Rouge and the Cambodian government were also airlifted out of the country.

It was feared "Operation Eagle Pull", as the evacuation was dubbed, would come under Khmer Rouge fire and more than 300 armed Marines guarded the field.

However, the operation passed off uneventfully.

Some of Cambodia's most senior government ministers, including the Acting President, Sautham Khoy, were among the evacuees.

The country's Prime Minister, Long Boret, has remained in Phnom Penh.

Long Boret's decision not to leave came as a surprise as he has been condemned to death by the advancing Khmer Rouge.

The evacuees were flown to American war ships, the Okinawa and the Hancock, in the Gulf of Thailand.

In Washington, President Ford explained the reasons why the US had pulled out of Cambodia.

Mr Ford said he had taken the decision with "a heavy heart" but had done so to ensure the safety of Americans who had "served valiantly".

The American withdrawal is an inglorious end to five years of involvement in Cambodia's civil war.

Its presence in the country was closely linked to the war it is conducting in neighbouring Vietnam.

Between 1970 and 1973 the US bombed Cambodia in order to stop its North Vietnamese enemies using the country as a base.

If Phnom Penh does fall, Cambodia will become the first country since Cuba 16 years ago to pass into Communist hands.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

After the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh on 17 April its leader, Pol Pot, immediately set about realising his vision of an agrarian utopia.

He forced hundreds of thousands of people to leave urban areas and become farmers.

Pol Pot's reforms led to the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million people - some were executed but many died of disease and starvation. In 1979 Cambodia's old enemy, Vietnam, invaded and the Khmer Rouge fled.

In 1991 a United Nations-brokered peace agreement was signed which ended the country's civil war.

In 1997 Pol Pot was convicted of treason by a "people's tribunal" and was sentenced to life under house arrest.

He died in April 1998.

Offbeat

DENTIST VOWS TO PUT RACY EASTER DISPLAY BACK UP



A New Jersey dentist who created a racy Easter display is vowing to put it back up after a female neighbor used gardening shears to damage it.

The display at a dental office in Clifton, New Jersey, featured five mannequins dressed in lingerie, fishnet stockings and colorful wigs, all holding Easter baskets and surrounded by Easter eggs. It had drawn mixed reviews from neighbors, as well as passers-by who stopped to take photos.

A television news crew was filming the decorations this week when the woman — who lives in a home across the street from the dental office and identified herself as Desire Mozek — took it down.

"I think I did something right," she said. "That's disgusting already."

The owner of the display, Wayne Gangi, called it a "spoof." He said the idea came to him when he saw giant Easter eggs while walking around a Party City store. He added that he liked Playboy bunnies when he was a child and thought the display would be funny.

Tom Mozek, who answered the door at the home where the woman lives, told The Record she is not his wife and her name is Desire Shepstone.

"I told her, 'Don't do it.' She has to take responsibility for it," he said, adding that she wasn't available to speak to a reporter.

Gangi said he is in the process of filing a restraining order against the woman. Gangi said he thinks she appears to have been seeking attention rather than justice due to moral outrage.

Clifton police are investigating the incident, but it wasn't clear yesterday if the woman will face any charges.

Gangi estimated the damage to the display at USD500 to \$1,000.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You have the power to succeed today - even if it feels like you're losing ground. Just keep pushing yourself.

Taurus April 20-May 20

Your earthy nature asserts itself in a big way today, but that may put off those with their heads in the clouds.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21

You rely on others to help get your own business done, but today you may be on your own.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You feel a new sense of balance today - though it might come at a cost. See if you can just enjoy what you've got.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You're making great progress toward some personal goal - but you need to keep it personal for now.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Your romantic world is spinning a little faster - so take a chance or snuggle up with your sweetheart!

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22

Be wary of new situations - something isn't quite right, though that's not to say you need to avoid dealing with it entirely!

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Your potent energy is the driving force behind today's big mission - so make sure that you're talking it up or inspiring others to the cause.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You are firmly committed to doing it all yourself today, whether it's making your own lunch or building your own shed.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You need to deal with all this energy in a positive way - which isn't such a hard task for you!

