



### SEEKING JUSTICE AT THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

An unknown guest was the focus of attention during yesterday's recess at the AL session attended by Chui Sai On

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## WORLD BRIEFS

**GENETICS** Stanford University has cleared three faculty members of any wrongdoing in dealings with a Chinese scientist who claims to have helped make the world's first gene-edited babies. In a statement, Stanford said the faculty members did not participate in or have financial or other ties to the work by the scientist, He Jiankui, and had discouraged him from pursuing it.

**NORTH KOREA** Leader Kim Jong Un will visit Russia later this month, the Kremlin said yesterday, in a meeting that offers President Vladimir Putin an opportunity to emerge as a broker in the long-running nuclear standoff and raise Russia's profile in regional affairs. **More on p13**



**PHILIPPINES** Diplomats have started evacuating a small group of Filipinos from the Libyan capital after it was hit by a barrage of rocket fire that wounded one Filipino. Thirteen more Filipinos have sought help and are expected to be flown back home in the next few days.

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## HO IAT SENG TO RUN FOR NEXT CHIEF

# Candidate number one

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## Chui: All ready for gaming tender by 2022

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## POLICY ADDRESS

# Chief Executive: all will be ready in time for 2022 concessions

Renato Marques

At the Legislative Assembly (AL) to respond to lawmakers' questions on the policy address and other social topics, Chief Executive (CE) Chui Sai On said yesterday that he believes the government will have all the relevant bills and regulations completed and approved before the gaming concessions expire in 2022.

"At this moment I don't see any need to perform any more extensions. We have enough time and we also think this is the right time to do the public tender," Chui said in reply to questions by lawmaker Leong Sun Iok.

"We need to gather the conditions of the public tender, namely by the adjustment of the laws that have influence over this matter," Chui further explained. "We are working on this topic already and we are available to hear from the public on these aspects."

Although the tender and preparatory works will only complete after Chui steps down, the incumbent Chief Executive noted that there was "enough time to introduce changes and plan the new tender on time."

Such changes, he elaborated, might include the clarification of the non-gaming elements to be introduced by the gaming concessionaires, as well as added guarantees for workers, among other new regulations and tender conditions.

Leong also wanted to know if the government planned to once more exempt from the special gaming tax the concessionaires that were recently granted a two-year license extension.

"This was a decision based on analysis and profound studies," replied Chui. "We understand that if the renewal date is the same for everyone [all concessionaires and sub-concessionaires], this would be good for the stability of the economy and especially the workers."

"Regarding the exemption of the special tax, we know that the taxes in Macau are quite high compared to other regions that also have gaming," the CE remarked, saying indirectly that he does not expect to char-

RENATO MARQUES



ge any other taxes on top of the main one levied at 35%.

Chui also noted that "from the talks we have had [with the concessionaires] we think they are all interested in joining the Central Provident Fund System." He noted that this would probably also influence the analysis of applications for new gaming licenses.

## MEASURES TO ATTRACT TALENT

One of the other big topics discussed during the CE's visit to the AL was the Greater Bay Area (GBA) and the opportunities and challenges arising in several fields from the initiative.

Noting one of these challenges, lawmaker Kou Hoi In took the opportunity to question Chui on concrete measures for "talent recruitment," in order to prevent Macau from lagging behind and enabling them to cope with the expected added competition.

Replying to the question, Chui noted that the government had been paying a lot of attention to the matter, having drafted a list of "priority professions in which Macau should focus on the recruitment of staff from abroad in areas we struggle with." Aside from the list created by the Talents Development Committee (CDT), the Chief Executive announced that in the second

half of this year he hopes to advance more concrete measures on this topic. Nevertheless, Chui said that the CDT "is addressing these topics, especially regarding attracting new talent and [enticing] locals to return after they have been abroad for their studies."

"Maybe our employment policies are disconnected from reality due to high growth [of the Macau economy] and high competition from the Greater Bay Area," he admitted.

Chui further elaborated on

the topic, saying: "Let's be honest: The conditions given to most of the cities of the GBA are much better than the ones we offer here. They offer better guarantees than us. We need to face this [problem]. We hope that this work [of finding ways to attract skillful people] moves forward as lots of studies have been done already in this field. We have to open our mentality and also change our laws."

The Chief Executive concluded by noting that there are not enough opportunities created

for residents to pursue university studies in Macau and abroad.

## ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Another of the topics that emerged during the AL session was the accountability of public officials in general, and more specifically the several cases recently revealed or partially uncovered by reports from the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC).

Lawmaker Ella Lei questioned the Chief Executive on the need to improve accountability laws and regimes. However, Pereira Coutinho went further and asked Chui about the identities of 12 other individuals on the list of 14 names allegedly mentioned by former public prosecutor-general Ho Chio Meng during the trial of a high-ranking official who had requested favors and recommended family and friends to public services.

Coutinho noted that two of the names had previously been revealed as the former and current Secretary for Administration and Justice, and asked for the remainder of the list's contents to be revealed.

Chui replied that the cases of misconduct by public officials were being handled according to the law, and that if crimes had been committed then the cases would be forwarded to the Public Prosecutions Office. He added that according to the statute and rules of civil servants, all people aware of such instances have a duty to report them, a requirement that is not exclusive to the CCAC.

Regarding the "list" requested by Coutinho, the Chief Executive simply said, "it does not exist."

## Seeking justice at the AL

Renato Marques

An anonymous woman was the focus of all attention during yesterday's recess at the Legislative Assembly (AL) session attended by the Chief Executive.

Emerging from the seats in the legislature reserved for the public, the woman stood in the corridor by the main door and, holding an envelope allegedly with documents that prove her case, she called for the assistance of the lawmakers in executing justice.

According to her own account, she had been fired without reasonable cause from her job and the company for which she used to work failed to compensate her.

The woman said that she took her case to the Labor Affairs Bureau but that she was not heard or helped. Finally, in an act of desperation, she decided to bring the case public at the AL.

After conversing for several minutes with AL staff, who were desperately trying to convince her to leave, the woman was finally persuaded to exit the plenary room by the intervention of lawmakers Leong Sun Iok and Ella Lei, who promised to hear about her case after the session.

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# Ho Iat Seng first declared in the race for top post



Ho Iat Seng

Daniel Beidler

**LEGISLATIVE** Assembly President Ho Iat Seng yesterday confirmed he is putting himself forward as the first declared candidate in the race to become Macau's next Chief Executive, but first he says he needs authorization from Beijing.

Long expected by the public, Ho made the formal announcement yesterday after the government's policy address at the Legislative Assembly.

The veteran legislator said that as he currently holds a seat on the National People's Congress, he is technically ineligible to run for Macau's top post. Hence, he has submitted his resignation and if that is approved he "will likely run."

Though, he is yet to formulate a platform for his campaign, Ho indicated that his two primary objectives would be to improve people's livelihoods and promote the integration of Macau into the Greater Bay Area.

Ho Iat Seng has long been tou-

ted as a likely replacement for Chui.

Steve Vickers, CEO of specialist political and corporate risk consultancy Steve Vickers and Associates, told the Times earlier this month that "there is a sense that this election will break from a long-term reliance on the 'three families' [...] that it would be the Ma family's turn, after Ho and Chui."

However, a recent endorsement from Chui Sai Cheong, the Chief Executive's brother and current Legislative Assembly vice president, "suggests to me that it is in the bag for Ho," said Vickers.

Ho said that one factor leading to his decision to become a candidate in the fifth Chief Executive election was his friends. According to Ho's account, his friends wanted him to use his experience from his time at the Legislative Assembly and the National People's Congress to run Macau.

Emphasizing this experience, the Legislative Assembly president brushed aside comments yesterday about his lack of admi-

nistrative experience within the executive branch of government.

These comments were likely made with incumbent Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong in mind. Leong dropped an overt suggestion in February that he would contest the upcoming Chief Executive election.

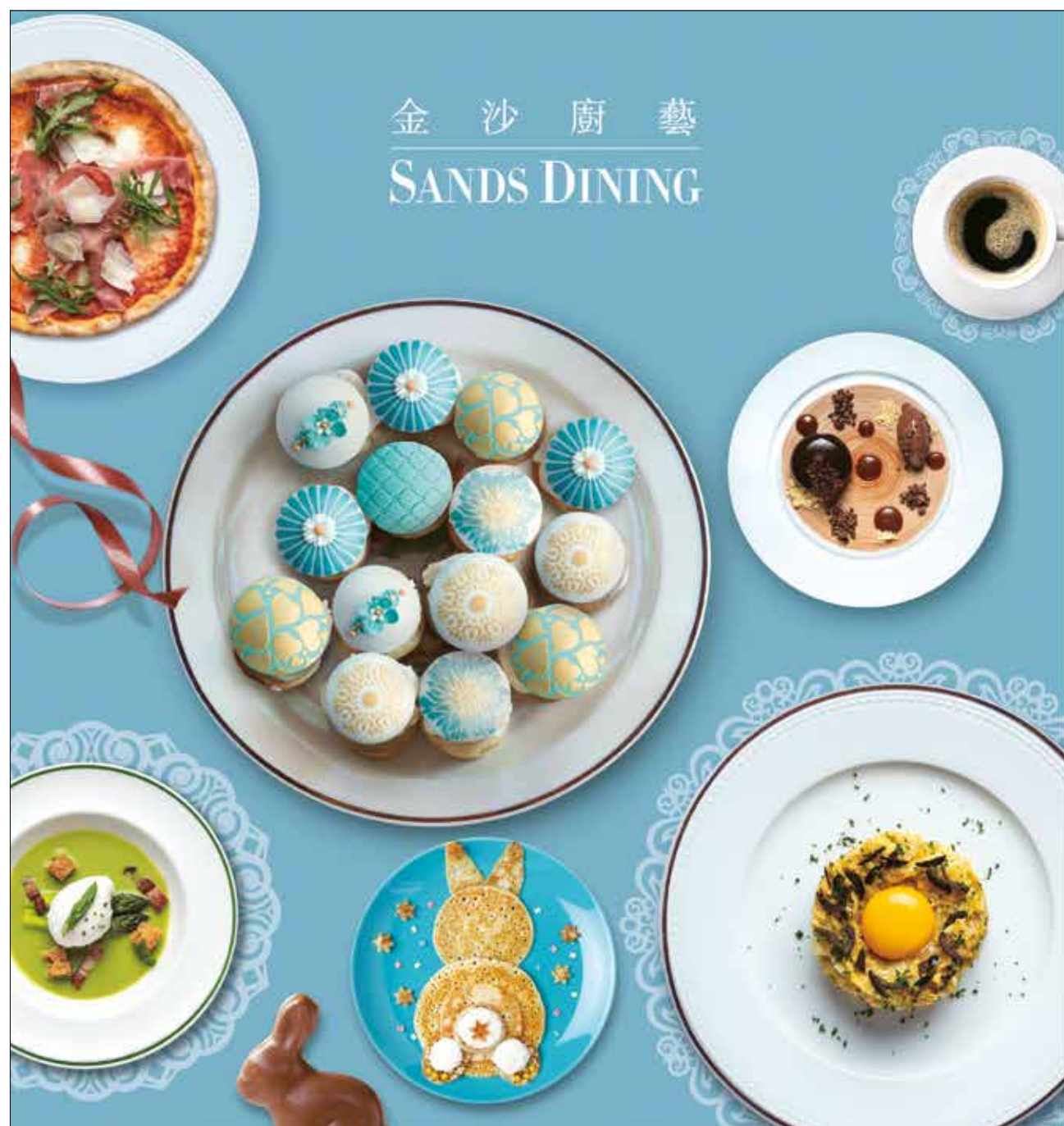
According to Vickers' assessment, Leong "has done a sound job implementing Chui and Beijing's wishes" and "his administrative experience would be an advantage." Nevertheless, Vickers regards Leong as "less likely to win" than Ho.

