



NPC REVIEWS HO IAT SENG WITHDRAWAL

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ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS TAKE FIGHT TO CHINA

After the Macau Canidrome's closure last year, activists are now turning to the Chinese mainland where the battle for greyhounds rages on

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TAIWAN TO REPEL 'CERTAIN' MACAU NEWSMEN

Taiwan will strengthen visa examination of those who work in 'certain' Macau, Hong Kong media outlets

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CATHOLICS TARGETED IN SRI LANKA BOMBINGS, 290 DEAD

Easter Sunday Horror

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AP PHOTO

WORLD BRIEFS



THE PHILIPPINES was struck by a 6.3 magnitude earthquake yesterday evening that shook buildings in the capital and prompted the evacuation of thousands onto the streets of Manila. At least five people have died, according to local media. The quake occurred 1 kilometer from Gutad, located to the northwest of Manila.



CAMBODIA-THAILAND The leaders of the two countries met yesterday at the Thai border town of Aranyaprathet to mark the ceremonial reopening of a rail link that will restore train service between the two countries after more than four decades. The connection would be integrated into plans to link most of mainland Southeast Asian from through the Southern Economic Corridor.
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AP PHOTO

HERITAGE PROTECTION

Lessons from Notre-Dame

P4

Government sorting opinions on illegal guesthouses

The government's study group for the criminalization of illegal guesthouses is now organizing collected opinions concerning the topic, according to the director of the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Helena de Senna Fernandes. The group, led by the Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, was formed approximately four months ago. During this time, it has met with different groups to collect opinions about illegal guesthouses. According to Fernandes, 10 percent of operators in illegal guesthouse cases paid the fines.



Sulu Sou expresses concern over teacher dismissal

Lawmaker Sulu Sou is urging the government to stop private schools from firing teachers groundlessly. In his written inquiry to the government, Sou cited statistics to point out that 38% of teachers who left private schools have 10 years or more teaching experience. "It is further necessary to analyze the number of teachers who left schools because they were groundlessly fired. Even one case would be one too many. Why are people threatening teachers and firing them unreasonably? Not just teachers; people in any industry and any profession should not be fired unreasonably," said Sou.

GGCT issues travel alert for Sri Lanka

Considering the recent situation in Sri Lanka, the Tourism Crisis Management Office (GGCT) has issued a Level 2 Travel Alert for the country. The decision is a response to several attacks at places of worship and tourist destinations over the Easter holiday weekend (more on p12-13). The GGCT alerts Macau residents who intend to travel to or are already in that country to reconsider their current travel plans. It is suggested to avoid non-essential travel to the destination. Until the present moment, GGCT has not received any request for information or assistance. The GGCT will keep monitoring the latest developments of the situation.

NPC reviews Ho Iat Seng withdrawal

THE 13th National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee is reviewing the resignation submitted by Ho Iat Seng, the chairman of Macau's Legislative Assembly (AL) and the first declared candidate of the 2019 Chief Executive election.

During the first meeting of the 10th session of the 13th NPC Standing Committee, the committee reviewed Ho's resignation request.

Last week, Ho confirmed he was putting himself forward as the first declared candidate in the race to become Macau's next Chief Executive.

According to the regulation, Macau's NPC members are

automatically members of the Election Committee of the Chief Executive election, and members of the election committee are not eligible to run for the office of Chief Executive. Ho thus requested to resign from the NPC.

Following the announcement, Ho cautioned that he still needs authorization from Beijing.

Ho said that one factor leading to his decision to become a candidate in the fifth Chief Executive election was his friends' encouragement. 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.

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.

Since 2001, Ho has been member of the Standing Committee of the NPC. In 2003, he was appointed as a board member of Jinan University.

Ho was a member of the Executive Council of Macau between 2004 and 2009.

In 2009, he became a lawmaker at the Macau Legislative Assembly and was the vice-chairman. In 2013, he became chairman of the AL.

Meanwhile, the Electoral Commission for the Chief Executive Election is separately warning the representatives of all groups entitled to participate in the Chief Executive election of the need to submit their registrations by today, the Commission said in a statement.

The Commission notes that the election of members of the Electoral Commission for the Chief Executive Election will be held on June 16 and the representatives of groups that wish to exercise their right to stand for such election must nominate and present their decisions by today at the Public Administration Building.

The groups should ensure that their nominated individual has not been designated as a representative of any other group or association and that such person's name is listed as a legal voter on the latest list issued in January this year. **JZ/RM**

Portuguese president to visit Macau next week

Staff reporter

MACAU will form a stop on the Portuguese president's state visit to China. President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa will spend two days in Macau and have at least one meeting with Chief Executive Chui Sai On.

The president plans to

stay in Macau between April 29 and 30. The Chief Executive will host a welcome banquet for the president and his delegation.

President Rebelo de Sousa will be in China from April 26 to May 2, with his first two days to be spent attending the 2nd Belt and Road

Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing. Last December, during President Xi Jinping's state visit to Portugal, his Portuguese counterpart decided to take part in the Belt and Road Forum.

The Forum, hosted by China, will count the participation of the heads

of 17 countries, as well as the president of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the secretary-general of the United Nations.

President Rebelo de Sousa is viewed favorably in China, having often used words like 'cooperation', 'exchange' and 'friendly'.

In his interview with the Chinese media outlet China Global Television Network, the Portuguese President said, "Macau was never considered to be a Portuguese colony," noting that the previous 500 years of Sino-Portuguese relations constituted "cultural, financial, economic, social, and political exchanges."

Given his previous comments, President Rebelo de Sousa's upcoming visit to China will likely see the strengthening of the existing "friendly ties."

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GREYHOUNDS

After Macau victory, animal rights activists take fight to China

NINE months after China's last greyhound stadium closed its doors, animal rights campaigners are turning their attention to what they describe as the "horrific cruelty" practiced on at least 25 illegal race tracks on the mainland, as well as by their dog breeder affiliates.

The Macau (Yat Yuen) Canidrome closed its doors on July 20 last year, admitting defeat after a multi-year campaign by local and international animal rights activists to shame the management company's treatment of greyhounds. It had operated in Macau for more than half a century.

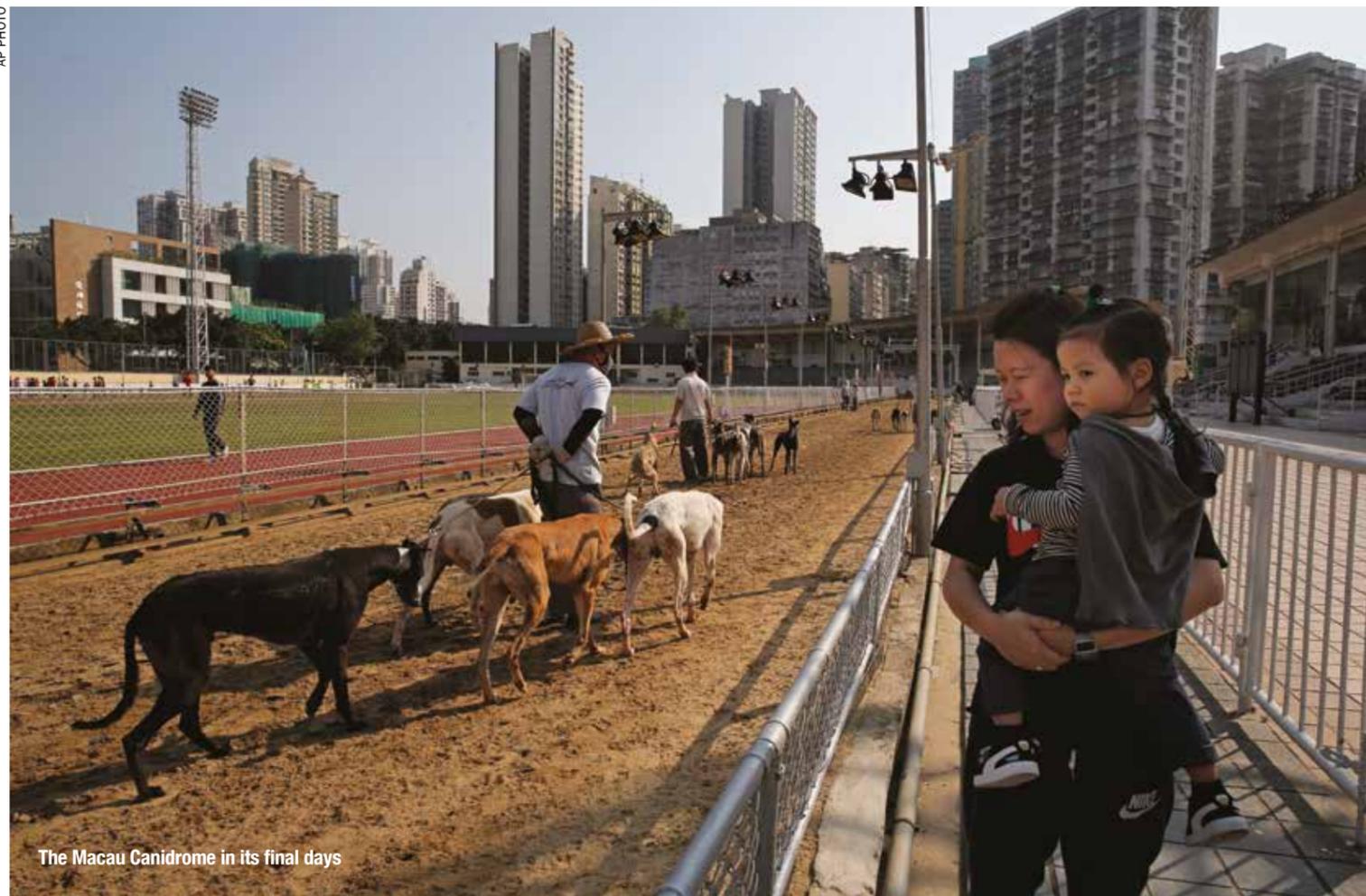
But international observers now point to another threat that lies in store for retired greyhounds.

A Sunday Mirror investigation has shed light on the dark underworld that retiree greyhounds face when injury or old age gets the better of them. Many of the greyhounds were bred and raced in Britain and Ireland.