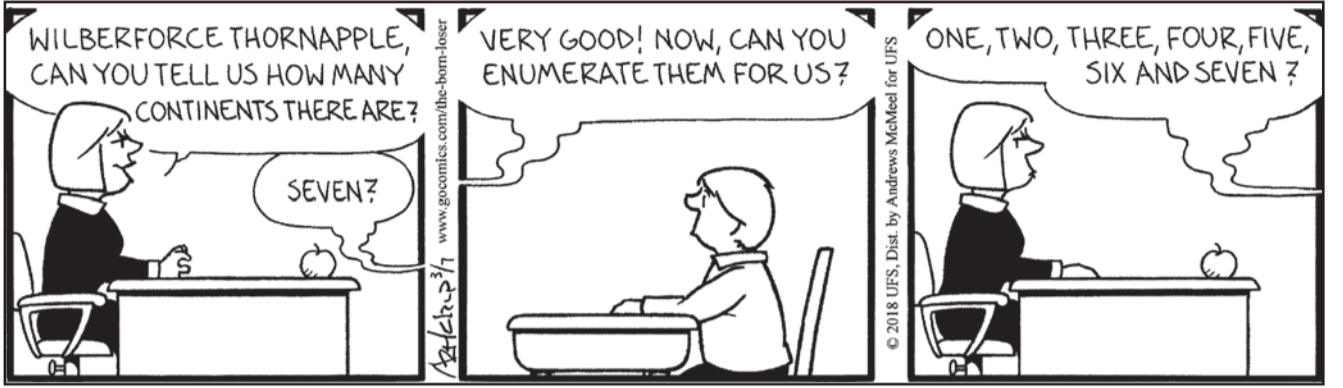
Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You're more tired than you feel you ought to be, so go easy on yourself and make sure that you're delegating responsibilities as much as you can.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20

Your assistance is needed in a big way - so ask around or look for opportunities to save the day.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

Sudoku grid for Easy level with numbers 1-9 in various positions.

Easy+

Sudoku grid for Easy+ level with numbers 1-9 in various positions.

Medium

Sudoku grid for Medium level with numbers 1-9 in various positions.

Hard

Sudoku grid for Hard level with numbers 1-9 in various positions.

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Opponent of Ike; 6- Young salmon; 10- ___ Lingus (Irish carrier); 13- Former French currency; 14- Peter Fonda role; 15- Narrative; 16- Path; 17- Mideast carrier; 18- Shower; 19- Ye ___ Shoppe; 20- Competence; 22- Legume; 24- Shuts; 28- Jointed or knobby at intervals; 31- More adorable; 32- Pong maker; 34- Subj. for immigrants; 36- Scarlett's home; 37- Mean Amin; 38- Vapid; 41- Bro's sib; 42- Upon us; 44- Pink lady ingredient; 45- Get into hot water?; 47- Little laugh; 49- Contiguous with; 51- Bandit; 53- Ukraine port; 56- Stipulation; 59- Prepare a salad; 61- Ready to pick; 64- Nevada resort city; 65- Vixen's master; 66- Ardent; 67- Bond's first film foe; 68- Belle or Bart; 69- Ogle; 70- Anon; 71- Turkish palace;

DOWN: 1- Bushy do; 2- Whimsical; 3- Diploma word; 4- Wave catcher; 5- Diamonds, in slang; 6- Native American village; 7- ___ want for Christmas...; 8- Unfeigned; 9- Museum artifact; 10- Towing org.; 11- Biblical high priest; 12- Cartoon dog; 15- Audition; 20- Assisting; 21- Pampering, briefly; 23- Singer Amos; 25- Hiding place; 26- Spine-tingling; 27- Mmes., in Madrid; 29- Paris divider; 30- Medium skill; 32- Parting word; 33- Taut; 35- Sexual drive; 37- A fan of; 39- Bro or sis; 40- Florida's Miami-___ County; 43- Aided; 46- Having a will; 48- Canal site; 50- Already?; 52- Language elements; 54- Sub detector; 55- Latin stars; 57- ___ Beach, Florida; 58- ___ way (not at all); 60- Delhi wrap; 61- Actress Charlotte; 62- Campus climber; 63- Chart shape; 65- Puncture sound;

Yesterday's solution

Grid for yesterday's crossword solution with words filled in.