Other possible candidates according to Vickers include one of the Ma family clan and Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak, though even Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam's name has been dropped by others.

Wong has ruled out running for the role making him a less likely contender, but Alexis Tam has not provided a definitive answer as to whether he is considering a shot at the top post.

Chief Executive Chui Sai On will formally step down in December 2019. His replacement will be decided in August, when an electorate of 400 will convene to select Chui's successor. It is not unusual for Chief Executive candidates in Macau to run unopposed.

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# Pearl Horizon buyers insist they don't want to carry on demonstrations

Julie Zhu

**Y**ESTERDAY, a group of five buyers of the former Pearl Horizon project delivered a petition to the Liaison Office in Macau asking its director to help them recover their never-completed properties.

Led by the leader of the Pearl Horizon Condominium Owners United Association, Kou Meng Pok, the group wants the Central Government to help them.

"We sincerely beg the Liaison Office to help with the disaster and to help with the difficulties," the group's slogan read.

"The occurrence of the Pearl Horizon cases has harmed the legal and reasonable rights and interests of more than 3,000 buyers. It indeed represents a miscarriage of justice," argued the group in the petition submitted to the director of the Liaison Office.

"The Pearl Horizon Condominium Owners United Association submitted letters to the Liaison Office's directors begging for a meeting where we could express our grievance," the letter reads. "However, we feel deeply helpless



Kou Meng Pok, leader of the group presents a petition to a representative of the Liaison Office (left)

that we did not receive the Liaison Office's help."

"The purpose of this petition is also to beg to the Liaison Office to help [...], and to protect the Basic Law and protect private property. We hope that the Liaison Office can urge the Macau government to solve the Pearl Horizon case, as

well as urge [them] to completely solve the case within this [administration]," the letter reads.

According to Kou, in the past, the group submitted their requests to the three previous directors of the Liaison Office.

In recent years, the group has been organizing multiple demon-

strations requesting the government to recover their commercial properties. However, the former Pearl Horizon land is being recovered by the government for the purpose of building public housing that may not reflect the initial Pearl Horizon project.

"It is really difficult to talk to a

dishonest and irresponsible government," Kou told the media.

"This year marks two anniversaries [the PRC anniversary and the Macau handover anniversary], and Macau is a harmonious place," said Kou. "We hope that this year we will not need to organize too many demonstrations, and that we can all celebrate the two anniversaries together, even celebrating the fifth election of the Chief Executive."

On May 1, Labor Day, Kou's association will organize a demonstration.

"Our slogan is really strong. It calls the main principal officials to step down from their positions. It will definitely influence Macau's image," said Kou, adding that "we don't want that, but we have no other way, we are forced. We can't tolerate it anymore. We want to solve the problem peacefully."

The Administrative Court ruled earlier this month that there was no legal grounds for the Pearl Horizon unit buyers to sue the government for the property price and stamp duty paid on apartments from the controversial and never-completed project.

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AP PHOTO



Hong Kong businessman Richard Suen

## Fire breaks out at Tv. de São Domingos

A fire broke out at a storage unit at Travessa de São Domingos yesterday morning. Firefighters spent nearly one hour extinguishing the fire. Residents from 10 households took the initiative of evacuating themselves. The fire spread across an area of approximately 150 square feet. According to the Fire Services Bureau, the fire may have been caused by an electrical malfunction.

## Local student hospitalized after being slapped by teacher

A case of a student being slapped was revealed earlier this week, one month after the incident took place. The identity of the school remains undisclosed. However, according to the Public Security Police Force, which revealed only some of the relevant information under media scrutiny, the victim was a male primary school student and was slapped multiple times by the suspect, a teacher. The student required hospital treatment. The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau has only said that the concerned teacher had been removed from his/her position.

## Proposal to build leisure space in Hac Sa village

Choi In Tong Sam Association has asked the government to use some spare land in Coloane Hac Sá village to build an integrated leisure zone for children and families. The land occupies an area of 70,000 square meters and was recovered by the local government in November 2018. The association says that the piece of land consists of a mountain and a green area, and should not be used for large-scale construction. In particular, the association hopes that the government will build a farm, a leisure and vacation center, and adventure facilities for children.

### GAMING

# Sands report suggests settlement amount in Macau case: \$96m

Ken Ritter, Las Vegas

**F**INANCIAL documents suggested that Las Vegas Sands Corp. paid USD96 million to settle a 15-year breach-of-contract dispute with a Hong Kong businessman who helped the U.S. company open its first casino in the Chinese gambling enclave of Macau.

The amount was listed as a "nonrecurring legal settlement" in a \$582 million quarterly earnings report by the publicly traded company headed by casino mogul Sheldon Adelson.

Adelson did not take part in a conference call with analysts, and company executives did not say anything about the single

line-item among 15 pages of financial figures.

No dollar amount was disclosed March 14 when the settlement between Sands and Richard Suen and his company, Round Square Co., was announced in a Las Vegas courtroom.

At the time, Suen said the battle he waged with Adelson since 2004 was "worth it" for what he called "the sense of justice." Suen attorney John O'Malley and Sands attorney James Jimmerson called it a fair end to the case.

Las Vegas Sands spokesman Ron Reese declined Wednesday to comment, and attorneys on both sides in the third trial involving Sands and Suen didn't

immediately respond to messages.

A \$96 million settlement would surpass previous jury judgments against Sands of \$70 million in 2013 and \$44 million in 2008 after state court trials.

Both times, Sands appealed. The Nevada Supreme Court upheld jury findings that Sands was liable for damages but said in 2016 that a new jury should decide how much Suen should receive.

The resulting settlement ended trial ahead of a second day of videotaped testimony by Adelson, the ailing 85-year-old board chairman, CEO and Republican national party donor.

Company lawyers say he is

being treated for cancer, and he has been excused from appearing in court in person due to his health.

Suen had no written contract but said he was promised a \$5 million "success fee" if Sands got approval from the Chinese government to open a Macau casino, plus 2 percent of profits over the 18-year life of a license. Sands now owns five lucrative properties in Macau.

It also owns the Venetian and Palazzo resorts and Sands Expo Center on the Las Vegas Strip and a resort in Singapore. It recently sold a property in Pennsylvania.

Company stock closed on Wednesday at \$67.91, down 24 cents. **AP**

### LAS VEGAS

# Blackstone is said to seek buyer for Cosmopolitan

**B**LACKSTONE Group is exploring strategic options for the Cosmopolitan hotel and casino in Las Vegas, including a possible sale of the strip property, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The investment firm is working with Deuts-

che Bank AG and PJT Partners Inc. to solicit interest from potential buyers for the resort, which could fetch USD4 billion or more, said the person, who asked not to be named because the matter is private. Representatives for Blackstone and Deutsche Bank

declined to comment. PJT didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

Blackstone acquired the hotel and casino for \$1.73 billion in 2014 from Deutsche Bank, which gained ownership through a crisis-related loan default in 2008. It has since made

improvements - completing construction on the top four floors, redesigning over 3,000 guest rooms and renovating spaces including the high-limit slots area.

Cosmopolitan isn't the only Las Vegas property for sale. Billionaire Carl Icahn is pressing Caesars

Entertainment Corp. to seek a buyer. Icahn, who holds an 18 percent stake in the company, the largest owner of U.S. casinos, controls three board seats. Caesars named industry veteran Anthony Rodio as its chief executive officer this week.

The Cosmopolitan, a two-tower complex, cost more than \$3.9 billion to build. It opened in 2010. It was one of several properties under construction that were hobbled by the 2008 financial crisis. **MDT/Bloomberg**

DANIEL BEITLER



## DSEC: warmest May last year since 1952

Staff reporter

**R**ECORDING the highest temperature of the year at 35.8 degrees Celsius, last May was the warmest May for nearly 70 years.

According to data collected from the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) and analyzed by the Statistics and Cen-

sus Bureau (DSEC), May 2018 was the warmest such month since 1952. The previous record was just 31.4 degrees Celsius.

However, last year's highest temperature was still 2.2 degrees short of the record seen during the entirety of 2017.

Last year's lowest temperature was recorded in February, at 4.6 degrees

Celsius, 2.5 degrees lower than that of 2017.

The mean temperature, on the other hand, was 22.8 degrees Celsius in 2018, compared to 23 degrees Celsius in 2017.

As to rainfall, a total of 1,795mm was recorded in Macau by the SMG last year, which was 12.4mm more than that in 2017. The year saw 39 days with

acidic rain.

Nonetheless, there was some improvement in air quality last year.

According to a summary report by DSEC, all air quality monitoring stations "showed a significant decrease in the number of 'poor' air quality days," apart from the ambient monitoring station in Taipa.

Generally speaking, air quality was better in 2018 than in 2017.

Seven tropical cyclones struck Macau in 2018 with a nine-hour-long signal 10 necessitated by Typhoon Mangkhut.

Meanwhile, both the city's population and land area recorded growth in 2018, according to the data.

Macau had a population of 658,000 in 2018 and a total land area of 32.9 square kilometers. The population density was about 20,000 persons per square kilometer last year, down by 1,100 persons per square kilometer in the previous year. DSEC attributed this to the reclamation connected to the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

## GPDP reminds that camera installation in taxis is illegal

**T**HE Macau Office for Personal Data Protection (GPDP) is reminding taxi drivers in the city not to install cameras inside their vehicles as that is illegal.

In a statement issued yesterday, the GPDP said it was following a case in Hong Kong, where two Hong Kong celebrities had become intimate inside the vehicle while they were being recorded.

According to the GPDP statement, it is currently illegal for drivers or taxi license owners to install cameras inside their vehicles in Macau.