Interviewing animal rights activists and British-Irish greyhound breeders and racers, the Sunday Mirror found that the former racing champions were being sold to puppy-breeding centers in mainland China, where they have their sperm extracted daily until they are no longer fertile and are sold to the dog meat trade.

According to the British tabloid, "with prices of up to £10,000 per litter, male dogs have sperm repeatedly extracted and even frozen so breeders can cash in on the dogs' success years after they die."

At least 40 former racing dogs from the U.K. and Ireland are currently caged in China and



The Macau Canidrome in its final days

used to support a suspected 25 illegal greyhound racetracks currently in operation.

One animal rights activist, who was not identified by the newspaper, said that greyhound owners who sell their dogs to Chinese buyers were not aware of the reality.

"People think of retired greyhounds living out a slow, comfy life on the sofa but for these unlucky ones, the reality is far more brutal," the activist said, as cited by the Sunday Mirror.

"These beautiful creatures are

being treated as a commodity. [...] After running around a track for years on end they are sent to a country where animal welfare laws are lax. They are completely sucked dry."

Conditions inside the Chinese facilities are bleak, according to Kerry Lawrence of the Birmingham Greyhound Protection, which helps to co-ordinate rescues of ex-racing dogs.

Male greyhounds are made to produce sperm to be used for artificial insemination or to be frozen for use after the animal dies. In other instances, the

dogs can be held in position for hours as their handlers try to coerce them to mate.

"The methods aren't necessarily cruel or inhumane, but the relentless approach, shocking lack of care and grim circumstances surrounding the process are," Kerry said.

According to the Sunday Mirror, some greyhound trainers in the two European countries are becoming more wary of Chinese buyers after videos of animal abuse had surfaced online. The newspaper reported that one Irish dog trainer had

stopped selling greyhounds to a buyer based in Hong Kong after seeing a video of a racing dog thrown into boiling water.

While there is no ban on exporting the greyhounds to China, Britain's regulatory body said it is cracking down on the export practice for animal welfare reasons. In Ireland, the Irish Greyhound Board is working with the government on legislation to protect the animals and is rolling out a digital database to track the racing dogs after they leave the country. **DB**

GAMING

Australia to see a resurgence in foreign high-rollers

AUSTRALIAN casinos just received a piece of good news from an industry analyst.

As the gambling houses continue to compete for Asian high-roller clients, their efforts are paying off and analysts are now optimistic that a recovery could be only a few short months away, reports Calvin Ayre.

Most of Australia's casinos have seen a decli-

ne in Asian high-roller traffic in recent years, attributed by some to a slowing Chinese economy. Star Entertainment and Crown Resorts have both reported a substantial decline in the high-roller segment, but have also continued to work hard at not losing more ground.

According to analysts with Macquarie Wealth Management, there

has been a "U-turn" in the sentiment toward mainland China, which the analysts see "flowing into VIP confidence and driving an uptick in volumes."

"We now include a VIP recovery in financial year 2020," the analysts added. "While we remain cautious on [second-half 2019] VIP volumes, with our view that Macau VIP bottoms

in the June 2019 quarter, we are optimistic and now forecast a recovery."

The Star saw its turnover from international VIP gamblers drop 33% in the last six months of 2018, coming in at \$20.7 billion (about MOP167 billion). The turnover was greatest at its Sydney-based casino, which saw a 49% decline.

Crown has suffered as

well. The largest casino operator in Australia reported just \$19.9 billion (about MOP161 billion) from the VIP segment, a reduction of 12.2% year-on-year during the same six-month period.

Despite the drop, The Star's future still remains bright.

Macquarie said that the company's three casinos – on the Gold Coast and in Sydney and Brisbane

– have an "attractive" future, with the promise of strong domestic growth.

The firm added that "the domestic business still accounts for more than 80 percent of earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization and is a higher quality business than VIP having greater earnings visibility and better margins."

MDT/Calvin Ayre

IC uses Notre-Dame burning as lesson in heritage protection

MACAU culture and heritage authorities are pointing to the recent burning of the Notre-Dame Cathedral as a reference for the protection of cultural heritage.

The idea was raised during a meeting of the Cultural Heritage Council last week, chaired by the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam.

The iconic Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris in France caught fire on April 15, and its 850-year-old tower was badly damaged.

Secretary Tam expressed great concern about the matter, pointing out that the incident had highlighted the need to safeguard Macau's cultural heritage.

The Secretary said he would instruct the cultural departments under his purview to strengthen communication with the owners or managers of heritage buildings, in order to safeguard the valuable cultural heritage of Macau.

The Cultural Affairs Bureau

(IC) would be instructed to continue to disseminate information and educate on the safeguarding of cultural heritage to the aforementioned end.

The Bureau pledged to continue to carry out inspections, as well as promote its platform, "Information to the Public about Macau Cultural Heritage", which will allow the public to notify the IC on the state of heritage buildings through various channels.

According to a statement from the Bureau, the IC places importance on the fire safety of heritage buildings, and together with the Fire Department (CB) regularly organizes meetings on the management of fire prevention in temples and conducting fire training.

With reference to the experiences and practices of other world heritage cities, the IC will establish a World Heritage Monitoring Center later this year, in order to reduce the risks of cultural heritage.



RENATO MARQUES

The measures of the cultural authority follow a serious fire that broke out at Macau's historical A-Ma Temple during the 2016 Chinese Lunar New Year period. Starting with an electrical

fault, the fire caused severe damage to the interior of the temple's main hall, as well as plaques, altars and furniture.

The IC said that the damage, though considerable, was not irreparable. DB

EAST-MEETS-WEST

Sichuan artist to blend traditions

THE Military Club of Macau is staging a solo exhibition of color paintings by Chinese artist Yu Jian between April 25 and 30.

Yu is originally from China's Sichuan province. Her paintings take a wide range of themes, from Buddhist beliefs to human and natural elements and scenes.

Flowers and women are two essential elements in Yu's paintings, with flowers often used to symbolize the circle of life, in either blooming or wilting form.

Yu's paintings also reflect a blend of oriental and occidental details.

For example, her couplet of paintings titled "Rainbow" features naked women painted in a western style, but surrounded by Chinese-style flowers, clouds, and the central element of a rainbow, presented in a form resembling the Chinese Ruyi, a ceremonial object that brings fortune.

According to a press release from the Macau Foundation, the organizer of the exhibition, Yu uses delicate pen movements and strokes to express her emotions and sentiments. Her paintings are the representation of a purely spiritual world.

The exhibition will run from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and admission is free.

AD

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MOTORSPORT

Powerboats to race in Macau waters next month

Renato Marques

ORGANIZED by the Asia Powerboat Association (APA), the Asia Powerboat Championship Macau will be held from May 3 to 5 at Fisherman's Wharf.

The event promises to be the first but not the last of its kind in Macau as, according to the APA, the association is committed to promoting and developing powerboat training and competitions around Asia, hoping to establish Macau as the "main center and training base" of such an initiative.

Held last year in Hong Kong, the powerboat competition now moves to Macau waters with organizers aiming for it to become - right from its debut - the second-largest motorsport event in the region, after the Macau Grand Prix. To that end, the association is also said to count the support of some local sponsors, such as Macau Legend Development and the Macau government.



GUY NOWELL/ASIAPOWERBOAT.COM

At the event presentation press conference, held last week, the Officer of the Day, Rory Power acknowledged Macau's rich history of motorsports.

For the first competition in Macau, APA invited 12 competitors from China, Macau, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Iceland, Australia, and Italy, among

others, for a series of races that would start at Fisherman's Wharf. Resembling what happened last year in Hong Kong, the com-

petition will use the same T750 model powerboats, known as "Go-karts on water," powered by Japan's famous outboard engines Tohatsu with 50 horsepower and capable of taking the small and lightweight boats to an average speed of 85 nautical miles per hour (157 kilometers per hour).

As for future competitions, the association is said to be planning to organize more international championships in other places in Asia, including Shanghai, Xiamen, Vietnam, and Singapore.

The three-day event will have free admission, with the organizers noting that the best viewpoint will be located by the Macao Science Center.

The event is complemented by a Carnival that includes entertainment and stalls selling several kinds of products.

The event will kick-off on Friday, May 3, with a qualifying session followed by races on the Saturday and Sunday with a duration of about 20 minutes, where the 12 competitors will score cumulative points that will result in the determination of the winner on Sunday.

Although the Macau race winners will be announced on the Sunday, as part of a championship with several events, the points scored by the racers will form part of the next racing event, to be held in Thailand.

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AP PHOTO

HONG KONG

Carrie Lam disappointed after extradition bill's first legislative hurdle



Julie Zhu

THE Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Carrie Lam, is disappointed with the Legislative Council of Hong Kong because the council, in its first meeting, failed to elect the chairman and vice-chairman to scrutinize the 2019 Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (Amendment) Bill, commonly referred to as the extradition bill.

Last week, the bill's committee held its first meeting without having selected a chairman.

"It is only a simple matter choosing the chairman, but it was not completed within two hours. I believe it is unprecedented in the history of the Legis-

lative Council," said Lam. "The SAR government expresses its disappointment and pity."

On April 30, the committee will hold its second meeting.

Lam hopes that, during the second meeting, the chairman and the vice-chairman of the bill's committee can be elected so that the relevant deliberation works may soon be carried out.

The bill stipulates that special surrender arrangements will be applicable to Hong Kong and any places outside Hong Kong, including mainland China.

There are groups in Hong Kong that expressed their concern over proposed changes to the city's extradition law, which would allow suspects to be sent to mainland China, where some

say could be subject to unfair prosecution and torture.

"From the perspective of protection, regardless of the protection of human rights or the procedural protection, the set of standards we have proposed today is no different from the international standards," Lam expressed, regarding the amendment proposal.

"Some opponents said that it would not work as long as it involves mainland China. Some people even think that there is no problem in the content of the amendment, and that it can be passed within one month, as long as mainland China is removed. Such [an] argument is very biased, and it even has a purpose behind it," argued Lam.

Despite her great disappointment in the failure to select the chairman for the bill's committee, Lam still stressed that she is strongly determined to deal with the legal loopholes that have gone unchallenged by Hong Kong's current extradition law.

