



SEARCH FOR SUNKEN VESSEL CONTINUES

The search for the sunken vessel carrying eight people, three of whom are understood to be from Macau, is still underway

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THE SOLE CANDIDATE?

The 13th NPC accepted the resignation tendered by Ho Iat Seng, making him the first declared candidate for the next chief election

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ECONOMIST PREDICTS SHENZHEN'S LEADERSHIP IN GBA, AND BEYOND

P8 GREATER BAY

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WORLD BRIEFS

SINGAPORE Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has named a deputy in a Cabinet reshuffle, in a possible indication of his successor. His office said yesterday that Heng Swee Keat would be promoted to deputy prime minister. Heng has been finance minister since 2015. He will keep that post when the appointment takes effect on May 1.



SRI LANKA The Islamic extremist group blamed for Easter attack that killed over 320 people began posting videos online three years ago calling for non-Muslims to be "eliminated," faith leaders said yesterday. Much remains unclear about how a little-known group called National Thowfeek Jamaath allegedly carried out six large nearly simultaneous suicide bombings striking churches and hotels on Sunday. *More on p12*



RUSSIA-N.KOREA A Kremlin adviser says that President Vladimir Putin will meet the North Korean leader in Russia's Far East tomorrow. Yuri Ushakov told Russian news agencies yesterday that the much-anticipated talks between Putin and Kim Jong Un would be held in Vladivostok on the Pacific Ocean and would focus on North Korea's nuclear program. *More on p14*

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VISITORS SURGE 40% OVER EASTER

More tourists test city's 'optimum' number

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EVA BUCHHO

Coutinho's trade union bill voted down - again

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RENATO MARQUES

Gov't distributes information on typhoon exercise

Macau authorities have been distributing information on the government's "Storm Surge Evacuation Plan" to be used when powerful typhoons cross the territory. They have also been calling on members of the public to participate in the upcoming typhoon exercise on Saturday, April 27. According to a statement from the government, the purpose of the evacuation exercise is to help the public to better understand how to protect themselves during the occurrence of such extreme weather phenomena. It also serves to assist civil protection entities in preparing for disaster response activities ahead of the peak typhoon season in the summer months.

Consumer prices rise 2.84% in March

The Composite Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased 2.84% year-on-year in March 2019, accelerating from the 2.79% annual growth seen in the previous month. According to Macau's Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), the growth is attributable to increased charges for eating out and higher rental residential prices, as well as rising prices of motor cars, gasoline, and fruits and vegetables. Among the various sections of goods and services, notable rises were registered in the price indexes of education and transport, which grew by 5.89% and 5.4% year-on-year, respectively. Meanwhile, the Composite CPI for March decreased by 0.4% month-to-month, according to the DSEC, owing to lowered charges for package tours after the Lunar New Year and the seasonal sales for winter clothing. The Composite CPI reflects the impact of price changes on general households in Macau and is used as a key indicator of inflation.

Public works to preserve three green plots

The latest plans of the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau propose the preservation of green areas at three land plots: one at the foot of the Guia hill, and two at Estrada Marginal da Ilha Verde. The latter two land plots are both private land, occupying areas of 6,700 and 1,600 square meters, and will not be used for industrial purposes. Some 2,800 square meters of the total area will be ceded to the government, which will use the space to build public streets. The owner of the Guia hill foot land plot, which is located next to the Liaison Office, has applied for a land plot re-classification.

RENATO MARQUES



Sunken vessel with three Macau residents pinpointed

Staff reporter

THE search for the sunken vessel carrying eight people, three of whom are understood to be from Macau, is still underway even as its final location was determined yesterday.

The vessel lost contact last Thursday.

The Zhuhai marine authority, which is part of a Greater Bay-wide search effort, reported that an object suspected to be the vessel has been spotted

around 3 km off the coasts of Baili and Dawanshan islands in the Wanshan Archipelago.

The depth of the water at the location is 26 meters, with the vessel 7 meters above the bottom of the sea. The front of the vessel is reported to be facing northwest.

The fishing boat was made of wood and owned by a person from Macau. Due to the automatic identification system of the vessel being shut off, its exact location was difficult to

pinpoint when it initially lost contact.

It went missing near the Wanshan Archipelago, south of the Pearl River Estuary.