The city's data protection law regulates that without the approval of the law or the GPDP, the collection of sensitive information may violate the city's data protection laws. This entails heavy punish-

ments, which can include two years in prison or a 240-day penalty fine.

Moreover, if the data is published on the internet, the publisher may be subjected to a maximum of three years in prison or a 360-day fine.

Some local taxi drivers have installed driving recorders inside their vehicles for traffic safety reasons.

"Even though the installation of cameras is still controversial, in principle, [driving recorders] can only be used for protecting personal rights similar to other driving recorders installed in private vehicles, and the information can't be shared on the internet," said the GPDP.

"The office appeals to all taxi drivers and car owners to comply with the law." **JZ**

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A child dressed in costume performs on a float during Piu Sik (Floating Colours) Parade



Bun Scrambling Competition

# Hong Kong's ancient history unraveled in upcoming spring festivals

**S**TEEPED in culture and tradition, Hong Kong is honoring its Chinese past with a series of ancient festivals coming up this spring.

Over a three-week period extending from late April to mid-May, the neighboring city will celebrate the Tin Hau Festival, the Cheung Chau Bun Festival, and the birthdays of Buddha and Tam Kung.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board, which is promoting the series of festivals as a tourist attraction, said that it was "proud to support the culture and heritage that makes Hong Kong such a vibrant city."

"We invite visitors to immerse themselves in these ancient celebrations, which truly capture

the color and lively spirit of the city," said Anthony Lau, executive director of the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

From powerful drums, riveting gongs and technicolor dragon dances to joyous crowds and mountains of Chinese buns, here are a few of Hong Kong's unforgettable upcoming festivals:

## TIN HAU FESTIVAL

A celebration of Tin Hau, the Goddess of the Sea, this eponymous festival lures thousands of people to peaceful Yuen Long every third lunar month. The celebration centers around the Shap Pat Heung fa pau (floral wreath) parade. Starting at 10 a.m. on April 27, the procession fills the streets with extrava-

gant floral wreaths, traditional dancers, and a lively marching band.

## CHEUNG CHAU BUN FESTIVAL

Taking place on the charming island of Cheung Chau, the famed Bun Festival was named one of the "Top 10 Quirky Local Festivals" by TIME Magazine. As the story goes, the villagers summoned Pak Tai, a powerful deity, to protect them from a devastating plague, and then paraded through the streets to ward off evil spirits.

For more than a century, the villagers had celebrated the festival with the vibrant Piu Sik (Floating Colours) Parade, papier-mâché effigies, Chinese opera performances, lion dan-

ces, and delicious food throughout the week.

Where do the buns come in? Every year, local vendors produce tens of thousands of ping on bao, aka "lucky buns".

The festival is celebrated between May 9 and 13. On May 12 at 11:30 p.m., the mind-boggling Bun Scrambling Competition takes off. Competitors scale a 14-metre-tall bamboo tower covered with 9,000 imitation buns and try to collect as many buns as possible in three minutes.

## BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

The city marks Buddha's Birthday with a week of carnivals and spiritual experiences from May 6 to May 12. A common ritual is 'Bathing the Buddha',

where worshippers wash Buddha statues with water to show respect. Then there's the Celebration Carnival for Buddha's Birthday in Victoria Park, the Buddhist Birthday Charity Concert at the Hong Kong Coliseum, and various events at Po Lin Monastery, on lush Lantau Island.

## TAM KUNG'S BIRTHDAY

A sea deity worshipped by fishing communities, Tam Kung is known for his ageless face and ability to forecast the weather. Every fourth lunar month, villagers celebrate the god at the century-old Tam Kung Temple in Shau Kei Wan with traditional lion and dragon dance parade. This year the celebration will fall on May 12. **MDT/AP**

## HONG KONG

# Cathay earmarks A321neo aircraft for China route expansion

**C**ATHAY Pacific Airways Ltd. intends to deploy Airbus SE A321neo planes scheduled for delivery starting 2020 on Chinese routes, part of a plan that will help the carrier manage costs while expanding and upgrading its network.

Through the use of data technology and more fuel-efficient aircraft, Cathay has managed to increase its revenue per seat mile by about 7 percent, Chief Executive Officer Rupert

Hogg said in an interview with Bloomberg News Wednesday. Its cost per seat mile has also been contained, he said.

Cathay has stated "we will make ourselves more productive and keep that cost flat," Hogg said in Beijing. "That's roughly what we did last year."

The new aircraft - which are more fuel-efficient and will help lower operating costs - will replace older A320 and A321 aircraft at Cathay's sister airline Cathay Dragon.

The Hong Kong carrier has faced immense pressure from Chinese airlines rapidly adding direct international routes, a development that has diminished the city's importance as a hub and led Cathay in 2016 to record its first full-year net loss in eight years. Cathay is on the last leg of a three-year transformation program that's seen the carrier cut at least 600 jobs, improve service offerings including meals, and keep a tight lid on costs.

The airline has also become what Hogg calls smarter in the way it works. It has invested in data technology to improve productivity, such as making sure its flights are on time more often and there are fewer missed connections, he said.

Last month, Hogg said Cathay is mining customer data to track flying behavior and aspirations to help the carrier understand their likes and dislikes. **Bloomberg**

## ZHUHAI

# Police bust frozen food smuggling gang

**P**OLICE in the city of Zhuhai in south China's Guangdong Province said earlier this week that they had busted a frozen food smuggling case valued at 4 million yuan (4.82 million patacas).

Two people have been detained for allegedly having smuggled 240 tonnes of frozen chicken feet, chicken wings and pig feet.

Most of the food was smuggled from Europe and America and some was unlabeled, police said, adding that further investigation is under way. **Xinhua**



## GUANGDONG

# Booming electric vehicle industry leads green development

**SOUTHERN** China's Guangdong Province saw a boom in electric vehicle charging services in the first quarter, according to local electricity authorities.

The Guangdong branch of China Southern Power Grid Co. Ltd. said Wednesday that from January to March its charging facilities provided more than 1 million charges for electric vehicles, increasing more than 450% compared to the previous year.

Electric vehicles charged 30.3 million kWh of power in the first three months through the company's charging facilities, year-on-year growth of over 840%.

Xu Yanhao, an official of the company, attributed growth in power consumption and charging services to the increase of electric vehicles including buses, taxis, and cars which offer online ride-hailing services, as well as improvements of charging devices in the province.

The number of users of provincial charging services has increased rapidly, with around 108,000 registered users in total. Newly registered users in the



first quarter increased 790 percent compared with the same period last year.

The surge in power consumption from electric vehicles not only reflects the vigorous growth of electric vehicles in Guangdong but shows the province's

pursuit of green development, Xu added.

Guangdong reported GDP growth of 6.8% last year to tally 9.73 trillion yuan (MOP11.74 trillion), representing about 10 percent of the national total.

The province has introduced

a variety of policies for green growth and high-quality development, and the electric vehicle industry has seen a significant improvement over the past few years.

The provincial government stipulated that from 2016, of the

renewed or newly-added buses in the Pearl River Delta region, the proportion of pure electric buses should not be less than 90 percent. The proportion of pure electric taxis should increase gradually, and at least 95 percent of newly-added vehicles should be pure electric ones for government agencies and public institutions.

Guangdong plans to invest 54 billion yuan to build charging facilities from 2016 to 2020, according to Xinhua, with nearly 1,500 charging stations and around 350,000 charging points built.

Around 5,000 charging points will be put into operation this year in Guangdong, said Xu, adding that charging facilities will be installed along the province's main expressways by 2020.

As of March, Guangdong had about 90,000 charging points.

"It is estimated that the annual power consumption by electric vehicles will exceed 220 billion kWh since 2020, which is expected to reduce more than 1.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions," said Qu Dapeng, an official of Guangzhou Power Supply Bureau.

The provincial ecology and environment department said people in Guangdong would embrace a better environment since the province has paid more attention to green development. **DB/Xinhua**

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## REAL ESTATE MATTERS

### A checklist for moving in macau

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.

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SAM LEE

**MOVING!** The very thought of it can send chills down our spine and can cause us to break out into a cold sweat.

Experts say that any kind of 'change' creates stress. Moving, especially if we are living in a foreign country and have not necessarily chosen to move, can create a huge amount of stress.

When preparing for a move we must motivate ourselves to get a lot of additional tasks completed as well as all the things we usually do.

This checklist contains many suggestions that may seem like "no-brainers". However, the very act of printing out these simple suggestions and reminders can be helpful as the dreaded time approaches.

Moving and relocating calls for proactive measures to be taken, completing certain chores well in advance of deadlines. Hopefully these points will help to accomplish that.

In this article we are leaving out the "big things" such as finding the best moving company, researching your new neighborhood's transportation, parking, employment, etc. Those are for another article on another day. Today we are concentrating on the basics of planning and preparation.

#### 1. DE-CLUTTER - GET RID OF WHAT YOU DON'T NEED.

Moving unwanted clothing and bric-a-bracs from one place of residence to another is a great waste of time and effort.

It is surprising how much more in control we feel once we start narrowing

down our "inventory" to what we actually need to keep.

Getting rid of the unwanted items can be done by having a sale long before moving time and then donating the leftovers to charitable groups or friends.

#### 2. GET ALL IMPORTANT PAPERS AND DOCUMENTS TOGETHER AND SECURE THEM.

Since moving is hectic, to say the least, we need to be aware of the exact location of all of our important items.

Things that we absolutely must not lose or misplace should certainly be hand carried, not put in a box for the movers: Address Books, Birth Certificates, Bank Statements, Checks, Credit Cards and Statements, Home Movies, Irreplaceable Memorabilia, Insurance Policies, Marriage Records, Medical and Dental Records, Military Records, Passports, Photos and Photo Albums, Resumes, School Records, Stock Certificates, Tax Returns, Telephone Numbers, Valuables, Vehicle Documents, Wills.

#### 3. IF YOU ARE RENTING, PREPARE WELL FOR YOUR CHECKOUT

Have all your last paid bills available for the agent and check current meter readings.

Also ensure you are fully packed and that the things you are taking are ready to go. Is the apartment clean or are you paying to have it cleaned after you leave?

Run through the inventory and note any missing or broken items as this can greatly speed up check out.

Make sure you have emptied your mailbox and have all keys ready to hand back.

#### 4. PREPARE WELL IN ADVANCE FOR LIVING AT YOUR NEW LOCATION.

There are many things that we can do at our new location well in advance of our move that will help smooth out the bumps and grinds of our relocation process when the actual event occurs:

Contact the new area utility companies and arrange for your new services. These can include Cable TV, gas, electric, oil, telephone, water and Internet access. Prepare change of address forms for all of your correspondents; credit card companies, other credit accounts, banks, insurance companies, current utility companies for final statements, magazines and other subscriptions, family, friends, and any other persons or businesses that you correspond with on a regular basis.