Democrats in the Hong Kong Legislative Council are expected to continue filibustering the bill, whereas some pro-government lawmakers have suggested that they could bypass the entire scrutiny process if the deadlock continues.

However, the president of Hong Kong Legislative Council, Andrew Leung, has already expressed that it is not advisable to hand the amendment directly

over to the general assembly, as this time it involves a controversial bill that needs to be dealt with in accordance with a consistent procedure.

Lam expressed that she may not have the political capability and power to solve the problems arising from the controversial piece of legislation.

"I regret to say I may not have the political capability to rectify the situation, because some lawmakers are now asking me to step down," she said.

As of January 2019, China has already signed extradition agreements with 56 countries in the world, including six developed countries, namely Australia, Portugal, France, Italy, Spain, and Belgium.

Taiwan to review travel permits for some Macau, HK media

THE Mainland Affairs Council of Taiwan has said that it will strengthen the immigration examination mechanism for those who work within specific Hong Kong and Macau media outlets and hold a certain level of position, according to Taiwan reports.

The decision has been triggered by the recent disclosure of a group of six journalists who practiced unapproved activities in Taiwan.

These journalists were suspected of illegally stalking Hong Kong pro-independen-

ce youth groups who were in Taiwan in January.

The Hong Kong journalists reportedly hired some Taiwan residents to stalk and record the activities of three pro-independence Hong Kong youths. Later, the aforementioned two newspapers featured headlines attacking these youths.

The six Hong Kong journalists write for Hong Kong's pro-Beijing media: Wen Wei Pao and Ta Kung Pao.

According to Taiwan's national security authority's

investigation, the six journalists applied for a temporary stay permit using either their Hong Kong or foreign residence.

Taiwan has a relatively relaxed verification process for visa applicants from Hong Kong and Macau, compared to what is required from mainland residents.

The spokesperson of the Mainland Affairs Council of Taiwan, Chiu Chui-cheng, said that Taiwan respects freedom of the press but does not tolerate any illegal act. **JZ**

Rescue work underway for eight missing in Pearl River

RESCUERS are searching for eight fishermen, including three from Macau, who have been missing off the Pearl River Estuary in south China for more than two days.

The sunken fishing boat was initially located Saturday night over 20 meters under the sea and more divers were sent into the sea Sunday to detect and reach the missing fishermen.

The wooden boat, owned by a person from Macau and with eight on board, went missing Thursday night near the Pearl River Estuary, the Zhuhai municipal information office said Sunday. The other five on board are from the Chinese mainland.

Earlier, the boat, 25 meters long and 6.56 meters wide, could not be precisely located as it had shut off its au-

tomatic identification system, said the office.

Local maritime rescue authorities have sent airplanes and ships to search a sea area of more than 600 square kilometers. They also used sonar technology and sent three divers into the water to detect the boat.

Rescue authorities from Hong Kong and Macau also joined in the rescue operation. **Xinhua**



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Property of the Week



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Property Hotlist



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1,366 ft²

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2



NOVA PARK, TAIPA

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1,134 ft²

2

2



MACAU SQUARE OFFICE SPACE

\$21,000/mth

837 ft²



More Listings

For Sale

- [Taipa] Nova City 4 2 2,503 ft² **\$17,800,000** (ref: 19015574)
- [Taipa] Choi Long Meng Chui 3 3 3,398 ft² **\$17,800,000** (ref: 18045555)
- [Coloane] Hellene Gardens 3 3 1,663 ft² **\$8,800,000** (ref: 19025577)
- [Taipa] Pacifica 3 2 1,226 ft² **\$9,888,000** (ref: 19015575)
- [Taipa] Va Fat 1 1 580 ft² **\$4,680,000** (ref: 18115569)

For Sale

- [Taipa] Nova Park 2 1 1,149 ft² **\$10,980,000** (ref: 18015541)
- [Taipa] The Manhattan 3 2 1,720 ft² **\$13,600,000** (ref: 16105507)
- [Macau] 2 Shops 1404 ft² **\$24,999,600** (ref: 19015573)
- [Taipa] Kinglight Car park space **\$1,500,000** (ref: 19035001)
- [Taipa] The Manhattan Car park space **\$1,900,000** (ref: 17035514)

Recent Movements

- Sold** The Manhattan, Taipa
4 bed, 2,305 ft² (ref: 18045551)
- Sold** Supreme Flower City
4 bed, 2,060 ft² (ref: 13105367)
- Rented** Manhattan, Taipa
2,305 ft² (ref: 18070684RT)

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AP PHOTO



Investment fund to explore Bay Area opportunity

Staff reporter

MACAU Chief Executive Chui Sai On has decided to set up an investment and development fund for use in the Greater Bay Area (GBA), managed by a special entity independent from the current government structure.

During his question and answer session at the Legislative Assembly (AL) last week, the Chief Executive raised the idea of setting up such a fund, in the hope of enhancing the returns of Macau's financial reserves.

The fund is expected to begin operation in the second half of this year. It will be run with market-led principles.

According to the government, "part of the fund" will be invested in the development of the GBA, as government data showed that approximately 49 projects were related or connected to Macau.

The Chief Executive said he believed Macau was financially capable of expanding investment in the GBA, which not only could be beneficial to Macau's financial reserve, but also "realize policy goals" outlined in the GBA development plan.

The Chief Executive also described the new fund as an apparatus for Macau's economic diversification.

The government has previously set up other funds with similar purposes.

The Guangdong-Macau Cooperation and Development Fund was designed to be operated on the principles of capital protection and security. According to the government, the returns of this fund are stable and predictable.

Macau gov't mulls Zhuhai for GBA healthcare scheme trial

THE government's proposed healthcare insurance scheme, which is designed to cover Macau residents living in the Greater Bay Area (GBA), will likely begin as a trial in the neighboring city of Zhuhai before being rolled out province-wide.

Macau's Chief Executive Chui Sai On outlined the proposal for the healthcare scheme during last week's Policy Address at the Legislative Assembly.

He said that the aim is to provide basic healthcare protection for Macau ID holders who live on the main-

land and hold a Chinese residence permit – in particular retirees.

The local government has already engaged in talks with the provincial government in Guangdong as to how the scheme might be implemented.

A preliminary plan of the healthcare scheme will likely be initially launched in Zhuhai, Chui revealed. Then the Macau government would evaluate the results before considering its extension to other Greater Bay Area cities.

According to the Macau go-

vernment, there are approximately between 17,000 and 18,000 Macau residents who have registered for a mainland residence permit and currently live in one of the nine Guangdong cities covered by the Greater Bay Area initiative.

Chui said the healthcare insurance scheme aimed to offer Macau people a form of backstop access to healthcare services. He added that the government's policy of "ageing in place" – which would assist senior citizens to live out their days in Macau – remained unchanged.

The Chief Executive was also asked during the Legislative Assembly session about the potential for a universal medical insurance scheme in Macau. He replied that the government had commissioned a study from the Macau University of Science and Technology to analyze the feasibility of such a policy and its cost.

It was anticipated that a report on the topic would be completed by October. The government would then launch a consultation process to solicit public opinion on the matter, said Chui. **DB**

Guangdong economy grows 6.6% in first quarter

THE gross domestic product of China's manufacturing hub Guangdong Province increased 6.6% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2019, local authorities said yesterday.

The province's GDP in the first three months expanded to 2.39 trillion

yuan (USD356 billion), data from the provincial statistics bureau showed.

The bureau attributed the moderate increase of Guangdong's economy to the steady growth of its real economy.

It said the new economy has become a vital engine promoting the economic

growth of Guangdong. The province's new economy, including advanced manufacturing and high-tech industries, in the first quarter, increased 7% year-on-year, accounting for a quarter of its entire GDP.

Meanwhile, Guangdong continued to see double-

digit growth in investment in the first quarter, a rise of 11.2%. Investment in sectors including education, information transmission, software and information technology all grew by over 45%.

As one of China's economic powerhouses, Guangdong recorded a 6.8% GDP growth to hit 9.73 trillion yuan last year. The province set a target of 6 to 6.5% economic growth this year.

Xinhua

SHENZHEN

Two dead after retaining wall collapse

TWO people died after a retaining wall collapsed in the city of Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province on Saturday.

The collapse took place at about 2 p.m. in an industrial park in the city's Nanshan district as a re-

sult of torrential rain. A makeshift house was buried and two were trapped. Firefighters found a child at 4:40 p.m. and a man at 7:20 p.m. Both of them were confirmed dead.

Further investigation into the case is underway. **Xinhua**



Car fires spur investigations by Tesla, its rival NIO

TESLA Inc. and its Chinese competitor NIO Inc. are looking into fires involving their vehicles, as videos of a car bursting into flames circulate on social media in the world's largest electric auto market.

A white sedan bearing Tesla's logo was caught on a video taken from a closed-circuit camera emitting smoke from both sides Sunday evening, before catching fire. A team from Tesla has been sent to Shanghai to look into the incident and is in touch with local authorities, the carmaker

said on its official Weibo account yesterday. As far as Tesla is aware, there were no casualties.

A few hours later, NIO - a Shanghai-based EV maker that listed on the Nasdaq last year - said one of its ES8 models caught fire in the north-west Chinese city of Xi'an while being repaired. No one was harmed and NIO is investigating.

The incidents could fuel concern over the safety of EVs in China, which has thrown its weight behind the shift away from the combustion engine to combat pollution. Electric cars

are increasingly using high-density lithium batteries to extend their driving ranges, as demand for the vehicles climbs. A mix of subsidies and favorable policies helped push Chinese EV sales beyond 1 million units last year, luring a raft of newcomers to the business.

In 2018, China recorded at least 40 fire-related incidents involving new-energy vehicles, a fleet that includes pure battery electric, hybrid plug-in and fuel-cell vehicles, according to the State Administration for Market Regulation. The watchdog has

called for scrutiny of NEV quality and recalled more than 130,000 cars last year.