Grid for today's crossword puzzle with numbers indicating starting positions.

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



Advertisement for 'The KEY to happiness is finding the KEY to the right home' featuring a woman holding a key.

Property of the Week advertisement for 'THE MANHATTAN' with a photo of a modern apartment and price details.

FOR SALE advertisement listing properties in Taipa and Macau with prices and contact info.

FOR SALE advertisement listing properties in Taipa and Macau with prices and contact info.

Advertisement for jml property (卓雅物業) with contact numbers and social media handles.

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Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

ENT : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

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Ronaldo scores his 125th career goal in the Champions

AJAX 1, JUVENTUS 1

FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Ajax plays Ronaldo and Juventus tough in draw

AFTER showing no fear against Real Madrid, a young Ajax squad didn't back down against Cristiano Ronaldo and Juventus either.

Ajax replied quickly after Ronaldo scored on the stroke of halftime yesterday, with David Neres equalizing 30 seconds after the break to secure a 1-1 draw in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal.

"I think we've done pretty well. We have a team with a lot of potential and that tends to emerge to its fullest in Champions League matches," said Matthijs de Ligt, Ajax's 19-year-old captain and center back. "We proved today that Ajax is not in the Champions League quarterfinals because it's a fluke."

Showing increasing confidence, Ajax produced more chances early on but then let Ronaldo waltz through to head in a cross in the 45th minute.

Ronaldo was returning from a two-week injury layoff.

In the opening minute of the second half, David Neres capitalized on an error from Juventus winger Jose Cancelo — who provided the cross for Ronaldo's

goal — and curled a shot into the far top corner.

Juventus nearly won it when Douglas Costa hit the post in the 85th.

The second leg is scheduled for next Tuesday in Turin, with the winner to face Manchester City or Tottenham in the semifinals.

"Everything is open. We need to go to the [Allianz] stadium and try to win it," Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny said. "But as we showed against Atletico [Madrid], we know how to win at home in this competition."

In the previous round, Ronaldo almost single-handedly overturned a 2-0 first-leg deficit to Atletico by scoring a hat trick in a 3-0 win.

"Ajax is a very different team to us," Szczesny said. "They play more attacking and aggressive. But we'll see what happens in the second leg."

The match was marred by fan clashes ahead of the game.

Police in Amsterdam said they fired a water cannon at football fans "to put out flares and prevent unsafe situations."

Local broadcaster AT5 showed images of scores of chanting fans being hosed by the water cannon and responding by tossing fireworks and flares at police before mounted officers charged at them followed by riot police.

Earlier, police in the Dutch capital said they had detained dozens of Italians suspected of possessing flares, a knife, pepper spray and fireworks.

It was a rematch of the 1996 final won by Juventus in a penalty shootout.

MAN U 0, BARCELONA 1

In yesterday's other game, Barcelona won 1-0 at Manchester United.

ns of a problem.

It was Ronaldo's 125th career goal in the Champions League. Only Lionel Messi (108 goals) is within 50 of Ronaldo's record, with Raul Gonzalez (71) third on the list.

"Once again Ronaldo proved to be on a different level, his movements and his sense of timing are simply different from the others," Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri said.

After his goal, a fan jumped over a barrier and ran to embrace Ronaldo and his teammates celebrating near the corner flag. Security quickly took the fan away.

Neres, a 22-year-old Brazilian, leveled 30 seconds into the second half with a shot that Szczesny had no chance on.

Both teams threatened near the end.

Szczesny swatted away a blast from Jurgen Ekkelenkamp before Costa hit the woodwork at the other end with a long, angled shot and Onana palmed away another dangerous effort from Cancelo.