With proper planning and preparation the moving process, though never fun, can at least be sane. The utilities at your present address can be disconnected the day after you move and the utilities at your new address can be connected the day prior to your arrival.

With proper planning and preparation you will have all of your important documents at the tip of your fingers at all times. Your mail will start arriving the day after you move in to your new abode, and your life will endure a minimum of chaos and clutter.

Good luck with your move and good luck in your new home or apartment.

## The only analyst who isn't drinking to Moutai's rise says sell

IT takes a strong stomach to be bearish on Chinese distiller Kweichow Moutai Co.

Its 60 percent rally this year has made it one of China's best-performing large-caps, putting it on course to be the first mainland-listed stock to reach 1,000 yuan. It's also one of the most loved companies onshore, with all but one of the 39 analysts tracked by Bloomberg telling investors to keep on buying.

Allen Cheng at Morningstar Inc. is the lone bear, bucking the trend when he downgraded the maker of baijiu liquor to sell earlier this month. Though he was reluctant at first, his financial models were telling him to make the call, and warns there may be no more positive

catalysts left for the stock until the end of next year.

"It's not a good entry point," Cheng said in a phone interview, noting that the price now far exceeds his target of 830 yuan. "There is no more positive news left to price in through the end of 2020."

China's biggest distiller closed at a record high of 952 yuan on Wednesday, 15 percent higher than Cheng's target and exceeding those of another 10 brokers, including Credit Suisse and JPMorgan Chase & Co., according to Bloomberg data. It's up more than 15,000 percent since its 2001 debut in Shanghai.

Cheng's sell rating stands out given the stock's performance, which bulls say justify its scorching valuation as sales

growth and consistently high margins defy worries about a consumer spending slowdown. But Cheng sees Moutai's shipment growth slowing in the second quarter. He says he wants more clarity from the liquor maker on its plans to boost profitability by selling more product directly to consumers.

One group of investors may be in agreement with Cheng's call on Moutai. Foreign investors began to offload their shares last week, selling a combined 1.5 billion yuan (USD224 million) of Moutai shares and lowering that segment's ownership to 9.4 percent of outstanding shares from 9.6 percent in March, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. MDT/Bloomberg

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# China-US tensions may linger after trade war, Singapore says

Linus Chua

**TENSIONS** between the U.S. and China may linger even as both countries show signs that they're edging closer to an end to their trade war, according to Singapore Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat.

A "quick resolution" could come in areas addressing the trade deficit and the protection of intellectual property, said Heng, who has spent the past week in Washington speaking with U.S. lawmakers, officials in the Trump administration, and industry experts.

"Many of the leaders and analysts I've spoken to have held the view that this is not just a trade dispute, this is a more complex competition

in technology and strategic influence," Heng said in an interview Wednesday in San Francisco, in the last leg of his U.S. trip. "That means this is not something that will be resolved overnight."

While Singapore has stayed "neutral" with both countries, according to Heng, it's caught in a potential cross-fire between China, its biggest trading partner, and the U.S., a key ally and investor. Senior U.S. and Chinese officials are scheduling more face-to-face trade talks in an effort to reach a deal by early May that President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping could sign later that month, two people familiar with the plans said.

The rift between the world's

two biggest economies has roiled markets and threatened global growth. Earlier this month, the International Monetary Fund cut its outlook for global growth to the lowest since the financial crisis a decade ago, amid a bleaker outlook in most major advanced economies and signs that higher tariffs are weighing on trade.

Singapore's central bank kept its monetary policy settings unchanged last week, striking a dovish tone as it sees the economy growing below potential. On Wednesday, government data showed electronics exports in March slumped by the most since 2013, while International Business Machines Corp. is closing its technology park in the city-state

and moving its high-end manufacturing to the U.S., the Straits Times reported.

"We must expect there will be changes in how companies relocate their operations in different parts of the world," Heng said, adding that "for Singapore, as a small open economy, we must be prepared for changes in the global environment."

The country has monetary and fiscal policy tools to adjust to changes in the global outlook, and will use this period of uncertainty around the world to "redouble" efforts to restructure its own economy and industries, he said. The minister is in San Francisco to speak at Singapore's Bridge Forum and another tech event organized by the city-state. **Bloomberg**

## WTO to issue ruling in Chinese farm quota dispute

Bryce Baschuk

**T**HE World Trade Organization is poised to issue another key ruling in the U.S. trade fight over China's agricultural trade practices.

The WTO said it will soon make public its determination as to whether China imposed illegal restrictions on farm imports and failed to implement its regulations in a transparent and fair manner.

The Obama-era case alleged Beijing violated WTO rules by applying discriminatory agricultural tariff-rate quotas for rice, wheat, and corn that unfairly undermined the ability of U.S. farmers to export their grains. If China is found to have violated WTO policy, Beijing would have to revise its quota programs or face the prospect of trade retaliation from Washington.

A U.S. win could increase Chinese market access for U.S. farmers at a time when they are struggling to compete amid the fallout of President Donald Trump's trade war.

As part of China's WTO accession agreement, Beijing pledged to set specific quota levels for wheat, corn, and rice by applying a lower tariff rate to imports up to a certain quantity and then applying higher duties to imports that exceed the threshold.

But China never reached its agreed-upon threshold for agricultural tariff-rate quotas despite lower global prices that favored the importation of grains into China, the U.S. complaint said.

The U.S. alleged Beijing's procedures were not clearly specified and prevented exporters from filling the tariff-rate quotas. Had China complied with its WTO obligations, Beijing would have permitted an additional USD3.5 billion worth of crops to be imported into China, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer told U.S. lawmakers in March that he was talking to his Chinese counterparts about "resolving" the dispute as well as a separate one within the context of the Trump administration's broader trade negotiations with Beijing. **Bloomberg**

### corporate bits

#### WYNN HOSTS SEMINAR ON THE 'ART OF CURATION'



In support of the upcoming arts and culture event 'Art Macao', Wynn hosted a seminar on the "Art of Curation" on April 17, as part of its Art Promotion Event Series for teachers, students, youth and art enthusiasts across art, de-

sign, exhibitions and other related fields.

Emerson Wang and Chip Tom, two experienced international art curators were invited as guest speakers at the seminar, where they shared their respective views on

art with teachers and students to further enhance their knowledge and understanding of art and exhibitions.

Wang gave an overview of the art curation industry, covering topics around art administration, the role of being an art curator, and the management and execution of curatorial projects. Meanwhile, Tom shared insights into how he assisted Wynn in creative planning and organizing art exhibitions, the characteristics of different art pieces, and the trend of contemporary art exhibitions.

The seminar attracted more than a hundred teachers and students from various local colleges, art enthusiasts, and Wynn employees, according to the casino operator.

#### 40 SANDS CHINA EMPLOYEES VISIT NATIONAL SECURITY EXHIBITION



Nearly 40 Sands China employees, including senior management from various departments, visited the second National Security Education Exhibition at the Handover Gifts Museum of Macau yesterday. While there, they went

on a guided tour in order to gain a deeper understanding of the exhibition.

Yesterday's activity was held in support of the Macau SAR government's efforts to promote public awareness and education regarding

national security in the community and is one of Sands China's initiatives to support national education.

The visit also helped employees to reinforce their understanding of "one country, two systems," the central government's Constitution, and Macau's Basic Law.

"With Macau continuing to play a key role in the region's rapid development, I encourage [employees] and the wider Macau community to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about the role we can play in contributing to the security of the nation," said Sands China President Wilfred Wong, according to a statement from the gaming operator.



## TAIWAN

# 6.1 quake causes light damage in Taipei, east coast

AP PHOTO



A strong earthquake shook eastern Taiwan yesterday afternoon, causing scattered light damage in the capital and along the eastern coast.

The 6.1 magnitude quake was centered northwest of the city of Hualien at a depth of nearly 19 kilometers, Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau said.

Water pipes at the city's train station burst and rail traffic was briefly suspended. Schools along the east coast were evacuated, with students holding their backpacks over their heads for protection. TV news showed at least one landslide in a lightly populated area.

Two hikers in the famed Taroko Gorge national park, including one from Malaysia, were injured by falling rocks, the Hualien government reported.

Traffic through the gorge has been halted while drones and helicopters check for damage, Premier Su Tseng-chang said.

"If it rains, [retaining walls] could fall down, so we urge people not to get close," he said.

Su said schools, worksites and water, power and transit lines had also been checked for damage. While no major problems were found, cracked road surfaces on the east coast could become a problem if rain falls soon, he said.

In Taipei, about 115 kilometers from the epicenter, people felt buildings shake, and one multistory building was leaning against

its neighbor after its foundation shifted. The city's subway system suspended service.

At the leaning building in downtown Taipei, area resident Ayumi Lin said the earthquake's force was considerable. "It was really scary," Lin said. "The quake shook strongly twice."

The owner of a travel agency in the adjacent building, who gave only his surname, Huang, said all his employees evacuated safely from their seventh floor office. "No one was hurt," Huang said.

People in Chinese cities close to the Taiwan Strait dividing Taiwan from mainland China reported on social media that they also felt the quake.

Taiwan is on a string of seismic faults around the Pacific Ocean known as the "Rim of Fire" and is frequently rocked by tremors, including a 1999 quake that killed more than 2,300 people.

The government has set up an elaborate system of alerts, inspections and recovery measures to cope with the frequent quakes. Hao Yilin, an exchange student from China studying at Chinese Culture University in Taipei, said he received a notice on his cellphone seconds before the ground began to shake.

"I wasn't scared because an earthquake like this is very common and the shaking was tolerable. So I didn't think of going outdoors and continued to eat lunch while watching a TV series," Hao said. AP

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## Macau's tourism crisis office monitoring situation

MACAU'S Tourism Crisis Management Office (GGCT) says it is monitoring the situation caused by the earthquake in Hualien, Taiwan, and is in regular contact with the Macau Economic and Cultural Delegation in Taiwan. As of yesterday afternoon, there was no

indication that any Macau residents had been affected by the earthquake. The GGCT said it has received just one request for information and no requests for assistance. The Macau Economic and Cultural Office in Taiwan has not received any requests for information or assistance.

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**'DISHONEST RECORDS'**

China's State Council listed public servants as a crucial test group for building personal credit systems in a 2016 document that was later adopted by 20 provinces. The council separately ordered all court decisions, penalties or disciplinary actions taken against civil servants be recorded in a system of "dishonest records" to be collated on a national platform naming and shaming individuals.

## China public servants are constantly expected to prove their loyalty to President Xi

Public servants who end up on the list will face consequences in their performance reviews and when being considered for promotions. Provinces and cities across the country have since formulated local versions of the plan.