An electric car under the Zhidou brand part-owned by Chinese billionaire Li Shufu's Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co. burst into flames on the road in September, according to a TV station in the eastern city of Hangzhou. In August, a plug-in hybrid SUV under BYD Co.'s Song brand caught fire while it was parked at the gate of Shanghai's Hongqiao railway station last August, according to the paper.cn. **Bloomberg**

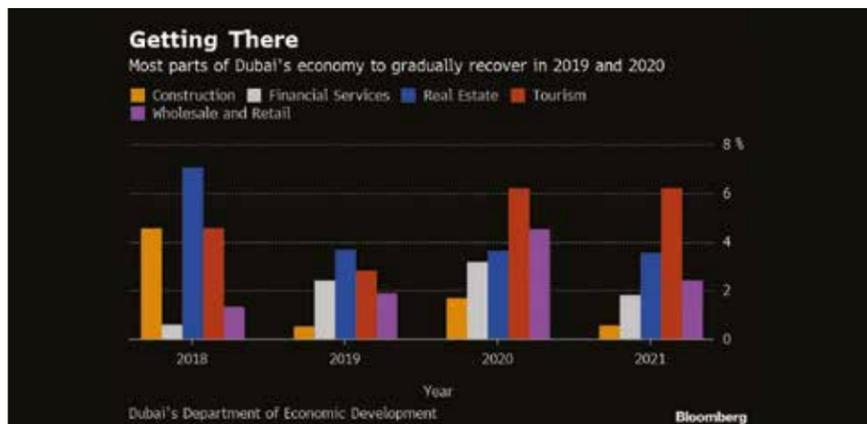
Dubai's escape from economic funk hinges on retail, tourism

Abeer Abu Omar

DUBAI is looking to break free of its weakest economic expansion in almost a decade.

Growth in the city's gross domestic product is set to accelerate to 2.1 percent in 2019 and 3.8 percent the following year before slowing to 2.8 percent in 2021, according to projections released on Sunday by the emirate's department of economic development. GDP expanded only 1.9 percent in 2018, substantially below forecasts made by the International Monetary Fund.

A turnaround for the economy is riding on a better performance for



industries other than Dubai's bellwether real estate sector, with improvements seen this year and next for finance, tourism as well as retail and wholesale. The emirate's 2020 World Expo will contribute 22.7 billion dirhams (USD6.2

billion) to the economy during the fair next year and another 62.2 billion dirhams after it's over, according to auditing firm Ernst & Young LLP. "Economic momentum has picked up at the beginning of this year with a surge in new business

licenses and improved optimism on jobs and business performance," the department said in its statement.

Growth in financial services is expected to speed up to 2.4 percent in 2019 from last year's 0.6 percent. Real estate

te, which has struggled with declines in prices, is one of the few sectors not projected to accelerate further after the expo. The industry's expansion will slow this year to 3.7 percent from 7 percent in 2018.

The emirate's economic slowdown to 1.9 percent for last year was revealed by Dubai's statistics center in March, in a long-awaited set of figures after months of no official word on the economy.

"We remain cautious at this point on the recovery in the externally facing sectors, such as trade and tourism-related, given the ongoing headwinds such as a strong currency and slowing global growth," Monica Malik, chief economist at Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, said by email. Still, "we do see a gradual pickup in real GDP growth in Dubai in 2019." **Bloomberg**

Japan, China sign agreement on ETF cross-investment program

JAPAN and China signed an agreement for a program that will make it easier for investors to buy exchange-traded funds listed in each other's markets.

Under the program, a Japanese or Chinese firm would create an ETF that mainly invests in the other country's listed ETFs, the Japan Exchange Group Inc. and Shanghai Stock Exchange said in a joint statement yesterday. Nomura's asset management unit will partner with China Asset Management to participate in the project, Nomura Holdings Inc. said separately.

China is pressing ahead with plans to allow more foreign investors into its market, including those from Japan, before Xi Jinping makes his first visit to the country as president for the Group of 20 summit in June. The ETF program would allow some of the trillions of dollars stashed away by Japanese savers to flow into the world's best-performing stock market.

The Shanghai Composite Index has risen almost 30 percent this year, the biggest gain among more than 90 global indexes tracked by Bloomberg. Inflows are expected to increase after MSCI Inc. said it will more than quadruple the weighting of China-listed equities in a benchmark index.

The ETF providers would need to obtain quotas under China's Qualified Foreign Institutional Investor or Qualified Domestic Institutional Investor programs. Additional investment quotas for this program will be subject to special treatment, meaning approval will take less time than usual, the bourses said.

Hong Kong's Securities and Futures Commission is discussing with Chinese authorities the possibility of dual-listed exchange-traded funds in China. But an ETF Connect is proving difficult to build, Christina Choi, SFC executive director and head of the investment products division, said last year. She cited issues including differences in cross-border settlement systems and operating timings. **Bloomberg**

SOUTHERN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

Cambodian and Thai leaders mark reopening of rail link

THE leaders of Cambodia and Thailand met yesterday at the Thai border town of Aranyaprathet to mark the ceremonial reopening of a rail link that will restore train service between the two countries after more than four decades.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and his Thai counterpart, Prayuth Chan-ocha, took a brief train ride across the border from Aranyaprathet to Cambodia's Poipet to celebrate the occasion. Each also shoveled some cement to mark the completion of a nearby cross-border bridge for automotive traffic.

Thai officials said regular cross-border rail service is expected to be restored soon.

The two leaders signed an agreement on operating the cross-border rail link.

Thailand helped fund Cambodia's rail line and will also hand over a train with four carriages.

Service between the two countries was suspended in the early 1970s when the track was destroyed during Cambodia's civil war. Only in the late 1990s was security completely restored with the defeat of the Cambodia's communist Khmer Rouge guerrilla army.

Restoration work in Cambodia has already been completed from Poipet to the northwestern province of Sisophon, which has rail service to the capital, Phnom Penh.

There are plans to eventually offer service to Phnom Penh from the Thai capital, Bangkok, but there is not yet a schedule for reopening that route. The connection would be integrated into



Cambodian's Prime Minister Hun Sen (left) and Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha wave from a window on a train at the Thai-Cambodian border town of Aranyaprathet, Thailand, yesterday

regional plans to link most of mainland Southeast Asia from Kunming in southern China through what has been called the Southern Economic Corridor.

Hun Sen said at yesterday's ceremony that the new rail connection would help develop both countries' economies, especially by connecting to the rest of the Southeast Asian region.

MALAYSIA RESURRECTS CHINESE PROJECT

Malaysia's government said it will resurrect a multibillion-dollar property and transportation project in Kuala Lumpur involving a Chinese state company, calling it a contribution to China's global "Belt and Road" infrastructure initiative.

Prime Minister Mahathir Moha-

mad, who is traveling to China next week to attend the second Belt and Road forum, said last week the Cabinet agreed to reinstate the Bandar Malaysia project, which is expected to cost 140 billion ringgit (USD33.8 billion).

It comes a week after Malaysia resumed a China-backed rail link project after the Chinese contractor agreed to cut the construction cost by one third to 44 billion ringgit (\$10.6 billion). Mahathir said that both projects will boost ties with China and add economic value.

He said that Bandar Malaysia, which is 40% owned by the government, will be developed with the same consortium partners, Malaysian developer Iskandar Waterfront Holdings and China Railway Engineering Corp. The

500-acre (202-hectare) project will boost urban development and serve as a hub to woo global finance, technology and entrepreneurial firms, he added.

Bandar Malaysia was started by the indebted 1MDB state investment fund in 2011 but it later sold a 60% stake to the consortium. The government took over 1MDB's stake due to its debt problems, but the project was terminated by the previous government in May 2017 due to a payment dispute with the consortium.

The 1MDB scandal led to the election ouster last May of former Prime Minister Najib Razak, who is currently on trial for alleged corruption.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has made the Belt and Road ini-

tiative a signature policy. The estimated \$1 trillion-plus plan aims to weave a network of ports, bridges and power plants linking China with Africa, Europe and beyond.

"These two major projects will also be a significant contribution to the Belt and Road Initiative, which Malaysia expects to be able to tap on and exploit its multiplier effects along the value chain," Mahathir said.

The connection would be integrated into plans to link most of mainland Southeast Asia, from Kunming through the Southern Economic Corridor

Mahathir said the revived project will include 10,000 affordable homes and a people's park and will prioritize the use of local construction material.

It was originally designed to house the main hub for a high-speed rail line connecting Singapore to Kuala Lumpur that would cut travel time to 90 minutes, but Mahathir's government suspended the rail project on the ground that it was too costly.

Mahathir said there will be "sufficient room for the station" if the government later decides to go ahead with the high-speed rail line. **MDT/AP**

MARKETS

Sudden rush to raise cash is burning stock investors

CHINA'S cash-strapped companies are going to new lengths to raise money from the booming stock market, even if it comes at a cost to existing shareholders.

Nine firms have said they plan to raise a combined 40.5 billion yuan (\$6 billion) through rights issues since January, almost twice the amount announced all of last year, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. That includes Tianqi Lithium Corp. and Xinjiang Tianrun Dairy Co., whose shares slumped 5.4 percent and 10 percent immediately after their res-



pective announcements.

Chinese companies face restrictions on how much, how often and at what price they can sell new shares through private placements, the hitherto most popular method to

raise money via the equity market. That's sent them on a hunt for alternative funding tools, making the most of this year's surging risk appetite. A rights issue, while subject to some of the same regulatory

hurdles, allows for more freedom on pricing.

"Rights issues are the most effective way of equity refinancing at the moment due to strict restrictions on private placements," said Yang Hai, analyst at Kaiyuan Securities Co. "For the stock market, it's never good news whenever refinancing shows up."

LONGi Green Energy Technology Co. invited existing shareholders earlier this month to buy new shares at a discount of about 80 percent. That's even though Chinese equities entered a bull market. While companies may also opt to raise funds through

a public placement, it's a tool that's still rarely used because issuers aren't permitted to offer big discounts.

The surge in rights issues has underscored the dilemma facing the nation's leaders as they seek to improve financing conditions for the private sector without jeopardizing the sustained rally in the stock market. The curbs on private placement were put in place in 2017, when new listings were picking up pace, alarming regulators that they may drag down the stock market by adding supply.