In past days, the search effort has covered an area of approximately 600 square kilometers around the Archipelago. Search teams were deployed from Greater Bay cities, namely Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Shenzhen, as well as Macau and Hong Kong.

Marine vessels were deployed a total of 31 times, and aircraft

seven times, according to authorities. Drones were also deployed from Macau to the area.

Later, the authorities turned to sonar equipment before they were able to pinpoint the location of the lost vessel.

The abruptly changing weather last Thursday night is suspected to be the culprit behind the accident. A social media post by the Macau Meteorological Association showed that a tornado-like vortex might have briefly formed in the area on the night.

Health authority warns of dengue fever possibility

Staff reporter

THE Health Bureau (SSM) has issued a reminder regarding measures that should be taken to prevent the spread of dengue fever and other contagious diseases spread by mosquitoes.

The humid weather of late makes for ideal

breeding conditions for mosquitos according to the SSM, including Tiger Mosquitoes, which can spread dengue fever. Accordingly, measures should be taken to prevent the spread of such diseases.

Members of the public are reminded to stay away from standing or collected water, as it

makes a good breeding environment for mosquitos.

In addition, the installation of door and window screens should be considered, as they help to deter mosquitoes from flying in from outdoor areas.

Educational videos on the prevention of dengue fever will be played

on social media and immigration checkpoints. Promotional materials will be distributed at the latter.

Next month, the SSM will hold several activities with a dengue fever prevention work group to enhance the public's protective measures. It will also add the knowledge to the curriculum

of the Labor Affairs Bureau's "Fisherman's Training Program".

Medical professionals are also reminded to report any suspicious cases of dengue fever.

According to the latest information, there have been three recent cases of dengue fever infection in Macau. They were all imported cases with origins in Southeast Asia.

The SSM advises that if symptoms of fever or rash occur, consult a medical professional immediately and disclose any travel history.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR) Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
MANAGING EDITOR Daniel Beitler daniel@macaudailytimes.com
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Eric Sautedé, Leanda Lee, Severo Portela

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Lynzy Valles, Paulo Barbosa, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, Bloomberg, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua
SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

SECRETARY Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephone: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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Daniel Beitler

TOURISM

TOURIST arrivals surged almost 40% during the Easter holiday period, according to data provided yesterday by immigration authorities, prompting fresh concerns about Macau's capacity to accommodate the growing number of visitors.

The four-day holiday period from April 19 to 22 registered just under 556,200 visitor arrivals in the city, up 39.3% from the equivalent four-day period in 2018, from March 30 to April 2.

Meanwhile, there were 2.46 million border crossings during Easter, with the Border Gate proving the most popular entry point for tourists, accounting for about 68% of the traffic. The second most popular point of entry was the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, with around 11% of visitors to Macau, while arrivals by sea sunk by 37.9% to 571,300 visitors.

Over-tourism has been a topic of intense interest for government officials, lawmakers and the wider public in past months, supported by the recent findings of a study from the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) that concluded Macau's optimal "tourism carrying capacity" stood at 40 million annual arrivals, or 110,000 tourists per day.

The issue was raised again by several lawmakers during yesterday's Legislative Assembly plenary session, including Leong Sun Iok and Song Pek Kei.

Macau received 35.8 million visitor arrivals over the course of 2018, a 10 percent rise from 32.6 million in 2017.

Official data from the Statistics and Census Bureau shows that the number of tourists visiting Macau this year is tracking significantly higher than in 2018.

Macau recorded 10.36 million tourist arrivals during the first quarter of

EVA BUCHO



2019, about 21.2% more than in the same quarter a year earlier, with the bulk of the increase carried by same-day visitors.

While overnight visitors increased by around 9.3% year-on-year in the first quarter to 4.73 million, same-day visitors soared 33.4% to 5.62 million. Accordingly, the average length of stay of visitors shortened by about 0.1 days year-on-year to 1.1 days.

The quarter was completed by a 24% year-on-year rise in visitors during March, following 24.9% and 15.5% growth in January and February respectively.

The growth seen in the first quarter puts Macau on track to record nearly 43 million arrivals by year-end, higher than the 40 million recommended in the IFT study.

The IFT was keen to stress earlier this month that the 40-million mark was not the maximum number of visitors that Macau's infrastructure could support, as commonly inferred. Rather, it is the estimated maximum the city can accommodate without negatively impacting the cultural and natural environment, such as the city's architecture, heritage and community, as well as visitor experiences.