The advances made by Wenzhou to monitor government workers parallels others in social credit pilot programs across China. The city's authorities said in August public servants who defied or obstructed local court orders would face disciplinary action and have their wages withheld. In February, the courts teamed up with 41 government departments to share government employees' social credit information. **Bloomberg**

# Bureaucrats increasingly judged on what they do after work

**F**OR Chinese bureaucrats, getting a promotion isn't just tied to their performance on the job - it's increasingly about how well they behave in their leisure time.

Last month, the southeast city of Quanzhou became the latest to start rating civil servants' personal behavior. Earlier Wenzhou - a commercial hub in the east - began equally weighting behavior at work and at home for

promotions and other rewards. The coastal city Zhoushan also keeps files on the so-called social credit of public servants to assess them.

China is increasing pressure on its public servants, who are constantly expected to prove their loyalty to President Xi Jinping and the party. A new emphasis on personal behavior being rewarded over competence and ability is leaving bureaucrats di-

sillusioned, as Xi curbs dissent and tightens his grip on power.

The government is ramping up efforts to stamp out corruption among public servants and dissuade them from taking advantage of their positions and influence, amid an ambitious government plan to build a nationwide social credit system by 2020 to assign lifelong scores to citizens based on their behavior.

In January, China's top judge

Zhou Qiang vowed to strengthen rules barring government employees who defied court orders from making investments and holding certain jobs.

China's already monitoring civil servants through a number of avenues, including a mobile app used to test Communist Party members' loyalty to the party. Millions of citizens have downloaded the program to score points with the government.

# Amazon to shut down part of its Chinese e-commerce business

**I**N a rare retreat for Amazon.com Inc., the e-commerce giant plans to shut down its Chinese marketplace business in July as it shifts its focus to offering mainland consumers overseas products rather than goods from local sellers.

Amazon will keep running its other businesses in China, including Amazon Web Services, Kindle e-books, and cross-border operations that help ship goods from Chinese merchants to customers abroad. Starting on July 18, customers logging in to Amazon's Chinese web portal, Amazon.cn, will only see a selection of goods from its global store, rather than products from third-party sellers.

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Pulling out of Chinese e-commerce represents a setback for the company in the world's largest retail market and for Chief Executive Officer Jeff Bezos, known for his willingness to weather losses to achieve long-term gains.

It's also the latest example of an American tech company in China struggling to contend with local leaders like Alibaba Group Holding Ltd and JD.com Inc., as well as group buying app Pinduoduo Inc., which went public in

New York last year.

Amazon entered China in 2004, when it bought a local online book seller for USD75 million. Since then, it's invested in warehouses, data centers, and programs to teach Chinese sellers how to

get their goods to Amazon customers. It launched its Prime membership program in China in 2016 with hopes of luring customers with promises of high-quality Western goods and perks like free international deliveries. But extra perks like Prime Video, which has been used to woo customers in other markets, aren't available to users in China.

Alibaba, JD and other Chinese platforms also ramped up their offerings of everything from American cherries to Australian baby formula with steep discounts. Amazon still has less than 1 percent market share in China, according to iResearch.

The pullback is the latest sign that Amazon is ceding China so it can focus on India, where it stands a better chance of becoming a dominant player. The company has plowed

billions of dollars into the India business since opening its website there in 2013, building more than 50 warehouses to support the business.

But Amazon still has to contend with Chinese e-commerce players in India, where Alibaba and others are building up operations or investing in local startups such as Paytm E-commerce Pvt and BigBasket.

For now, Amazon's commitment to China remains strong and it will continue to invest in the country, according to a company spokeswoman. She said it has been shifting the focus of its online retail business in the country to cross-border sales, which cater both to Chinese merchants selling to consumers abroad and to Chinese customers looking for high-quality goods from around the world. **Bloomberg**



## KOREA TENSIONS

# North says it tested new weapon, wants Pompeo out of talks

**N**ORTH Korea said yesterday that it had test-fired a new type of "tactical guided weapon," its first such test in nearly half a year, and demanded that Washington remove Secretary of State Mike Pompeo from nuclear negotiations.

The test, which didn't appear to be of a banned mid- or long-range ballistic missile that could scuttle negotiations, allows Pyongyang to show its people it is pushing ahead with weapons development while also reassuring domestic military officials worried that diplomacy with Washington signals weakness.

Separately, Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry accused Pompeo of playing down the significance of comments by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who said last week that Washington has until the end of the year to offer mutually acceptable terms for an agreement to salvage the high-stakes nuclear diplomacy. Both the demand for Pompeo's



A mock North Korea's Scud-B missile (left) and South Korean missiles are displayed at Korea War Memorial Museum in Seoul

removal from the talks and the weapon test point to Pyongyang's displeasure with the deadlocked negotiations.

In a statement issued under the name of Kwon Jong Gun, director general of the American Affairs Department at

Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry, North Korea accused Pompeo of "talking nonsense" and misrepresenting Kim's comments.

During a speech at Texas A&M earlier this week, Pompeo said Kim promised to denuclearize during his first summit with

President Donald Trump and that U.S. officials were working with the North Koreans to "chart a path forward so we can get there."

"He [Kim] said he wanted it done by the end of the year," Pompeo said. "I'd love to see that done sooner."

The North Korean statement said Pompeo was "misrepresenting the meaning of our requirement" for the negotiations to be finalized by the year's end, and referred to his "talented skill of fabricating stories." It said Pompeo's continued participation in the negotiations would ensure that the talks become "entangled" and called for a different counterpart who is "more careful and mature in communicating with us."

In a speech at his rubber-stamp parliament last week, Kim said he is open to a third summit with Trump, but only if the United States changes its stance on sanctions enforcement and pressure by the end of the year.

Kim observed the unspecified weapon being fired Wednesday by the Academy of Defense Science, the North's state-run Korean Central News Agency said. Kim was reported to have said "the development of the weapon system serves as an event of very weighty significance in increasing the combat power of the People's Army."

The Associated Press could not independently verify North Korea's claim, and it wasn't immediately clear what had been tested. A major ballistic missile test would jeopardize the diplomatic talks meant to provide the North with concessions in return for disarmament. A South Korean analyst said that details in the North's media report indicate it could have been a new type of cruise missile. Another possible clue: one of the lower level officials mentioned in the North's report on the test — Pak Jong Chon — is known as an artillery official.

Media reports have suggested Kim may visit Vladivostok, Russia, next week for a summit with President Vladimir Putin. Japan's Fuji Television Network on Wednesday showed Kim's de facto chief of staff, Kim Chang Son, visiting an area near Vladivostok's train station. **AP**

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Terrence Edwards

## MONGOLIA

IT'S hard to escape Genghis Khan in Mongolia.

The 13th century conqueror has donated his name to the capital's airport, a hotel, a central avenue, a garden, a club, even a brewery. Yet none evoke the spirit of autocratic power and greatness better than the shining 40 meter high equestrian statue of the warrior built by President Battulga Khaltmaa on the Mongolian steppes.

Now, less than two years after Battulga's election, some fear his widespread popularity and campaign to root out corruption may be moving the president's authority closer to that of his hero at the expense of democracy, and shifting Mongolia closer to China and Russia.

With support from parliament, Battulga passed a law that effectively gave him far-reaching powers to dismiss judges and senior members of the nation's legal system via his role as chairman of the National Security Council. He wasted no time in immediately removing a Supreme Court judge and the country's highest prosecutor. The deputy general director of Mongolia's Independent Authority Against Corruption may be next.

Dressed in a trim navy suit and red tie, the president urged lawmakers in his signature gravelly voice to grant the three-member security council authority to remove those who "are part of a conspiracy system that shields the illegal activities" of "political-economic interest groups."

Anti-corruption group Transparency International and human rights organizations including Amnesty International say the move is an erosion of the country's democratic values.

"There won't be enough checks and balances," said Badamragchaa Purevdorj, justice program manager at the Open Society Forum in Ulaanbaatar.

But voters have become angered by successive governments' failure to deal with issues such as air pollution and widening income disparity. And Battulga's tough-guy image and populist campaign to attack corruption have given him widespread popularity.

At stake is Mongolia's international image in a delicate game it has been playing to balance the influences of Russia, China and the U.S. While Western democracies see Mongolia as oasis of democracy, sandwiched between Russia and China, the country relies largely on its neighbors to buy its resources and provide investment. In March, China bought 86 percent of Mongolia's exports.

A trade agreement introduced this month in the U.S. Congress - the Mongolia Third Neighbor Trade Act - would remove duties on exports such as cashmere, which Mongolia is pushing to diversify its trade away from

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minerals.

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, who co-introduced the bill, called Mongolia "a stable democracy in a sea of authoritarianism" that contributes to U.S. national security goals in Asia. In an April 11 statement, he said the act would bring employment to the country and help empower women, who comprise most of the country's garment industry.

But Battulga also wants closer cooperation with the eight-member Shanghai Cooperation Organization, an Asian centered security and economic group that includes China and Russia. In a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Vladivostok in September, Battulga said relations with Russia were a priority for Mongolia.

The Mongolian president's advantage is that his political support at home cuts across parties. While the heads of some of the world's leading democratic countries may be having trouble winning support from polarized parliaments, Battulga has no such problems. His popular support and promise to battle graft have given him a strong position in a parliament that has been embattled by months of protests over corruption.

Thousands of Mongolians gathered in the capital in temperatures 20 degrees below zero in January to protest against political elites that are popularly called Manan, Mongolian for fog, a word created by meshing the acronyms for the two main political parties.

Battulga, a vocal critic of oligarchs and elites he accuses of pulling the strings in government, appeals to many voters because of his image as a tough-guy outsider, independent of a tainted political system.

"I respect him because he's

one of us, one of the ordinary citizens"

He is a self-made millionaire and a martial arts champion, who competed in Russian sambo wrestling. As the former head of the Mongolian Judo Association, he led the country's judo team to take the nation's first Olympic gold medal during the 2008 Beijing Games. Despite his wealth and fame, Battulga has won over the public as a man of the people.

"I respect him because he's one of us, one of the ordinary citizens," said Narantsetseg Batkhuu, 53, a Democratic party supporter who was protesting near the Government Palace at another demonstration on April 10.

## President Battulga's advantage is that his political support at home cuts across parties

The president's own Democratic Party has only nine seats in the 76-seat legislature, the State Great Hural, after suffering a huge defeat in the last election. But the motion to extend the National Security Council's powers was supported by many first-time lawmakers elected in 2016, and the bill passed with 85 percent in favor.

"The new MPs are not corrupted," said Ganbaatar Jambal, a member of the majority Mongolian People's Party, who voted for the bill. He said the president didn't directly push the policy on politicians, but "their ideas crossed."