The Shanghai Compo-

site Index has risen more than 30 percent this year through last Friday, the best-performing stock market in the world. The gauge fell 1.7 percent yesterday, as investors turned cautious after China's latest politburo meeting hinted that future policies may be less stimulative.

The flood of issuance elsewhere - including 207 billion yuan of convertible bonds and more than 80 applications to list on Shanghai's new tech board - have also raised concerns over whether there's enough money in the equity market to go around. **Bloomberg**

Texas cancer center ousts three over Chinese data theft concerns

A prominent cancer center in Houston has ousted three of five scientists whom federal authorities identified as being involved in Chinese efforts to steal American research.

Peter Pisters, the president of MD Anderson Cancer Center, told the Houston Chronicle that the National Institutes of Health wrote to the cancer center last year detailing conflicts of interest and unreported foreign income by five faculty members, and gave it 30 days to respond.

"As stewards of taxpayer dollars invested in biomedical research, we have an obligation to follow up," Pisters said. MD Anderson received USD148 million in NIH grants last year.

The center provided internal documents to the Chronicle regarding the cases but the names of the scientists were redacted. The newspaper said all three are ethnically Chinese. Two of them resigned ahead of termination proceedings and the third is challenging the dismissal.

Officials determined termination was not warranted for one of the remaining two and are still investigating the other.

It's not clear if any of them face federal charges or deportation. An FBI spokeswoman in Houston, Christina Garza, said over the weekend that the agency "does not confirm or deny the existence of any investigation."

Pisters said MD Anderson's reputation as the world's No.



1 cancer center made it an obvious target, but the newspaper report doesn't say what evidence of intellectual property theft was uncovered at the facility.

The dismissals come amid heightened concern in Washington, D.C., that foreign governments including China have been using students and visiting scholars to pilfer intellectual property from confidential grant applications.

At a gathering in Houston last summer, FBI officials warned Texas academic and medi-

cal institutions of the threat, particularly from insiders, and called on them to notify the agency of any suspicious behavior.

A 2017 FBI report found that intellectual-property theft by China costs the U.S. as much as \$600 billion annually. FBI Director Christopher Wray has called China "the broadest, most significant" threat to the nation and that its espionage is active in all 50 states.

"This is part of a much larger issue the country is facing,"

Pisters told the Chronicle. "Trying to balance an open collaborative environment and at the same time protect proprietary information and commercial interests."

It's not clear if any of them face federal charges or deportation

Some Chinese Americans say the crackdown amounts to racial profiling and that it hinders groundbreaking research.

"Scientific research depends on the free flow of ideas," Frank H. Wu, president of the New York-based Committee of 100, a group of influential Chinese Americans, told the newspaper. "Our national interest is best advanced by welcoming people, not by racial stereotyping based on where a person comes from." AP

TECHNOLOGY

Huawei says Q1 sales up 39%

CHINESE tech giant Huawei said yesterday its revenue rose 39% over a year earlier in the latest quarter despite U.S. pressure on allies to shun its telecom technology as a security risk.

Huawei, the biggest global maker of network equipment for phone and internet companies, on Monday reported revenue of 179.7 billion yuan (USD26.8 billion) for the first three months of the year.

Washington's pressure on allies to avoid Huawei, China's first global tech brand, threatens to block access to Europe and other markets as carriers prepare to invest billions



of dollars in next-generation technology.

The company denies U.S. accusations it facilitates Chinese spying.

Huawei, founded by a former Chinese military engineer in 1987, is privately held but reports

financial results to try to defuse Western security concerns.

Huawei gave no quarterly earnings but said its profit margin was 8%. That would be about 14.4 billion yuan (\$2.1 billion).

The revenue growth reported yesterday was higher than the 19.5% gain reported earlier for 2018 annual revenue. The company earlier reported annual sales of 721.2 billion (\$105.2 billion). AP

Beijing criticizes US effort to reduce Iran oil sales

CHINA, one of Iran's biggest oil export markets, yesterday criticized Washington's decision to tell Beijing and other governments to stop buying crude from Tehran or face sanctions.

China opposes Washington's "unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction," said a foreign ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang. He said Beijing's dealings with Iran are "reasonable and legitimate."

U.S. officials told reporters the Trump administration will inform other governments they no longer will be exempt from sanctions.

China, which relies on im-

ports for about half of its oil, could present the toughest diplomatic challenge in trying to enforce the Trump administration's ambition of driving down Iran's oil exports.

Beijing has supported global efforts to curb the spread of nuclear weapons technology. But it rejects unilateral U.S. action and previously opposed linking trade to Iran's nuclear program.

The communist government will "protect the legitimate rights" of its companies, Geng said. He gave no indication what China might do if Washington goes ahead with sanctions. AP

Bharatha Mallawarachi
& Krishan Francis, Colombo

EASTER SUNDAY TERROR

Seven suicide attackers behind

THE coordinated Easter Sunday bombings that ripped through Sri Lankan churches and luxury hotels were carried out by seven suicide bombers, a government investigator said yesterday.

An analysis of the attackers' body parts made clear that they were suicide bombers, said Ariyananda Weliana, a forensic crime investigator. He said most attacks were by one bomber, with two at Colombo's Shangri-La Hotel.

The bombings, Sri Lanka's deadliest violence since a devastating civil war ended a decade ago on the island nation, killed at least 290 people with more than 500 wounded, Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara said.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan police investigating the bombings are examining reports that intelligence agencies had warnings of possible attacks, officials said.

Two government ministers have alluded to intelligence failures. Telecommunications Minister Harin Fernando tweeted, "Some intelligence officers were aware of this incidence. Therefore there was a delay in action. Serious action needs to be taken as to why this warning was ignored." He said his father had heard of the possibility of an attack as well and had warned him not to enter popular churches.

And Mano Ganesan, the minister for national integration,

AP PHOTOS



said his ministry's security officers had been warned by their division about the possibility that two suicide bombers would target politicians.

The police's Criminal Investigation Department, which is handling the investigation into

the blasts, will look into those reports, Gunasekara said.

Earlier, Defense Minister Ruwan Wijewardena described the blasts as a terrorist attack by religious extremists, and police said 13 suspects had been arrested, though there was no im-

mediate claim of responsibility. Wijewardena said most of the bombings were believed to have been suicide attacks.

But officials have yet to say who they believe is behind the attacks. The Tamil Tigers, once a powerful rebel army known for its use of suicide bombers, was crushed by the government in 2009, and had little history of targeting Christians. While anti-Muslim bigotry has swept the island in recent years, fed by Buddhist nationalists, the island also has no history of violent Muslim militants. The country's small Christian community has seen only scattered incidents of harassment in recent years.

dragged out" after the blast.

"There was blood everywhere," said Bhanuka Harischandra a 24-year-old from Colombo and founder of a tech marketing company. He was heading to the hotel for a meeting when it was bombed. "People didn't know what was going on. It was panic mode."

Most of those killed were Sri Lankans. But the three bombed hotels and one of the churches, St. Anthony's Shrine, are frequented by foreign tourists, and Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry said the bodies of at least 39 foreigners from a variety of countries were recovered.

The U.S. said "several" Americans were among the dead, while Britain, India, China, Japan, Australia, Denmark and Portugal said they, too, lost citizens.

The U.S. said "several" Americans were among the dead, while Britain, India, China, Japan and Portugal said they, too, lost citizens.

The streets were largely deserted yesterday morning, with most shops closed and a heavy deployment of soldiers and police. Stunned clergy and onlookers gathered at St. Anthony's Shrine, looking past the soldiers to the stricken church.

The Sri Lankan government lifted a curfew that had been imposed during the night. But most social media remained blocked yesterday after officials said they needed to curtail the spread of false information and ease tension in the country of about 21 million people.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said he feared the massacre could trigger instabili-

Authorities block social media after Easter Sunday bombings

SRI Lankan authorities flicked the off switch on most social media after Easter Sunday attacks on churches and hotels killed hundreds of people, a dramatic reaction that reflects distrust in the capability of American internet companies to control harmful content.

The block on social media including Facebook and its WhatsApp and Instagram services was announced by the government's official news portal, which cited the spread of "false news reports" online. The NetBlocks observatory said it detected an intentional blackout of the popular platforms as well as YouTube, Snapchat and Viber. Twitter appeared unaffected.

Officials likely feared that the spread of inflammatory content could provoke more bloodshed in Sri Lanka, a Buddhist-majority island nation that has

large Hindu, Muslim and Christian minorities and a long history of ethnic and sectarian conflict. At least 290 people were killed in the bombings.

Ivan Sigal, head of the internet and journalism advocacy organization Global Voices, said the country's rapid action was a "telling moment."

"A few years ago we'd be using these platforms to help each other and coordinating assistance. Now we view them as a threat," he wrote on Twitter.

"If I were Facebook and WhatsApp I'd take a moment to ask myself where I'd gone wrong," he said. "Cannot think of a clearer signal for lack of platform trust."

It wasn't the first time Sri Lanka has blocked social media. The government imposed a weeklong ban in March 2018 because of concerns that WhatsApp and other platforms were

being used to fan anti-Muslim violence in the country's central region.

Facebook is increasingly in the crosshairs of regulators, rights groups and the public as it tries to balance what CEO Mark Zuckerberg has called "giving people a voice" and demands for censorship of hate speech and other harmful content posted on Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp.

It faced intense criticism after the right-wing extremist who attacked two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, last month, killing 50 people, live-streamed the massacre on Facebook. The U.N. in a report last year blamed the social media company for the spread of hate speech in Myanmar that dehumanized Rohingya Muslims and contributed to persecution that caused hundreds of thousands to flee the country. **AP**

The bombings killed at least 290 people with more than 500 wounded

The explosions — mostly in or around Colombo, the capital — collapsed ceilings and blew out windows, killing worshippers and hotel guests in one scene after another of smoke, soot, blood, broken glass, screams and wailing alarms.

A morgue worker in the town of Negombo, outside Colombo, where St. Sebastian's Church was targeted, said many bodies were hard to identify because of the extent of the injuries. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

At the Shangri-La Hotel, a witness said "people were being

six Sri Lanka blasts



ty in Sri Lanka, and he vowed to “vest all necessary powers with the defense forces” to take action against those responsible.