KOREA RISES TO THIRD-LARGEST MARKET

Despite the surge in visitor arrivals, the source markets of Macau's visitors appear to have held mostly stable. Mainland China and Hong Kong remain the two largest source markets, but South Korea has overtaken Taiwan as the third-largest destination.

In the first quarter, visitors from mainland China (7.44 million) and Hong Kong (1.79 million) recorded respective growth of 23.5% and 21.3% year-on-year. Visitors from South Korea (262,000) and Taiwan (261,800) grew by 9.2% and 3.3% respectively.

Visitors from the United States (50,200), Australia (24,000), Canada (20,800) and the United Kingdom (13,800) showed marginal year-on-year growth.

Meanwhile, partly owing to the impact of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, the Statistics and Census Service said that in visitors to Macau from the cities of the Greater Bay Area grew by 16.6% year-on-year to 1.36 million in March alone, with 44 percent of them coming from Hong Kong. Visitors from neighboring Zhuhai and Guangzhou totaled 227,000 (16.6%) and 155,000 (11.4%) respectively, representing year-on-year increases of 47.5% and 11%.

GAMING

PokerStars fined \$10k for taking bets on NJ college teams

Wayne Parry, Atlantic City

NEW Jersey gambling regulators have fined PokerStars USD10,000 for taking bets on New Jersey college basketball teams in violation of the state's sports betting law.

The state Division of Gaming Enforcement issued the fine on April 12, and posted it on its website last week.

Documents filed by the state indicate that PokerStars accepted 216 wagers on a game involving Rutgers and Eastern Michigan University totaling more than \$2,700.

The company also took a single bet on a game involving Monmouth University and the University of Pennsylvania, whose value was not disclosed on the division's website.

PokerStars did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment Monday, but the state noted the company voided all the wagers and returned the money to bettors before the games began. It also indicated the company acknowledged the bets violated the law, and that PokerStars had agreed to the fine as part of a settlement with the state.

The fine comes as New Jersey lawmakers are considering a bill that would set fines starting at \$20,000 and ranging up to \$100,000 for companies that take prohibited bets on New Jersey college teams.

The bill, introduced earlier this year by Assemblyman Ralph Caputo, a northern New Jersey Democrat and former casino

executive, was released by a state Assembly committee but has not come up for a vote by the full Assembly. The affected companies also would have to pay an additional fine equal to the total amount of prohibited bets they accepted and could have their sports betting license suspended for 10 days.

Caputo introduced the bill out of frustration with what he considered inadequate fines handed out to two gambling companies who took similar prohibited college bets last fall.

The Golden Nugget casino and Caesars Enter-

tainment were penalized for taking such bets, with Caesars fined \$2,000 for taking bets on a Rutgers-Kansas football game in September, and Golden Nugget forfeiting \$390 in bets that it took on numerous college games involving New Jersey teams. Caesars Entertainment operates two Atlantic City casinos that have sports books: Bally's and Harrah's.

State law prohibits wagers on college teams from New Jersey, regardless of where the game is played, or on college games that take place within the state. **AP**

Ho Iat Seng's resignation accepted, gears up for CE candidacy

Julie Zhu

THE 13th National People's Congress (NPC) has accepted the resignation tendered by Ho Iat Seng, the chairman of Macau's Legislation Assembly (AL), making him the first declared candidate of the 2019 Chief Executive (CE) election.

The NPC's acceptance means that Ho is no longer a member of the Election Committee for the Chief Executive election.

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

Members of the election committee are not eligible to run for the office of Chief Executive. Ho thus requested permission to resign from the NPC.

Yesterday, on the sidelines of the meeting of the Electoral Affairs Commission of Macau, Song Man Lei, president of the commission, did not offer much comment on Ho's announcement of his candidacy for the CE, nor about about Ho's position at the Legislative Assembly.

According to the law, Macau's

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12 NPC members automatically become members of the election committee. Following the withdrawal of Ho, there might be only 11 NPC members this year. As a result, this may mean that the election committee will only have 399 members.

"The law has not clearly prohibited such a situation,"

said Song, explaining that the law only says NPC members become automatic members of the committee, not that all NPC members must be members of the committee.