Notably, the other two members of the security council are Prime Minister Khurelsukh Ukhnaa and the influential speaker of parliament, Zandanshatar Gombojav, both from the majority Mongolian People's Party.

In Mongolia, the prime minister holds executive power, with the president having right of veto and judicial appointment powers as well as being head of the nation's armed forces. But presidents over the past decade have increased their influence, raising concern the office is beginning to rival that of the premier.

"They are one team now," said Naranjargal Khashkhuu, president of Globe International, a Mongolian NGO that promotes freedom of expression. "It's very frustrating. It's also a test of Mongolia's democracy."

Naranjargal criticized elected officials for hastily passing a law before accepting any input from voters. She argued that the amendment is unconstitutional and hopes that a case will eventually come before the Constitutional Court to strike it down.

A statement from the President's Office said concerns about sweeping powers were overstated. "The only change is when the National Security Council issues a recommendation on the temporary suspension of judges," until deliberated on and fulfilled by a judicial council, the statement said.

In making his case for the rule change, Battulga cited accusations of torture to convict suspects in the of assassination of a former politician in 1998 and concern about the purchase of 49 percent stake in the Erdenet copper mine.

The president's proposed legislation passed just 48 hours after introducing it and took effect immediately. Enforcement normally begins only after laws are

published in a state periodical.

That's rattled some parliamentarians, including some of Battulga's own party, who were among the few who voted against the motion.

"The Democratic Party is against the expanding of the power of the president," said Sukhbaatar Tsedenjav, the party's secretary for foreign relations and cooperation. "We are for improving and strengthening the parliamentary system."

Sukhbaatar said the law's passage was a symptom of Mongolians' loss of faith in democracy. "There are more and more voices inside Mongolia preferring authoritarian rule, like in Russia, like China," he said.

That's not surprising. Mongolia's short-lived mining boom in 2010-2013, ended when commodity prices fell and disputes between the government and foreign mining companies curtailed investment, forcing the country to be bailed out by the International Monetary Fund in 2017.

A shift in power could further complicate investments in the country, especially for mining companies as new and old deals come under increased scrutiny. The nation's largest foreign-investment project, Rio Tinto Group's Oyu Tolgoi copper and gold mine, is already embroiled in a corruption investigation involving the former finance minister responsible for signing the deal in 2009.

Rio Tinto and its local unit Turquoise Hill Resources, did not respond to requests for comment. In its 2018 financial report, the company said it was complying with the Mongolian Anti-Corruption Authority's requests regarding possible abuses by former government officials, but that it had not received any notice from authorities that its operations or employees were the subject of any investigation.

Gross domestic product per capita in the nation is USD3,771 a year, and many Mongolians feel that even that wealth is unfairly distributed. With an economy skewed towards its huge coal and ore deposits that enriched oligarchs in the capital, the rural population has been pouring into Ulaanbaatar, looking for jobs and services like healthcare that are scant in rural areas.

Between 2010 and 2016 more than 245,000 people arrived in the city, bringing the population to 1.5 million, or about half the national total, according to the government statistics office. They created sprawling districts of traditional ger tents on the outskirts where about 60 percent of the city's people live.

Despite the president's man-of-the-people image, his assets include a hotel, a tourism company and a meat producer. His conglomerate Genco Holdings Pte Ltd., is named after Don Vito Corleone's olive oil import company in the American mafia novel "The Godfather." **Bloomberg**



UK

# Monty Python celebrate 'Life of Brian,' honor ailing Jones

Hilary Fox, London

**C**ELEBRATIONS for the 40th anniversary of the Monty Python comedy classic "Life of Brian" are being somewhat overshadowed by the health news of member Terry Jones.

Jones is "very robust" although "on the downhill slope" due to dementia, according to his friend and colleague Michael Palin. Jones was diagnosed in 2015 with a form of dementia that impairs the ability to speak.

"I go and see him and the great satisfaction is just to get a reaction; sadly, he doesn't speak much. But I read him some stuff that we'd written together a long, long time ago and Terry actually started to laugh at it, and he laughed only at the bits that he'd written," Palin recalled in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

"Life of Brian," which Jones directed, is being feted with a worldwide re-release today. It is among the group's revered



45 TV comedy episodes, five films and a blockbuster Broadway musical.

When "Life of Brian" came out four decades ago, it was a huge hit, but also stirred controver-

sy because of its plotline: It was about a man named Brian Cohen who was born in the stables next to Jesus and mistaken for the Messiah. Palin played Pontius Pilate with a speech impediment.

"We didn't get death threats, we just got people who were deeply, deeply offended by what we'd done," said Palin.

**“We didn't get death threats, we just got people who were deeply, deeply offended by what we'd done.”**

MICHAEL PALIN

"Yes, the right-wing militias weren't as strong in those days," added troupe member Terry Gilliam.

Palin recalls the film was actually banned from a town cal-

led Aberystwyth in Wales until 2008.

"Then Aberystwyth elected a new mayor, and the mayor they elected was Sue Jones-Davies, who played Brian's girlfriend, romping around in the nude. She was mayor of Aberystwyth and the first thing she said was, 'We're going to release this film in Aberystwyth,'" he recalled. "It was only shown for one night."

Besides the anniversary of "Life of Brian," Gilliam, 78, and Palin, 75, are also relishing the continued cultural relevance of sketches they wrote in their youth.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte recently likened British Prime Minister Theresa May, mired in Brexit, to the Black Knight (played by John Cleese in the film "Monty Python and the Holy Grail") who refuses to admit defeat despite losing all his limbs in a fight with King Arthur.

"I mean Python's had quite a resurgence owing to politics recently," said Palin, who added that "a Python situation" now is a synonym for "ridiculous."

Gilliam welcomed the attention, adding it was much needed now.

"People seem to be frightened of laughing at things, or especially to laugh at themselves, and that's what really worries me," he said. "If we can't appreciate the utter absurdity of us as a species, we're dead." AP



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## TV canal macau



## FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Harry Potter - Uma História de Magia
16:05	Livra-te do Medo - Zeca Afonso
17:10	Shout! Gospeling
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	Semana Internacional
21:50	Sinais de Vida
22:35	Portugal Culto e Oculto
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Resumo Liga Europa 2018/2019
00:10	A Solista
01:35	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:20	RTPi Directo

## SATURDAY

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

## Offbeat

## GAMBLER SETS ANOTHER ONE-DAY WINNINGS RECORD ON 'JEOPARDY!'

AP PHOTO



A professional sports gambler from Las Vegas has broken his own single-episode winnings record on "Jeopardy!"

James Holzhauer won USD131,127 during a show aired yesterday [Macau time], breaking the record that viewers saw him set last week.

Due to the game show's taping schedule, the records were actually set one day apart, with Holzhauer's new high score occurring on Feb. 12.

This win marks the 10th consecutive win for the 34-year-old Holzhauer. Before his run, the previous episode record was \$77,000 and was set by Roger Craig in 2010.

"Jeopardy!" host Alex Trebek, who revealed in March that he was diagnosed with advanced pancreatic cancer, posted a message Wednesday thanking fans for their well-wishes and said he's feeling good and continuing with his therapy.

## cinema



## CINETEATRO

18 - 23 Apr



## THE QUEEN'S CORGI

ROOM 1

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

Director: Vincent Kesteloot, Ben Stassen

Starring: Jack Whitehall, Julie Walters, Tom Courtenay

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 85min



## THE UPSIDE

ROOM 1

9:30pm

Director: Neil Burger

Starring: Kevin Hart, Bryan Cranston, Nicole Kidman

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 126min



## HOTEL MUMBAI

ROOM 2

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

Director: Anthony Maras

Starring: Dev Patel, Armie Hammer, Nazanin Boniadi

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 123min



## OKKO'S INN

ROOM 2

4:45pm

ROOM 3

7:30pm

Director: Kitarô Kôsaka

Starring: Seiran Kobayashi, Nana Mizuki, Satsumi Matsuda

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 95min



## WONDER PARK

ROOM 3

2:15, 4:00, 5:45pm

Director: Dylan Brown

Starring: Sofia Mali, Jennifer Garner, Ken Hudson

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 85min

## P STORM

ROOM 3

9:30pm

Director: David Lam

Starring: Chrissie Chau, Louis Koo, Kevin Cheng

Language: Cantonese (Chinese &amp; English)

Duration: 96min

## this day in history



## 1956 PRINCE RAINIER MARRIES GRACE KELLY

Prince Rainier III of Monaco has married the American film actress Grace Kelly.

The religious ceremony follows yesterday's civil ceremony held in the throne room in the Palace of Monaco.

The celebration of the Nuptial Mass was held in the Cathedral of Monaco. Miss Kelly looked every bit the film star in her ivory gown made of silk taffeta and lace.

The couple did not look at each other during the ceremony, but sat, stood and knelt facing the high altar as instructed by Monsignor Marella, the Papal Legate from Paris.

They spoke their vows so quietly that it was hard to tell whether they made them in English or French, the national language of Monaco.

At the end of the ceremony, a message was read out from the Pope. Then the couple drove through the streets of Monte Carlo in an open-top car, waving to thousands of well-wishers.

The couple, who announced their engagement in January, are spending their honeymoon cruising around the Mediterranean aboard Prince Rainier's yacht, Deo Juvante II - out of the public eye for the first time in months.

Yesterday's civil ceremony, conducted by the president of the Monaco Supreme Court, was attended by the couple's close family and friends.

In Monaco, as in France, a civil marriage must take place before a religious ceremony.

Miss Kelly, wearing a beige, lace dress with a close-fitting hat, was noticeably nervous throughout the proceedings.

Following the legal formalities the couple made a short appearance on the balcony of the palace where approximately 500 members of the public waited below.

The newly-married couple, surrounded by an abundance of red and white flowers, waved to the crowds for a few minutes before going back inside.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Grace Patricia Kelly was born on 12 November 1929 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In 1951, she appeared in her first film entitled Fourteen Hours. The following year her career took off when she landed the role of Amy Kane in High Noon.

After her marriage, when she became Her Serene Highness Princess Grace of Monaco, she gave up her acting career, having made 11 films.

She and Prince Rainier went on to have three children - Caroline, Albert, and Stephanie.

Princess Grace was killed in a car crash on September 14, 1982 after her car went off a road over a cliff in Monaco.

Prince Rainier III - or Rainer Louis Henri Maxence Bertrand de Grimaldi - was born in 1923 and was educated in Britain, Switzerland and France.

The Prince succeeded his grandfather Louis II in 1949 to become Monaco's 31st ruler. He died in April 2005.



YOUR STARS



Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Thoughts just under the surface are sabotaging your work. Losing money feels like a calamity, but would it really be that bad? Stop worrying about the possibility and start making it an impossibility.