The Archbishop of Colombo, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, called on Sri Lanka’s government to “mercilessly” punish those responsible “because only animals can behave like that.”

The scale of the bloodshed recalled the worst days of Sri Lanka’s 26-year civil war, when the Tamil Tigers, from the ethnic Tamil minority, sought

independence from the Sinhalese-dominated country. The Sinhalese are largely Buddhist. The Tamils are Hindu, Muslim and Christian.

Sri Lanka, off the southern tip of India, is about 70 percent Buddhist. In recent years, tensions have been running high between hard-line Buddhist monks and Muslims.

Two Muslim groups in Sri Lanka condemned the church attacks, as did countries around the world, and Pope Francis ex-

pressed condolences at the end of his traditional Easter Sunday blessing in Rome.

Six nearly simultaneous blasts took place in the morning at the shrine and the Cinnamon Grand, Shangri-La and Kingsbury hotels in Colombo, as well as at two churches outside Colombo.

A few hours later, two more blasts occurred just outside Colombo, one at a guesthouse where two people were killed, the other near an overpass, Ata-

pattu said.

Also, three police officers were killed during a search at a suspected safe house on the outskirts of Colombo when its occupants apparently detonated explosives to prevent arrest, authorities said.

Authorities said a large bomb had been found and defused late Sunday on an access road to the international airport.

Air Force Group Captain Gihan Seneviratne said yesterday that authorities found a pipe

bomb filled with 50 kilograms of explosives. It was large enough to have caused damage to a 400-meter radius, he said.

Harischandra, who witnessed the attack at the Shangri-La Hotel, said there was “a lot of tension” after the bombings, but added: “We’ve been through these kinds of situations before.”

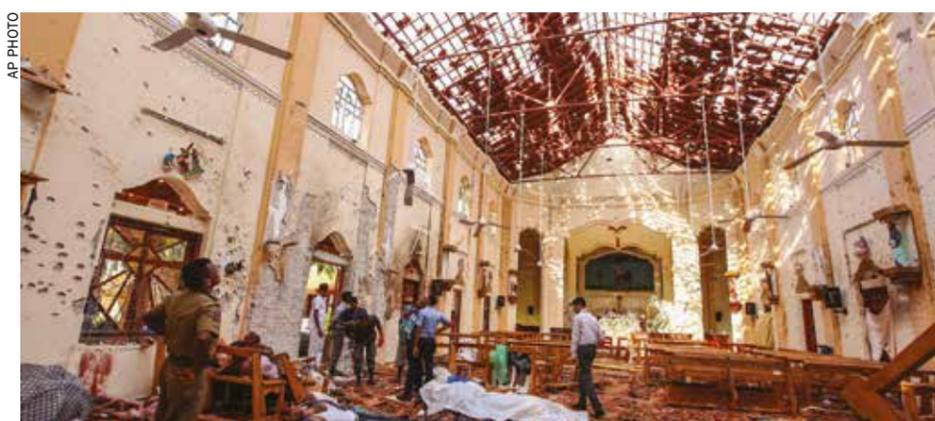
He said Sri Lankans are “an amazing bunch” and noted that his social media feed was flooded with photos of people standing in long lines to give blood. **AP**

A Catholic town at the center of deadly attacks

THE seaside Sri Lankan fishing town of Negombo has long been called “Little Rome,” a reference to its abundance of churches and its place at the center of the country’s small Catholic community.

Yesterday, it was a town in mourning.

Small white flags flew in house after house near St. Sebastian’s Church, a sign that someone who lived there had died. Groups of people visited, paying their respects. On Easter Sunday, a bomb blast ripped through St. Sebastian’s, one of a half-dozen coordinated attacks on churches and high-end hotels that killed nearly 300 people. At least 110 were killed at St. Sebastian’s, said Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, making it the



day’s most deadly bombing.

Charles Fernando, 32, who was among the neighborhood residents walking between houses, pointed to a home where he said nearly everyone had been killed or injured.

“We had war for 30 years but there were no bomb

blasts in Negombo,” he said. “We will never forget this.”

During Sri Lanka’s long and bloody civil war, Negombo, about an hour north of the capital, Colombo, was largely spared the violence that raged elsewhere in the country. The war, which left

some 100,000 people dead, ended in 2009.

“It is a safe haven for all,” Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith said at a religious conference held in the town in 2016.

Catholicism is everywhere in Negombo, a town of about 140,000 people with dozens of churches and

perhaps hundreds of small roadside Catholic shrines. About 65% of Negombo is Roman Catholic, according to census data, though Catholics make up just 6% of the country.

But it has also long been known for its tolerance. The town’s Angurukaramulla Temple is a popular stop for Buddhist pilgrims. Its Grand Mosque is famed for its beauty. The Hindu god Rama is said to have been nearby before his great battle with the demon-king Ravana.

“I was shocked when I saw the horrible devastation caused at the church,” Ranjith said after visiting St. Sebastian’s, pleading for tolerance in the aftermath of the attacks and urging Christians not to seek re-

venge. Authorities have blamed the Sri Lankan Muslim group National Thowfeek Jamaath.

But in the first hours after the blasts even Ranjith called on officials to “mercilessly” punish those responsible for attacks, saying “only animals can behave like that.”

The targets included two Catholic churches — St. Sebastian’s and St. Anthony’s Shrine in a Colombo suburb — and the Protestant Zion Church in the eastern coastal city of Batticaloa.

The attacks surprised many in Sri Lanka, where the small Christian community, which totals roughly 7% of the population, has long avoided involvement in the country’s bitter ethnic and religious divides. **AP**

SPAIN

Rural regions become fierce battleground

Aritz Parra, La Bienvenida

SPANISH politicians are swapping campaign buses for tractors, buddying up with hunters and inspecting home-grown tomatoes in Spain's often-neglected rural regions as they hunt for votes in Sunday's general election, one of the country's most polarized votes in decades.

The ballot comes as Spain's traditional bipartisan political landscape — which used to revolve around the center-left Socialists and the conservative Popular Party — has fractured into five main political parties, including a far-right populist newcomer. That has spurred a race for votes in Spain's overrepresented hinterland, where nearly one-third of the seats in parliament's lower house are up for grabs.

Spain's electoral rules grant a bigger say in parliament's lower house to provinces with shrinking populations. A few thousand votes in these areas can swing a win for one party or another, turning the "every vote counts" cliché into a reality for candidates far from the big cities.

That doesn't mean these politicians are getting a warm welcome.



Marcy Jurado, 64, lives in central Spain's Alcludia valley, surrounded by pastures dotted with holm oaks, with her husband and son, the only remaining residents in the village of La Bienvenida. She's wary of politicians knocking on farmers' doors.

"All I wish is that they don't forget about us once the elections are over," she said.

Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez is the politician most favored by the splintering of Spain's

right wing into three parties. But his ability to stay in office hinges not just on how well the front-running Socialist party does in the national vote but also on how his divided opposition performs.

Spanish politicians across the political spectrum are seeking both photos of themselves in muddy boots and headlines promising more investments for rural jobs, better internet access and more local schools and health care centers.

Nestled at the top of a hill, La Bienvenida has gone from having 50 families only 20 years ago to seeing "for sale" signs on house after house. A 37-year-old dairy farmer is the breadwinner in the only inhabited house, and also Jurado's only reason to stay.

"If my son loses his job, I'm done with it, I'll leave," said the retired truck driver. "The days are hard and long enough for somebody who enjoys company."

Her wish list for lawmakers has

two items: Make sure pensions keep up with inflation and create more jobs for the young.

At a state-of-the-art game preserve down the road, a provincial candidate from the far-right Vox party was telling people that his upstart party will unapologetically defend hunting against "lefties, ecologists and animalists who tell rural dwellers how to live their lives."

Ricardo Chamorro, a lawyer, fell out with the Popular Party and embraced the nationalist populism of Vox, whose program echoes the "take back control" mantra of populist movements across the globe. The party vows to defend Spain from Muslims, communists and Catalan separatists, who held a defiant secession referendum in 2017, unleashing a wave of Spanish nationalism.

"We are committed to rural Spain, which sees the money flowing to richer areas that are being disloyal to the nation," Chamorro said to applause from three dozen farmers who gathered under stuffed boar and deer trophies at a bar in Brazatortas, on the edge of the Alcludia valley.

Barring any last-minute surprises, Vox is poised to grab 29 to 37 deputies in Spain's 350-seat

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for votes

national parliament on Sunday, a big splash for a party that only last year made its first big advance with a win in the regional election in Andalusia, a Socialist stronghold.

With nearly 400,000 voters in a country of 37 million, the rural Ciudad Real province is a mirror of national politics. In the last general election in 2016, three of the five deputies chosen here went to the Popular Party and two to the Socialists. This year, polls are predicting at least two seats for the Socialists and one for the Popular Party, with the remaining two up for grabs among four parties, including the center-right Citizens Party and the Vox party.

Only the anti-austerity Unidas Podemos party seems to be left out in the province, according to the latest polls. At the national level, Podemos could lose up to 15 deputies from rural areas in Sunday's vote.

Blanca Fernández, Ciudad Real's 41-year-old Socialist candidate, said politicians and the media are victimizing the countryside.

"It bothers me deeply when people [politicians] climb onto tractors in a forced manner," she said. "It's an insult to those who live here."

What the Socialists want, she said, "is for anybody in Spain to

have access to services in comparable quality conditions, no matter where they live. And that means more opportunities in rural areas."

"It all comes down to how much taxes we want to pay and what are the services we want to have," she said as she inspected a Manchego cheese business that exports to the U.S.

Fernández wants to boost women's roles in the countryside, subsidize young farmers taking over old operations and ensure that farmers have access to water.

"There's no future for the farmland without women or schools," she said.

During two straight days of campaigning, Fernández and Chamorro listened to similar concerns. Tuberculosis tests were seen as too strict, forcing farmers to cull herds and lose money. Sheep ranchers had conflicts with laws on preserving natural spaces. The swelling numbers of wild boars and vultures were hurting livestock operations. All residents complained about too much administrative red tape, poor infrastructure, schools and clinics that were too far away, limited phone and internet services.