However, Kevin Ho may succeed Ho Iat Seng's place in electorate to become the 12th member. There are three candidates and Kevin Ho is thou-

ght first in line to the NPC to replace Ho. If he is accepted by the NPC in time, he will join Macau CE electorate.

Currently, Macau has 388 election committee members selected. On June 13th, the commission will select the remaining committee members.

Song offered his understanding that the law does not

prohibit a situation where there are fewer than 400 election committee members.

When questioned about Ho's position at the AL, Song said that "AL affairs are not related to our work. Until he is confirmed as a candidate, and until the announcement of the election results, his position will be suspended. If he becomes CE and then steps into office, he will lose his position as AL chairman. Regarding what kind of measures the relevant people will take, we do not make assumptions."

As of 4:30 p.m. yesterday, 630 groups out of 774 groups (81.4 percent) had submitted nomination registration forms, a similar percentage to the previous election.

There is still no decision regarding the election date for the Chief Executive, Song told the media yesterday.

In order to maintain the nomination threshold at the ratio of one-sixth of the total membership of the Election Committee, the number of Election Committee members required for nominating CE candidates is 66.

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RENATO MARQUES



José Pereira Coutinho

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Trade union bill discarded like its nine predecessors

Renato Marques

MACAU'S Legislative Assembly (AL) voted down the trade union law bill for the 10th time yesterday afternoon. The proposal, spearheaded by José Pereira Coutinho, was the lawmaker's seventh personal attempt and its tenth time overall facing legislative scrutiny. Speaking to the Times after the voting, Coutinho expressed a positive feeling on the outcome despite the bill's defeat. He noted that this time the bill had gathered a total of 13 votes in favor, one more than the last time it was brought to a vote at the plenary in October 2017.

According to Coutinho, the result would have been better if some lawmakers, who always say that they protect and support their workers, voted in favor instead of against. Coutinho was referring specifically to Angela Leong.

In fact, Leong performed the stunt of the day in the plenary session voting against the proposal of Coutinho although expressing her opinion in favor of both the bill's primary backer, and also of lawmaker Sulu Sou, one of the most active of the pro-

ponents during the debate that followed the proposal's presentation.

Besides the democratic wing, the lawmakers connected with the Macao Federation of Trade Unions also supported the bill, with Ella Lei and Leong Sun Iok coming forward in favor.

"I support it," said Lei. "We need to protect the rights of the workers and of collective negotiation. We must have a law to implement all this."

"Why is the government dragging this law? I don't understand," she said.

As for Leong, he also recalled the nine previous unsuccessful attempts to pass such a bill. The lawmaker said that measures said to be enforced by the government to help on the labor disputes have not been implemented.

Furthermore, according to official data, "there were 2,143 [labor] conflicts in 2017 that resulted in fines of over MOP10 million. This means that conflicts did not stop existing and that workers continued to have a weaker negotiation position."

"People are afraid of complaining and being punished," added Leong. "The [approval] of a trade union law can delegate the power to the associations to take

care of these matters and release the workers from such burden."

Leong, made once more use of the statistics to show that a large percentage of the active population of Macau are employed in conditions of few or even no negotiation power.

"More than half of our population are employed by the big corporations with no capacity to negotiate anything with their employers," the lawmaker said.

Leong said he was disappointed with the fact that government has never taken the initiative to propose the creation of such a law itself.

As for lawmaker Sulu Sou, he took the opportunity to reaffirm the need for more "of these" initiatives by lawmakers, "namely on topics where the government has been lagging behind or failing to address."

According to Sou, on previous

occasions the director of the Labor Affairs Bureau "spoke only half-truths when saying that people can legally create associations and that this already grants them protection."

"This is not true and we know that to create associations even with the name of 'trade union' does not change the legal powers of such association," he said, recalling that in many difficult cases lawmakers have been called as substitutes for proper institutions to deal with severe labor disputes.

Sou also suggested that the historical arguments against the creation of such a law have been lacking – among them fear for the economic situation of the Macau SAR and arguments to the effect of it not being "the right time."

Making reference to the case of former Prosecutor-General Ho Chio Meng, Coutinho argued that there was a need for a "whistleblower" system, that protects people with knowledge about illegal activity to be able to report it without fear of reprisal.

Those in favor of the bill were vocal during yesterday's debate in contrast to the near silence of those against.

The lack of participation from the opposing party even prompted Sou to comment at one point that it "looks like there are no lawmakers against this. We have been debating and I saw nobody intervening with a position against."