Taurus

April 20-May 20

Being passionate has its drawbacks. If you approach everything with intensity, start thinking about a lighter touch. In other words, be gentle, today – not like a bull in a china shop.



Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

When someone hurts your feelings, your first instinct is to retreat and dig in. But being willful won't help this situation. Putting your emotions aside is better for your mental health and your bottom line.



Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

"They Who Hesitate Are Lost" isn't always the best motto to go by. Some indecision is good for you, today. You'll discover powerful reasons not to sign once you waver, so indulge your insecurities.



Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Following your hunches isn't enough. You have to back up your intuition with facts. They're out there, and not buried deeply, either. Look beneath the surface for what you need.



Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Seeing eye-to-eye may feel like an unrealistic goal. But not only is it obtainable, it's necessary. You may not believe those with differing views but it's your job to at least listen.



Libra

Sep.23-Oct. 22

When money changes hands, people start feeling greedy. It's not a free-for-all, though, so don't start grabbing anything in reach. Follow the rules and earn the old fashioned way.



Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

You are beyond confident. In fact, you're radiating power. Be cautious of those who are drawn to that, though. You shouldn't need a bunch of groupies to feel respected.



Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Don't waste time on the subconscious. Your active imagination is not providing the most reliable picture. Figure out what's real, today, if you want to understand the big picture and your place in it.



Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Others are waiting for your next move. Some decisions can't be put off for another day. You've already gathered enough details, so piece them together to organize an answer.



Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

If you've been moving full speed ahead, it's only natural to start slowing down. Don't burn the candle at both ends. Use this time to rest and prepare for your next surge forward.

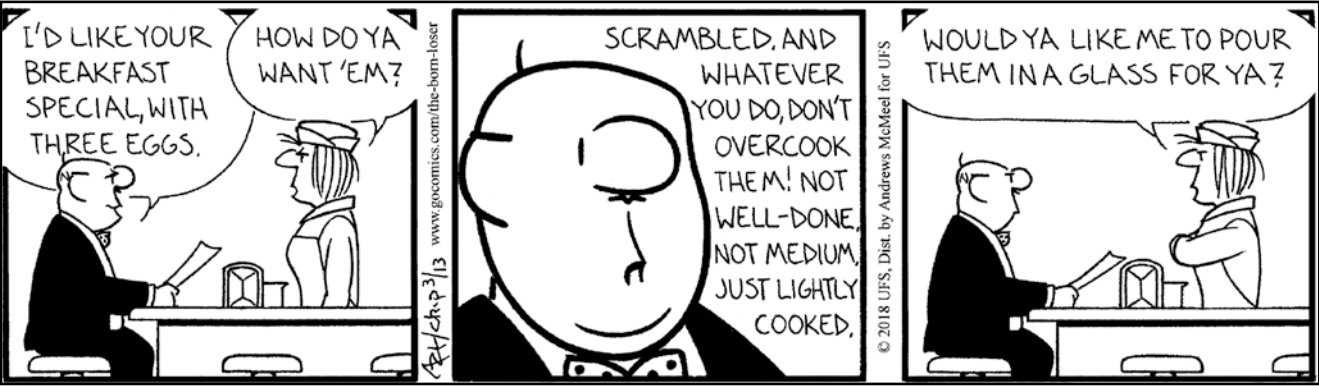


Pisces

Feb.19-Mar. 20

When people get used to treating you like a doormat, they'll be surprised when you object. It doesn't have to be a huge scene, fraught with emotional upheaval. Simply speaking up will do.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Ancient Semitic for "Lord"; 5- Secret agents; 10- Monetary unit of Western Samoa; 14- Prefix with dexterity; 15- Desert bloomers; 16- Big birds; 17- Monetary unit of Iran; 18- New York city; 19- \_\_\_ best friend; 20- Infancy; 22- Child who has lost both parents; 24- Favorite; 25- Soothing succulent; 26- Grinders; 29- Period of being a young man; 33- Eat away; 34- Bummer; 36- Thor Heyerdahl craft; 37- Cover; 38- Impertinent; 39- Al Jolson's real first name; 40- Dress (up); 41- Undercooked; 42- Out; 44- Exhales violently; 47- Singer Brewer; 48- Hard to grasp; 49- When Will \_\_\_ Loved?; 50- Breastbones; 53- Appearing; 58- Prefix with present; 59- Born before, senior churchman; 61- "A Death in the Family" author; 62- Long luxuriant hair; 63- Playing marble; 64- Average; 65- Steven Chu's cabinet dept.; 66- Identified; 67- Western Native Americans;

DOWN: 1- Fishhook feature; 2- What \_\_\_ mind reader?; 3- Simple rhyme scheme; 4- Floating leaf; 5- Skedaddles; 6- \_\_\_ Alto, CA; 7- Frosted; 8- Seventh Greek letter; 9- Study of China; 10- Fermented soybean cake; 11- Eastern nanny; 12- Roman moon goddess; 13- Org.; 21- Take this; 23- Siegfried's partner; 25- By surprise; 26- Thaws; 27- Betelgeuse's constellation; 28- Ski cottage; 30- Give a valedictory, say; 31- Fertile area in a desert; 32- Roman goddess of the moon; 34- Noted duck; 35- Flea; 38- Inhabiting caves; 42- Wyo. neighbor; 43- Aromatic herb; 45- More spine-tingling; 46- Mahayana movement of Buddhism; 47- Set in layers; 50- A few; 51- Govt. agent; 52- Feminizing suffix; 53- Gouda cousin; 54- Dole (out); 55- \_\_\_ Rhythm; 56- Sleuth Wolfe; 57- Precious stones; 60- NYC airport;

Yesterday's solution

T	H	R	O	M	A	B	A
H	O	P	I	N	T	E	N
E	L	I	S	E	P	E	E
A	C	C	O	M	P	L	I
Z	O	O	U	T	E		
I	S	O	B	A	R	E	A
M	A	C	A	W	B	A	T
E	X	T	R	A	G	U	R
T	O	E	S	A	R	E	A
A	N	T	E	S	T	O	M
L	E	I	C	E	S	T	E
A	R	M	O	R	E	R	O
L	I	A	N	G	C	A	R
A	N	N	O	Y	S	S	S

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[Taipa] Va Fat 2 2 2  
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[Coloane] Hellene Gardens 3 3 3  
1,663 ft² \$8,990,000 (ref: 18085559)

FOR SALE

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[Taipa] Wa Bao 2 2 2  
1,020 ft² \$8,500,000 (ref: 18115568)

[Taipa] The Buckingham 2 2 1  
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[Taipa] The Manhattan Carpark space  
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## opinion

## JUVENTUS' FAILURE LINKED TO ITALY'S 'CATENACCIO' PAST

Andrew Dampf, AP Sports Writer

Nearly 70 years after the tactic was invented, Italian clubs are still struggling to shed their "catenaccio" past.

Juventus has come in for harsh criticism over its defensive play during a surprising elimination by a young and exciting Ajax squad in the Champions League this week.

"In Italy, soccer is still defensive and individual, whereas in Europe it's necessary to offer a more offensive and collective approach," former Italy coach Arrigo Sacchi wrote in an editorial published in the Gazzetta dello Sport on Thursday.

In both legs, Juventus relied on Cristiano Ronaldo to carry the scoring load and its vaunted defense to keep the opposing strikers in check.

Ronaldo came through with the opening goal in each leg but a fluke equalizer from Ajax in the return match changed the momentum as Ajax went on to a 3-2 aggregate victory.

"Individualism isn't enough," Sacchi said.

Sacchi, a two-time European Cup-winning coach with AC Milan, added that "defenders don't always have to outnumber opponent's strikers" and that Juventus needed "a more optimistic and courageous approach."

"Catenaccio," which translates as lockdown, is a highly defensive tactic that entails sitting back and negating every opportunity from the opponent before striking back with counterattacks.

The system was developed under Nereo Rocco at Padova in the 1950s then was perfected by Helenio Herrera's highly successful Inter Milan squad in the 1960s.

Italy has produced elite center backs for decades and the "BBC" trio of Leonardo Bonucci, Andrea Barzagli and Giorgio Chiellini has played an integral role in Juventus' march to seven straight Serie A titles — with a record-extending eighth championship likely to be celebrated on Saturday if the team can earn a point at home against Fiorentina.

Yet, Juventus has rarely been entertaining to watch over the eight seasons.

First under Antonio Conte and then with Massimiliano Allegri in charge, Juventus has largely sought to drain the energy out of its opponents before striking back for marginal victories.

Juventus has scored more than three goals only once in all competitions this season — despite dominating Serie A with a 17-point lead over second-place Napoli.

Meanwhile, all four of the clubs that reached the Champions League semifinals — Ajax, Tottenham, Barcelona and Liverpool — preach attacking, free-flowing soccer.

Tottenham edged Manchester City on away goals following a 4-4 aggregate score in the quarterfinals, Barcelona advanced 4-0 over Manchester United and Liverpool crushed Porto 6-1 over two legs.

The last time an Italian club won an international title came when Inter lifted the Club World Cup trophy in 2010.

A lack of goals also contributed to Italy's failure to qualify for last year's World Cup, as did a lack of belief in younger players.

With Roberto Mancini having replaced the fired Gian Piero Ventura as national team coach, he has promoted a new generation of players under-utilized by their clubs.

Players like 19-year-old Roma midfielder Nicolo Zaniolo, who Mancini called up to Italy's squad before he played a single Serie A match; or 19-year-old Juventus striker Moise Kean, who last month became the youngest player to score a goal for the national team in 60 years.

Kean had scored eight goals in his last nine games for Juventus and the national team entering the return leg against Ajax but was preferred to an out-of-form Paulo Dybala at the start and only came on in the second half when Dybala was injured. In the first leg, Kean was not used at all.

Meanwhile, one of the few times that Juventus was seriously challenged during its eight-year reign at the top of Serie A came last season when Napoli's mesmerizing passing game under Maurizio Sarri kept it close right until the end.

"Glory in soccer is achieved by teams that make beautiful play an integral ingredient," Sacchi said. "A victory is important but it becomes even more so when the show helps achieve the victory."

AP PHOTO



Tottenham Hotspur forward Fernando Llorente

## FOOTBALL

## Tottenham stuns Man City to reach Champions League semis

Rob Harris, Manchester

MAN CITY 4, TOTTENHAM 3

**M**ORE than two minutes into stoppage time, Manchester City forward Raheem Sterling slid across the field and puffed his chest to the crowd, roaring in elation. Tottenham players collapsed to the turf, some flat on their backs, forlorn and heartbroken.

From the brink of Champions League elimination, Manchester City was celebrating its passage to the semifinals.

Not for long.

As City manager Pep Guardiola was leaping on the touchline, Turkish referee Cüneyt Çakir was receiving updates in his ear from the video assistant referee checking replays.