While Chamorro visited cattle farms and met with retirees, Fernández toured a solar panel farm and a madeleine factory where three siblings have returned with university degrees to take over the family business. **AP**

UKRAINE

No joke: Comic Zelenskiy wins presidential vote in landslide

WITH nearly all the votes counted in Ukraine, TV star Volodymyr Zelenskiy is projected to win the country's presidential runoff vote in a landslide.

The Central Election Commission says that Zelenskiy has won 73% of the vote while the incumbent President Petro Poroshenko got just 24% support with more than 96% of the ballots counted.

Unlike in most of the elections in Ukraine's post-Soviet history, Zelenskiy appears to have won both in Ukraine's west and east, areas that have been traditionally polarized. One of the campaign slogans of the popular television comedian who has no previous political experience was to unify Ukraine, which has been torn by bitter debates over its identity as well as the separatist conflict in the east that is fueled by neighboring Russia.

Even with a landslide to give him a powerful mandate for change, Zelenskiy has daunting challenges ahead.

The simmering, deadly con-



Ukrainian comedian and presidential candidate Volodymyr Zelenskiy (left) makes the victory sign

flict in eastern Ukraine and the conundrum over Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea are likely to dominate the agenda of the man who up until now has only played the president in a TV sitcom. Zelenskiy, a Russian speaker from central Ukraine has promised to step up efforts to re-integrate the east back into Ukraine's fold but has offered no details on how he is going to do that.

A political novice, 41-year-old Zelenskiy will also have to face off against Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has ruled his country for nearly two decades, if he wants to mend relations with

Ukraine's neighbor.

Officials in Moscow on Monday sounded cautiously optimistic but also condescending about Zelenskiy's victory.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said on his Facebook page yesterday that the election results in Ukraine show "there is a chance to improve the relations with our country after all."

Medvedev, whose government has been supplying the Ukrainian separatists with weapons and manpower, expressed hope that Zelenskiy would be "pragmatic and responsible" when tackling separatism in the east. **AP**

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what's ON



SEE SAW ZINE?

TIME: 12pm-8pm (closed on Tuesdays)

UNTIL: July 12, 2019

VENUE: Taipa Village Art Space

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2857 6212/ 2857 6118

ONENESS: CALLIGRAPHY BY PROFESSOR JAO TSUNG-I

TIME: 10am-6pm (No admission after 5:30pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: September 30, 2019

VENUE: Jao Tsung-I Academy

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2523

MANDARIN'S HOUSE

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Wednesdays, open on public holidays)

ADDRESS: No. 10, Travessa de António da Silva

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 8820

STROLLING AND FEELING: WATERCOLOUR PAINTINGS OF LAI IENG

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: June 16, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

STAMPS AROUND THE WORLD –

LIECHTENSTEIN, KINGDOM OF STAMPS

TIME: 9am-5:30pm (closed on public holidays)

UNTIL: May 31, 2019

VENUE: Temporary Gallery, Communications Museum

ADMISSION: MOP10

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2871 8063

Offbeat

SNAKES IN OFFICE FORCE LIBERIA'S PRESIDENT TO WORK FROM HOME



A spokesman says Liberia's president is working from home after two snakes were found in the building that contains his office.

Deputy press secretary Smith Toby tells The Associated Press that former international soccer star and President George Weah was told to stay away until the Foreign Affairs building can be fumigated. He is expected back in the office today (Macau time).

The black snakes were seen this week briefly emerging from a hole in a wall of the building's reception area. Liberia is home to poisonous snakes and officials are not taking chances.

The deputy press secretary says the fumigation has begun to take care of "crawling and creeping things." Weah, who was FIFA's 1995 player of the year, assumed the presidency in January 2018.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Água de Mar
15:45	Zig Zag
16:10	T2 para 3 Remodelado
16:35	Maior que o Pensamento - Parte I - Primórdios
17:30	Sonhar era Fácil
18:30	TDM Desporto (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Entrevista
21:50	Escritores a Norte - Vidas com Obra em Casas D'Escritas
22:30	Filhos da Nação Sr.2
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Uma História de Autonomia
00:45	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:30	RTPi Directo

cinema



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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 & English)

Duration: 96min

this day in history



1984 SCIENTIST FINDS AIDS VIRUS

The discovery of a virus which may cause Aids, the fatal disease sweeping through America, has been hailed as a "monumental breakthrough" in medical research.

The development was announced in Washington by US Health Secretary Margaret Heckler.

She said the virus was a variant of a known human cancer virus called HTLV-3. A blood test has also been developed, which, she said, would be available within six months, preventing the tragedy of transfusion patients contracting the disease through tainted blood products.

She also suggested that a vaccine to prevent Aids might be ready for testing in two years' time.

"Today's discovery represents the triumph of science over a dreaded disease," she said.

Aids, or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, weakens the immune system, leaving its victims open to a series of wasting diseases. Those people who appear to be more at risk of contracting Aids include homosexuals, haemophiliacs, drug users and those who have received blood transfusions.

It has been causing widespread panic in the United States, where 4,000 people have been infected since the discovery of the disease in 1981. Almost half have died.

The findings in the United States are similar to the discovery in France last week of a virus called LAV, although French researchers stopped short of saying it was definitely the one which causes Aids.

Reaction to the news among victims was philosophical. Bob Schecky has lived with the disease for two years - far longer than his doctors predicted. He welcomed the news from Washington, but said a possible vaccine was too far off to offer comfort.

"I am working with people with Aids on a daily basis," he said. "To hear that there is a possible vaccine that could come out in two or three years is no good news for these people. Most of the people we're working with now will be dead by that time."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The HTLV-3 virus was discovered to be the same as the LAV virus discovered in France. To avoid confusion, it was re-named HIV in 1987.

An estimated 24 million people, both homosexual and heterosexual, have died of Aids since the disease emerged in the United States. It has now reached pandemic proportions in some parts of southern Africa, where two million died in 2001 alone.

No successful vaccine has yet been developed, although billions of dollars have been spent trying.

Only eight potential vaccines are currently being tested on humans, and just one, developed by US firm VaxGen, has reached end-stage trials.

The trials were held in North America, Europe and Thailand and involved thousands of volunteers at high risk from Aids.

But preliminary results announced in November 2003 from the AIDS-VAX trial in Thailand showed it does not work.

Nevertheless since the start of the HIV epidemic, a series of drugs have been developed which significantly prolong the lives of people who are HIV positive.



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opinion

**ON BASKETBALL:
THIS FIRST ROUND SORELY
LACKS PLAYOFF DRAMA**

Tim Reynolds, AP

If there was a silver lining for Indiana fans after the Pacers were the first team to be bounced from the 2019 NBA playoffs, it's this: They won't have to watch any more first-round games.

For that, they should be thankful.

Drama is in very short supply so far in these playoffs. Close games? Few and far between (more on this later). Ratings? They're down double-digit percentages from last year, a massive hit that suggests casual fans aren't watching if LeBron James — out of the playoffs for the first time since 2005 — isn't playing. Tickets? There were seats on the secondary market available for Monday's Milwaukee-Detroit game for as little as USD18.

That's \$18, by the way, to see a Bucks team that was the best team in the NBA during the regular season. The Bucks have the likely MVP in Giannis Antetokounmpo. Pistons fans can probably bank on it being their team's last home game of the season. And apparently, not very many people want to go see that game.

Can't blame them.

The divide between the haves and the have-nots in the NBA looks like a canyon right now. Unless San Antonio takes two of the next three against Denver, or someone rallies from 3-1 or 3-0 down, the eight higher-seeded teams will all win in the first round for the first time since 2008.

On the one hand, that means the second-round matchups could be really good. Boston-Milwaukee. Golden State-Houston. Philadelphia-Toronto. None of them are set yet, but they would all be fascinating if they happen.

"You take control of a series by winning games on the road," Golden State star Stephen Curry said. "We've been able to do that."

This past weekend, all the higher-seeded teams took control by winning away from home. Road teams went 4-0 on Saturday. Road teams went 4-0 again on Sunday. That's never happened in NBA history. And with lower seeds not cashing in on home-court advantage, this first round might wind down real fast.

Boston swept away Indiana. Houston can sweep Utah on Monday night. Philadelphia, Golden State, Toronto and Portland all have a chance to win in five games. Entering Monday, only one series — Denver vs. San Antonio — was assured of going six games. There might not be a single Game 7 in the first round. The last time that happened was 2011.

Fans might want the drama that comes with close games, long series, back-and-forth tussles. Players, of course, don't mind going without.

"Not worried about it or paying attention to anybody else right now," said Toronto guard Danny Green, whose team is up 3-1 over Orlando. "We're focused on us and Orlando. We don't skip steps here. We can't think about the next series. We haven't won this series yet. Can't even think about the next series. Orlando's our focus. They deserve all our focus. They're a pretty damn good team. And we're not looking ahead because we haven't beat them yet. The job's not finished."

There have been 30 games played in these playoffs entering Monday.

Road teams have gone 16-14, which is absurd.

And just two of the 30 games have been decided by three points or less. The average margin of victory so far in these playoffs: 13.7 points per game.

So there's been lopsided games, and for the most part, lopsided matchups. By Wednesday, there might be only two first-round series left. By Thursday, it might be one. By Friday, the first round might be over. There's a chance this could be the fastest first round since the NBA made the opening matchups all best-of-sevens in 2003.

The earliest the second round can start is Saturday.

Here's hoping the intrigue ramps up around then as well.

FOOTBALL

Ronaldo becomes first player to win Europe's top 3 leagues

Andrew Dampf, Rome

THE breakthrough under Alex Ferguson at Manchester United. Then the coronation at Real Madrid. And now another title at Juventus.

If ever there was a need to emphasize Cristiano Ronaldo's impact as a footballer, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner did it again this weekend by helping Juventus to the Serie A title in his first season in Italy.

In doing so, the 34-year-old Ronaldo became the first player in history to win league titles in the English Premier League (with United), the Spanish league (Madrid) and Serie A (Juventus).

"I'm very happy to have won in England, Spain and now the league title in Italy as well," Ronaldo said. "It meant a lot to me and it means a lot to us as a team."

Other players have won titles in three of the five major European leagues (England, Spain, Italy, Germany and France) but nobody had previously put together the combination of England, Spain and Italy.