But the opposition finally perked up when it came to the voting procedure, with some lawmakers expressing their positions during the vote declarations.

"We already have several institutions that protect the citizens," said Ma Chi Seng, adding that he must disapprove of such a bill "because it was not subjected to public consultation."

Vong Hin Fai justified his vote against with uncertainties over its legality and "compliance with the basic law," reaffirming as on previous occasions that the creation of new laws should be by the sole initiative of the government.

Dual candidate rule for CE election fails to interest plenary

LAWMAKER Sulu Sou's proposal for an amendment to the Chief Executive Election Law that would prevent such elections from being held without at least two candidates was addressed yesterday during the plenary session.

The proposal was previously rejected by both the president of the Legislative Assembly (AL) and the Executive Board of the AL. It was considered during the plenary session only on the lawmaker's appeal of the board decision.

The idea gathered the support of four out of the 30 lawmakers voting, namely democrats Sou, José Pereira Coutinho, Ng Kuok Cheong, and Au Kam San. All the others voted against the proposal.

According to Sou, "my project aims only to break

the monologue in the elections and widen the Macau political space," an idea immediately refuted by the representative of the Board of the AL, lawmaker Kou Ho In.

Kou explained why the project was refused by the president first and then by the board, saying that to enforce a "limitation" in the number of candidates would be akin to a "change in the political structure" and that type of mandate "is reserved exclusively for the government."

After the voting crushed the pretensions of Sou, fellow democrat lawmakers Ng and Au explained that they had voted in favor in order to prompt the advance of Macau's political system and prevent "a regression in the system." **RM**

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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

Cathy Chan

CLSA appoints Gould as CEO, replacing company veteran Slone

CLSA Ltd. appointed Rick Gould, head of its Americas business, as global chief executive officer after several top managers left the brokerage amid mounting tensions between the firm's old guard and its Chinese owner.

Gould will relocate to Hong Kong from New York and formally start in his new position this week, according to a CLSA memo obtained by Bloomberg News. He replaces company veteran Jonathan Slone, who resigned earlier this year.

At least four of the Hong Kong brokerage's senior managers followed Slone out the door, people with knowledge of the matter said this month. The departures included Nigel Beattie, who had been in talks to succeed Slone. The moves underscored growing concerns among some employees that CLSA is losing its independence as Citic, China's biggest state-owned brokerage, tightens its grip on the business and overhauls staff compensation.

"Citic Securities is very aware of the current shifts in the global financial markets but we are optimistic about the growth opportunities that lie ahead," Zhang Youjun, chairman of Citic Securities and CLSA, said in the memo. "Our goal is to ensure both Citic Securities and



CLSA work more closely together to develop opportunities and solutions for clients. To do

that, we will provide additional resources and implement suitable business structures that will

make us more efficient." CLSA made more appointments in the past weeks, said people

with knowledge of the matter, asking not to be identified as the information isn't public: Singapore country head Andrew Hartley will also lead the group's equity sales, trading and execution. Shaun Cochran is promoted as head of research. Andrew Norman named as CEO for the Australia business after heading the region's equities business.

Gould joined CLSA in 2014 and has been a member of the firm's executive committee. He previously held positions at Bloomberg LP, the parent of Bloomberg News, as well as Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., where he started his career in 1983 before leaving for Morgan Stanley.

The Citic-CLSA tie-up has been closely watched by some in the industry as a test case for whether a Chinese brokerage can successfully expand overseas and compete with the likes of Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Morgan Stanley. While Citic said last month that it's committed to growing internationally, it has yet to come anywhere close to matching the global reach of Wall Street's giants. **Bloomberg**

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Cathay Pacific cracks down on internal theft

CATHAY Pacific Airways Ltd. is cracking down on flight attendants taking in-flight supplies such as cutlery, champagne and ice cream, the South China Morning Post said, citing company and cabin crew sources.

The Hong Kong carrier started spot checks by security officials at its home base to prevent such theft, long considered an unofficial perk by staff, the newspaper said. At least six employees were placed under investigation on Saturday, the paper said.

The stolen items have cost the carrier "hundreds of millions" over the years, the Post said, citing the sources. Pots of Haagen-Dazs ice cream are among the most popular items swiped, though they also include everything from wet wipes to company-branded pens, the paper said.