The stadium soon became hushed until the big screen flashed: "No goal. VAR. Offside."

Guardiola threw his head in his hands, but there was nothing to argue about.

When Christian Eriksen's misplaced back-pass deflected off Bernardo Sil-

va into the path of Sergio Agüero, the City striker was offside before setting up Sterling in the penalty area.

"It's cruel," Guardiola said.

There would be no eighth goal on this breathtaking night of epic drama. Tottenham advanced on away goals following yesterday's 4-3 loss that left the teams tied 4-4 on aggregate.

City's quadruple dreams were extinguished. Guardiola, a Champions League-winning coach with Lionel Messi's Barcelona in 2009 and 2011, failed to reach the semifinals for the sixth straight time, his third with City after three misses with Bayern Munich.

Instead, Tottenham reached to its first European Cup semifinal in 57 years and will play Ajax. Liverpool meets Barcelona following a 6-1 aggregate win over Porto, giving England multiple clubs in the semifinals for the first time since Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea in 2009.

Tottenham advanced thanks to Fernando Llo-

rente's hip, which nudged the ball into the net in the 73rd minute for a goal that survived a VAR review for possible handball. It was the last goal of a night that will be long remembered by clubs that lived in the shadows of larger rivals in their own cities.

"That is why we love football, we feel the passion," Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino said. "We enjoy watching football, anything can happen."

"Today we showed our great character, great personality. To score three goals against Manchester City is not easy."

Not when top-scorer Harry Kane was out through injury. Not when the midfield options were so depleted that an injury to Moussa Sissoko before halftime before Pochettino to bring on out-of-favor center forward Llorente.

And Tottenham will play the first leg against Ajax without Son Heung-min — Kane's understudy who scored the valuable first-leg goal last week. Son scored Tottenham's first two goals at Etihad Stadium, then picked up a booking

for a foul on Kevin De Bruyne that earned him a one-game suspension for yellow card accumulation.

The South Korean showed just how influential he is for Tottenham in a start unlike anything seen before in the Champions League.

Four goals in the opening 11 minutes. The fifth in the 21st minute, after five shots on target.

FC PORTO 1, LIVERPOOL 4

For the second year in a row, Porto had no answer to Liverpool's attacking trio of Sadio Mané, Mohamed Salah and Roberto Firmino.

A year after the forwards scored all goals in a 5-0 rout of the Portuguese champions in the round of 16 of the Champions League, the trio combined again to lead Liverpool back to the semifinals of the European tournament.

They netted a goal each in a comfortable 4-1 win over Porto, with Virgil van Dijk also scoring as Liverpool advanced 6-1 on aggregate after winning the first leg 2-0 at home. **AP**



opinion

Bizcuits

Leanda Lee



MASS CONFUSION

Las Vegas Sands Ltd released their first quarter results after share markets closed in the US Wednesday. Industry media writers and analysts offer us interesting insight and some entertainment with their variations on spin and approach, all depending upon their interests and what message they want/are required to convey.

GGR Asia commenced their write up with the low-lights: "VIP business remains important to the overall Macau casino market", immediately revealing a softening in that sector but pointing to Sands being keen to play the game both ways, even though the company has been talking up the mass market as their focal point - this week's release of results being no exception. GGR Asia continued downplaying the company by shifting to the overall profitability of Las Vegas Sands: "a 60-percent decrease compared to nearly US\$1.46 billion recorded in the same period last year". Only after these downers did GGR Asia allow for some energised news with direct quotes from Robert Goldstein, president and chief operating officer of Las Vegas Sands offering the corporate good news line: "We had an outstanding quarter, especially in Macau," noted Mr Goldstein. "Our growth in base mass and premium mass... the numbers are just extraordinary".

A more hyped approach was offered elsewhere: Investorplace.com headlines: "LVS Stock Surges on Earnings"; AGBrief, "Record mass table revenues helped to boost total net revenue"; IAG, "Sands China's Cotai Strip properties all up in 1Q19 on good luck, rising mass". The sell-side analysts will likely add to these messages - they were not particularly penetrating in questions during the investor conference.

The message of the mass market being more profitable than the VIP market was started by the US operators and predominately spruiked by US sell-side analysts. It has been obfuscated by classifications which shift to suit circumstances. The truth is not clear. A range of profit margins on mass, premium mass and VIP may be reported. For example, Sands China states a departmental profit margin of 35-45% grind mass and 25-40% on premium mass (presumably before overheads and tax). Margins will vary across casinos based also on the levels of comps, reimbursements and return commissions on Average Daily Theoretical (ADT) win. What revenue falls into those categories is also confusing: rolling chip volume is not exclusive to VIP play as rolling chips are used at mass and premium mass tables, just as cash and rolling chips are used by direct VIP players. So, rolling does not equal VIP and non-rolling does not equal mass. DICJ classifications are based upon the rooms, not what goes on there, and these classifications are not necessarily used by casinos beyond communications with the authority.

Then different casinos will categorize Premium Mass based upon their own ADT win; some start at around HKD3,000 and others at around HKD50,000. Whether premium mass is included in mass is also dependent on circumstance: when describing profits, mass could mean grind mass only, whereas financial reports may include other categories in the volume statistics.

On the hype of Sands this week, their mass revenue growth for the quarter over 2018 of 13% comes in below the industry average. DICJ reported that mass revenue increased by 16.1%, so Sands actually underperformed the market. Given their grind mass grew at 10.2%, it was premium mass with growth at 15.9% where the better news is.

The narrative of a focus on and growth in mass gaming is problematic, regardless of the obtuse justification of profitability and current political correctness. For mass to make up any loss in nominal VIP revenue and profit, an exponential increase in visitor numbers will be needed. Macau residents have long become wearied of the hordes of mainland tourists on local streets, but if mass gaming is to grow, then we must see a concurrent growth in Chinese visitation. Will the Macau population buy into this mass market narrative, tolerate what is to come and give social license to those casinos to operate?

THE 'GIANT LION' FOSSIL FOUND IN KENYA MUSEUM DRAWER

A new species of giant mammal has been identified after researchers investigated bones that had been kept for decades in a Kenyan museum drawer, BBC reported.

The species, dubbed "Simbakubwa kutokaafrika" meaning "big African lion" in Swahili, roamed east Africa about 20 millions years ago.

But the huge creature was part of a now extinct group of mammals called hyaenodonts.

The discovery could help explain what happened to the group.



COURTESY BBC

Earth, meet Polo: Ralph Lauren unveils plastic bottle shirt

Leanne Italie

EARTH, meet Polo. Polo Ralph Lauren yesterday launched a version of its iconic polo shirt made entirely of recycled plastic bottles and dyed through a process that uses zero water.

David Lauren, the youngest son of the company's founder and its chief innovation officer, told The Associated Press ahead of the announcement that the new shirt is part of a broader strategy of fresh environmental goals throughout the manufacturing process.

"Every day we're learning about what's happened with global warming and what's happening all around the world, and our employees and our customers are really feeling that it's time to step up and make a difference," Lauren said.

The Polo isn't the first of its kind. Smaller brands around the world are using repurposed and recycled materials. In announcing Earth Polo, Ralph Lauren committed to removing at least 170 million bottles from landfills and oceans by 2025. The shirts are manufactured in Taiwan, where the bottles are collected. Each uses an average 12 bottles.

The shirts are produced in partnership with First Mile, an organization that collects the bottles turned into yarn and, ultimately, fabric. The new fibers will also be used for existing performance wear already made of polyfibers, which are popular for their ability to wick away moisture.

The Earth Polo went on sale yesterday, ahead of Monday's Earth Day, at RalphLauren.com and retail stores around the world. It comes in styles for men and women in green, white, navy and light blue. The shirts are not more expensive than other Polos.

Ralph Lauren has taken on environmental initiatives over the years, but it's putting into place a more significant strategy aimed at changing both its corporate culture and how it thinks about the clothes it produces. The effort includes a new supply chain and sustainability officer, Halide Alagoz, who said more details will be released in June.



AP PHOTO

This combination of photos released by Ralph Lauren shows Polo shirts made from recycled plastic bottles

"At the moment we're refreshing our approach and framework around sustainability," she said.

Ralph Lauren committed to removing at least 170 million bottles from landfills and oceans by 2025

Among the company's other goals: the use of 100% sustainably sourced cotton by 2025 and 100% recyclable or sustainably sourced packaging materials by the same year.

Other fashion powerhouses are also getting more aggressive on the environment.

Other fashion powerhouses are also getting more aggressive on the environment.

Late last year, Burberry and H&M were among fashion stakeholders to sign on to the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action, launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP24, in Poland. The charter contains a vision to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Ralph Lauren is not a signatory but is exploring the call to action.

As for Earth Polo, a huge threat facing oceans today involves trillions of tiny plastic and chemical-covered non-plastic microfibers that flow from washing machines through drain water, placing smaller fish and other sea life, such as anemones, at risk. Alagoz said Ralph Lauren is working with experts who say the impact of turning a plastic bottle into recycled microfiber is "much less than that bottle ending up in the ocean."

The broader question of biodegradability of such fibers remains unresolved. For Polo Earth, the story is about recycling and reusing, Lauren said.

"There's so much out in the world that is not good for the environment. Whatever materials we can turn into threads, we'll start looking at other opportunities," he said. "Right now, we're trying to make sure that what we produce is as good for the environment as possible, or at least helps clean up another problem. Are we creating a new problem? I think we're creating solutions, or at least trying to find solutions." AP

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	60-80 Moderate	☹️
High Density Residential Area	40-60 Good	😊
Ambient	50-70 Moderate	☹️

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

**PAKISTAN** Gunmen wearing Pakistani police and paramilitary uniforms ambushed a bus before dawn yesterday and killed 14 people after going through their ID cards and forcing them out on a remote part of a coastal highway in restive southwestern Baluchistan province, officials said.

**PAKISTAN's** finance minister, Asad Umar, said he will step down amid a wave of criticism over the government's handling of a financial crisis that has sent prices soaring. In a tweet he defended Prime Minister Khan's leadership, calling him the "best hope" for Pakistan.



AP PHOTO

**SPAIN** With elections this month exposing an ideological divide that echoes the Civil War, descendants of the dictatorship's victims worry they may lose the chance to recover the remains of their relatives. The far-right Vox party wants to scrap efforts to exhume and identify Franco's victims.



AP PHOTO

**PORTUGAL** Authorities on Madeira Island are working to identify the victims of a tour bus crash that killed 29 people and injured 28 others, many of them German tourists who were onboard.

**SUDAN's** new military rulers arrest ousted President Omar al-Bashir's two brothers for corruption, part of a broad sweep against officials and supporters of the former government, the country's official news agency reports.

HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Tuesday, April 23. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.