David Beckham played in four of the top leagues but only won titles at United (six), Madrid (one) and Paris Saint-Germain (one), having failed to lift the Serie A trophy during his two loan spells at AC Milan.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic won four Serie A titles (three with Inter Milan and one with AC Milan), the Spanish league with Barcelona and four French championships with PSG.

Brazil fullback Maxwell was on many of those same teams as Ibrahimovic and also won in Italy, Spain and France.

Then there was Arjen Robben, who won the Premier League twice with Chelsea before adding a Spanish title at Real Madrid and seven Bundesliga trophies at Bayern Munich.

Another Dutchman who achieved the feat was Mark van Bommel, with titles with Barcelona, Bayern Munich (two) and AC Milan.

While Juventus also won the league in the seven seasons before Ronaldo's arrival, there was no doubting



his impact in Turin. With 19 goals and six assists in 27 Italian league matches this season, Ronaldo played a part in nearly 40 percent of Juventus' goals.

So it came as no surprise when his dangerous cross from a sharp angle was redirected in by a defender as an own-goal for the winner in Juve's 2-1 win over Fiorentina over the weekend — giving the Bianconeri more than the single point they needed to secure a record-extending eighth straight title with five rounds remaining.

It's the sixth league title of Ronaldo's career.

The first came as a 22-year-old at United, ending a four-year drought for Ferguson's squad as Ronaldo scored 17 goals — three fewer than Didier Drogba's

league-best 20.

That was just a warmup for what came next.

In 2007-08, Ronaldo led the Premier League with 31 goals and helped United to the league title and the Champions League trophy.

Another Premier League title came the following season as Ronaldo finished second in the scoring charts with 18 goals, behind only Nicolas Anelka, who had 19 for Chelsea.

While Ronaldo won only two Spanish league championships in his nine seasons at Madrid, he also helped the team to four Champions League trophies — including three consecutive European titles over the last three seasons.

When Juventus acquired Ronaldo in a 100 million euro (\$112 million) transfer

last year, the expectation was that he would help end the club's long chase for a Champions League trophy.

Ronaldo did his part by scoring a hat trick to overturn a first-leg deficit against Atletico Madrid in the opening knockout round and goals in both legs of the quarterfinals against Ajax but the Bianconeri were still eliminated by the Dutch club.

"Next year is a new page, the fans all want it and so do we," Ronaldo said. "It is an important trophy, but it's difficult to [win]."

A Champions League title with Juventus would enable Ronaldo to match another multiple nation and multiple team record — joining Clarence Seedorf as the only players to win the trophy with three different clubs. AP

opinion

Our Desk
Renato Marques



ONLINE MEDIA: LEGALIZE OR SHUT THEM DOWN

The boom of the Internet, and mostly the striving Era of the Social Networks has brought up the phenomenon of the so-called "online media."

Although the definition of what "online media" is seems to be simple, in reality things are far more complex and, most of the time, the difference between many of the online media that spring up like mushrooms every single day and the regular "weblog," created in the late 1990s, which reached its peak of popularity in the early 2000s, is basically none.

Maybe it is exactly because the popularity of the "blogs" has decreased leading to a new trend (or a group of new trends) to begin and since people are too lazy to read, there is nothing like adding some videos and other attractive items to catch people's attention. And, since there are different "mediums" being used, someone decided to call them "media," just like in "social media."

Well, for me, and putting aside tight definitions, there is a very clear difference between what I call "real media" or otherwise, and that has to do with the content – more specifically, whether they create content or whether they simply share it.

From my perspective, if you create your own content and put resources to work with a specific purpose, that fits in my mental box of "media." If you just share content produced by others, well... I think the maximum I can do is to place you in the mental box of "advertising agency."

But it was not to provide my opinion of what is media or not that I am writing this today. Instead, it is to address the fact that, as we know, there are hundreds of companies and people calling themselves either "media," or "advertising agencies" or even "influencers" (a word that I seriously want to avoid because for me, an influencer is someone who has a life path or great recognition and who can inspire many others to make the world a better place – sounds cliché, I know). Making "robotic" comments or placing or removing "likes" on social networks is really not my idea of "making the world a better place."

Moving forward, they exist! All of them! So, how to clearly distinguish what is a real "media company" from someone playing "news," for me is very simple: legalize them or shut them down.

To continue in this system of saying: "Oh you cannot do this because you are not a registered media," does not solve the problem - make it legal then! Or not! Accepting "online media companies" is not just a matter of mentality; it is a matter of policy. Some governments accept them, others do not, and I am not trying to say that some are better than others because they accept more things. They are just different.

Putting all these people in the same "box" and letting them play sometimes and not play on other occasions is not logical, and is not acceptable.

Draw a policy, assume a position, make them legal and call for responsibilities from the relevant people when needed (like with any other media) or shut them down and once and for all assume that position. Let's stop this limbo and purgatory of loopholes because we all know that it is in this "non-system" or in the refusal to embrace one system that the dirty puddles appear and, when you least expect it, you fall into one of them.

THE HOMELESS ACTIVISTS OUTSIDE NOTRE DAME DEMAND 'A ROOF TOO'

Dozens of public housing advocates are protesting outside the gutted Notre Dame in Paris to demand that France's poorest be remembered after donors pledged USD1 billion to rebuild the cathedral and its destroyed roof.

Around 50 people from a French homeless association gathered yesterday with placards reading "1 billion in 24 hours." They chanted slogans directed at Bernard Arnault, the CEO of luxury group LVMH, who last week pledged

200 million euros. Some chanted "Notre Dame needs a roof, we need a roof too!"

Paris police monitored the peaceful protest but didn't intervene.

In addition to Arnault's pledge, another billionaire, Francois Pinault, and his son pledged 100 million euros for the reconstruction effort from their company, which owns the Christie's auction house and is the main shareholder for Gucci.

ROYAL FAQ

Everything you wanted to know about Harry and Meghan's royal baby

THE time is drawing near for the impending birth of the first child for Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex. The couple is keeping many details about Meghan's pregnancy and birth plan private and say they don't know the baby's gender yet. Here are some key points about what will be the latest addition to the world's most famous royal family.

HOW WILL WE HEAR ABOUT THE BABY?

Kensington Palace says the press and the public will be informed when Meghan goes into labor.

Harry has resented the often-intrusive coverage of the royals by the British press and he has toned down expectations for what information will be released about the new baby. That means the public won't be told where Meghan plans to give birth.

Some observers think she will opt for a home birth away from prying eyes at a hospital. Queen Elizabeth II, Harry's grandmother, had all her children at home but Harry's brother Prince William and his wife Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, opted to give birth in a central London hospital.

Harry and Meghan have also indicated they won't be posing on the hospital steps with their newborn hours after the baby has arrived, breaking with the pattern set by William and Kate. They have indicated it will be several days before they show the baby to the world.

WILL THE BABY GROW UP TO BE A KING OR QUEEN?

The baby will be seventh in line for the throne, making it very unlikely that he or she will grow up to be the British monarch.

The current heir is Prince Charles, Queen Elizabeth II's 70-year-old son. He is followed by William and William's three young children, Prince George, Princess Charlotte, and Prince Louis. Next comes the new baby's father, Prince Harry, and then the newborn.



WILL THE BABY AT LEAST BE A PRINCE OR A PRINCESS?

This won't happen automatically. It's really up to the queen to decide, although Harry and Meghan may also have a say.

A decree issued by King George V in 1917 limits the number of grand royal titles in a way that would make Harry and Meghan's baby known as a "Lord" or a "Lady" rather than as a prince or princess. They would not become "his royal highness" or "her royal highness" under the current rules.

The queen has the authority, however, to intervene as she did when future king William and his wife Kate started having children. The queen decreed that all of William and Kate's children, not just the eldest, would be princes and princesses.

WHAT WILL THEY NAME THE BABY?

London's savvy legal bookmakers believe the baby is likely to be a girl. They had to close betting on the name due to the heavy volume of bets favoring a baby girl.

Many believe that a baby girl would be named Diana, after Harry's late mother, Princess Diana, who died in a Paris car crash in 1997. Royal babies often get several names so it's possible that Diana could

end up as a middle name.

Other names seen as quite possible include Victoria, Alice, Grace and Elizabeth.

If it's a boy, speculation abounds that he would be named Albert, Arthur or James.

Meghan is feminist and some believe she could name a girl Eleanor after both Eleanor Roosevelt, the former U.S. first lady who was a champion of women's rights and civil rights, and Eleanor of Aquitaine, queen of England in the 12th century.

WILL THE BABY BE AMERICAN?

Meghan is an unusual addition to the royal family because she is an American citizen born to a white father and an African-American mother. Palace officials said at the time of her engagement to Harry that she planned to eventually become British, a process that can take several years.

She and Harry could decide to pursue American citizenship for their baby, so the child could end up having dual British and American nationality. That would give the baby the right to live and work in the United States without needing a visa in the future – and spare him or her the lengthy entry procedures that often face foreign visitors arriving at U.S. airports. **AP**

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

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



NORTH KOREA An ex-Marine suspected of involvement in a mysterious dissident group's February raid on North Korea's Embassy in Madrid has been arrested in Los Angeles by U.S. authorities. The specific charges against the suspect, Christopher Ahn, were not immediately clear.



JAPAN-US Without close friends in Asia, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe appears to be using every opportunity, even the emperor's accession, to court President Donald Trump. Abe is scheduling a rushed visit to Washington to meet with Trump and celebrate first lady's birthday, and then is inviting him to be first foreign leader to meet the new emperor.



TRUMP's lawyer Rudy Giuliani (pictured) insisted there was "nothing wrong" with the president's 2016 campaign taking information from the Russians, as House Democrats pledged stepped-up investigations into campaign misconduct and possible crimes of obstruction detailed in Robert Mueller's report. It was possibly ill-advised but not illegal, Giuliani said.



UKRAINE With nearly all the votes counted in Ukraine, TV star Volodymyr Zelenskiy (pictured) is projected to win the country's presidential runoff vote in a landslide. Unlike in most of the elections in post-Soviet history, Zelenskiy appears to have won both in Ukraine's west and east.

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