Allegri opted not to bring on Moise Kean, a 19-year-old Italy striker who had scored seven goals in his last eight games for club and country. AP

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opinion

Kapok
Eric Sautédé



22 OF THE DIRTY 400

For a reason that escapes any logic primarily concerned with fairness, only 22 members of the Legislative Assembly will participate in the Election Committee responsible for the designation of the Chief Executive (CE) this year. It is at the very least an aberration. After all, in Hong Kong, all members of the LegCo — the 70 of them — participate in the Committee, so why not in Macao?

Are arithmetic and proportionality to be blamed? The Election Committee in Hong Kong is made up today of 1,200 members against 400 only in Macao. But then, why would “all” members representing the SAR at the National People’s Congress be included instead of a selected few: the whole lot, that is 12 of them, are entitled to participate, just like in Hong Kong — 36 altogether in the latter case. Does it mean that NPC members are more legitimate to elect the CE than members of the local legislature? Does it comply with the rationale of the “one country-two systems” formula?

What about the members of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference? Almost half of the delegates — 14 out of 29 in total, that is 48.3% — representing the Macao SAR in this toothless consultative body will participate in the Committee, proportionally more than in Hong Kong where the electoral law indicates 51 members out of a total of 124 (41.1%). Why would they be more “entitled” in Macao than in Hong Kong? And how does it reflect on the very idea of a “high degree of autonomy”?

The anomaly of the situation becomes even more obvious if one starts to look into Annex I of the Macao Basic Law, in which we are being told that “principles of democracy and openness” should prevail over the designation of the members of the Election Committee. How is it even possible to exclude the very few members of the community returned via universal suffrage in really competitive elections?

The Electoral Law for the Chief Executive only makes a passing reference to the way legislators should be designated to the Election Committee: an “internal vote” has to be organized (art. 14), but just like in the case of legislative elections for functional constituencies, an actual vote becomes optional if the number of candidates matches the number of seats.

At the very least, one could imagine that all legislators directly elected via universal suffrage — 14 out of 33 — should make the cut. However, only ten will participate. Three democrats — Au Kam Sam, Ng Kuok Cheong and Sulu Sou Ka Hou — abstained from even running for political reasons: they denounce what they have been calling for years the tragic embodiment of “small circle” elections — the “happy few” co-opting a single candidate — and advocate for really “democratic and open” elections in which the whole citizenry would be called to the voting booths.

But then, why is Si Ka Lon, a directly elected legislator and Mr Chan Meng Kam’s henchman, absent from the list of the 22? What does it say about his standing? Could it be a political statement? A deal for another to take his spot? Not quite: contrary to 2014, Mr Si Ka Lon is now entitled to a seat in the Election Committee because he is concurrently one of the twelve designated delegates representing Macao at the NPC! And talking about shrinking small circles, the same goes for Ho Iat Seng, Chui Sai Peng and Kou Hoi In, all NPC delegates as well.

Ultimately, indecency is really championed by the appointed members of the Legislative Assembly: the very people appointed by the CE will get to elect the CE by representing the one and only institution with a democratic component! True, they were appointed by Chui and will get to vote for Ho, but again, beyond a mere farce, what message does it convey? And will Wu Chou Kit and Fong Ka Chio (the only two appointed lawmakers left aside) prove better? Not exactly, as Mr Wu and Fong will most probably be among the 43 members representing the “professional sector” on the Committee. Clearly, the circle is tightening, almost to the size and shape of a single dot.

THE BUZZ EU, UK AGREE TO DELAY BREXIT UNTIL HALLOWEEN

British Prime Minister Theresa May says the European Union has granted her “key request” to add an early exit clause to its agreement to a six-month Brexit extension.

The U.K. and the EU agreed yesterday to delay Brexit until Oct. 31, but May says she wants to leave “as soon as possible.”

She says that if U.K. lawmakers back her Brexit deal, her country can still leave before June 30 — the Brexit deadline that she had requested from the bloc.

May says Britain faces “stark” choices “and the timetable is clear.”

EU Council chief Donald Tusk is pleading with the United Kingdom to use the special six-month Brexit extension it has been granted to the fullest of its ability.

French President Emmanuel Macron says a last-ditch six-month extension for Brexit is the “best possible compromise” to protect the rest of the European Union.

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

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



INDIA At least four people were killed in clashes yesterday on the first day of polling in the country’s general elections, a six-week process that’s seen as a referendum on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.



US The Getty Conservation Institute plans to restore and maintain one of Los Angeles’ most stunning homes for generations to come. The institute said it partnered with the Eames Foundation on an ambitious conservation plan for the Eames House. The home was built in 1949 by Charles and Ray Eames as their personal residence.



VATICAN Pope Benedict XVI has ventured out of retirement to publish an essay blaming the Catholic Church’s sex abuse scandal on the sexual revolution of the 1960s and church laws that protected priests.



SUDAN’s military overthrew President Omar al-Bashir yesterday amid increasingly bloody protests over his repressive 30-year rule and the deteriorating economy. But pro-democracy demonstrators were left angry and disappointed when the defense minister announced the armed forces will govern for the next two years.



Callao Cave on Luzon Island of the Philippines, where the fossils were discovered

HOMO LUZONENSIS

Filipinos plan more diggings where new human species found

Jim Gomez, Manila

ARCHAEOLOGISTS who discovered fossil bones and teeth of a previously unknown human species that thrived more than 50,000 years ago in the northern Philippines said yesterday they plan more diggings and called for better protection of the popular limestone cave complex where the remains were unearthed.

Filipino archaeologist Armand Salvador Mijares said the discovery of the remains in Callao Cave in Cagayan province made the Philippines an important research ground on human evolution. The new species is called *Homo luzonensis* after the main northern island of Luzon, where the remains were dug up starting in 2007.

Beaming with pride, Mijares displayed the six fragments of bones from the feet, hands and thigh and seven teeth of three individuals from that bygone era in a news conference at the state-run Univer-

sity of the Philippines. Tests showed two of the fossil fragments had minimum ages of 50,000 years and 67,000 years, according to a study published by the scientific journal Nature.

“This puts the Philippines, our scientific community in the spotlight,” Mijares said. “Before, we’re just peripheral in this debate of human evolution.”

Mijares, who led a small team of foreign and local archaeologists behind the rare discovery, said he plans to resume the diggings next year and hopes to find larger fossil bones, artifacts and possibly stone tools used by people in those times. Aside from Callao Cave, human fossils have recently been found in another site in Bulacan province just north of the capital, Manila, Mijares said without elaborating.

Another veteran Filipino archaeologist, Eusebio Dizon, said the human remains from Callao were the oldest to be found in the Philippines,

predating those discovered in Tabon Cave on the western island of Palawan by thousands of years.

While the archaeological find could attract more scientists, Dizon worried that it could also draw vandals and treasure hunters who could threaten the seven-chamber cave complex, which is a popular tourism destination. An open-air chapel with pews and an altar in the cave complex has become a popular venue for weddings and filmmakers.

“Penablanca has been a treasure hunting haven of many people,” Dizon said, referring to the Cagayan provincial town where the Callao caves are located. “Maybe it will reignite their kind of activity so that’s why it needs protection now more than ever.”

The main exodus of modern man’s own species from Africa that all of today’s non-African people are descended from took place around 60,000 years ago.

The fossil bones and teeth found about 3 meters (9.8 feet) below the ground in the cave show they belonged to small-bodied people. Bones of deer and related animals were found in the area, some with cut marks, suggesting they were butchered although there were no stone tools or sharp implements found in the immediate area where the human fossils were dug up, Mijares said.

Although the find contributes a new insight into modern man’s ancient beginnings, Dizon said it also raised new questions and deepened the mystery behind the evolution of man. **AP**



Fossil bones and teeth belonging to a new species scientists called *Homo luzonensis*