"In view of an increasing number of reported losses of company property, we have informed our cabin crew that random inspections will be carried out," Cathay said in an emailed statement. "We are dealing with cases in a fair and reasonable manner in accordance with standard internal procedure." **Bloomberg**

Economist predicts Shenzhen's leadership in GBA

HONG Kong-born American economist Steven Ng-Sheong Cheung has predicted that Shenzhen will become the leading municipality of the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

On Saturday, Cheung delivered a speech in mainland China at a forum on the future of both the GBA and Shenzhen.

"The center of international economic development has always relied on a bay area. It is a universal law. [...] It is beyond any doubt that Shenzhen, whose name is not included in the Greater Bay Area, will become the leader of this bay area," projected Cheung.

Cheung also affirmed his belief that Shenzhen will surpass Silicon Valley and Shanghai in terms of gross domestic product.

"Thirty years ago, I inferred that Shanghai's economy would surpass Hong Kong. Today, I infer that Shenzhen will surpass Shanghai," declared Cheung.

In the nearly hour-long speech



DANIEL BEITLER

ch Cheung did not hide his confidence in the future development of Shenzhen, having said that "two years ago, I predicted that Shenzhen would surpass Silicon Valley in ten years. Even though mainland China's economy is currently not in a good condition, there are still eight years left to go, and my forecast remains unchanged."

"Shenzhen will become the economic center of the entire planet," said Cheung.

The American economist, who has been residing in mainland China in recent years, said that Shenzhen's advantage is Dongguan, which he predicts will be the reason that Shenzhen will eventually replace Silicon Valley, as there is no industrial zone like Dongguan in Silicon Valley.

In addition to foreseeing Shenzhen becoming the leading city of the GBA, Cheung noted that Shenzhen has no

cultural barriers and is capable of attracting foreign talent. Cheung mentioned that Shenzhen's economy had already surpassed that of Hong Kong, but then also said it had surpassed Taiwan's.

However, reviewing official data, Shenzhen's gross domestic product amounted to the equivalent of approximately USD360 billion in 2018, while Taiwan's exceeded \$600 billion in the same year. **JZ**

AD

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MARKETS

China signals less stimulus, undermining world's hottest stocks

THE world's best performing stock market is looking vulnerable after Beijing officials signaled they're less comfortable about adding stimulus.

The CSI 300 Index of equities traded in Shanghai and Shenzhen sank 2.3 percent on Monday, its biggest loss in a month. Property developers led the plunge, along with old economy shares such as banks and industrial companies. The gauge fell as much as 0.5 percent yesterday.

After the CSI 300 surged almost 40 percent this year, investors have grown increasingly sensitive to whether the authorities will maintain the massive scale of stimulus seen in the first quarter. A statement late Friday from a meeting of the Politburo was interpreted by traders as meaning the economy is on a stable enough footing that extended support isn't needed. Instead there was a focus on deleveraging and avoiding speculation in the housing market.

"People have come to a clear consensus that there won't be any aggressive stimulus that floods the economy with excessive liquidity, indicating limited

room for valuation recovery," said Dai Ming, a Shanghai-based fund manager with Hengsheng Asset Management Co. "The market is entering a consolidation period that may last one to two months."

The CSI 300 closed down 0.2 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng China Enterprises Index dropped 0.3 percent as the city's equity market traded for the first time since Thursday.

China's stock market has historically been driven by liquidity and momentum traders and any sense that these may dry up could act as a serious overhang. Equities slumped earlier this month amid concern the authorities would act to slow the increase in leverage in the market. The CSI 300 sank 4 percent on March 8 after investors took a rare sell rating from the nation's largest brokerage as a sign that the government was unhappy about the speed of the rally.

The central bank last week gave a signal that supply of cash would be less liberal, when it rolled over only half of the funds coming due through one of its longer-term policy tools, instead offering more seven-day money.



"The Politburo meeting showed that investors had gotten ahead of themselves," said Wang Zhihong, managing director at Whiterock Asset Management Co. The phrasing of the statement, and the implication that real estate may be targeted, has weakened sentiment, he said.

A gauge of property developers in Shanghai tumbled the most in six weeks on Monday, with

Gemdale Corp. and China Vanke Co. losing more than 6 percent. Sany Heavy Industry Co., which makes excavators and steam rollers, plunged the most in more than three years before gaining 0.8 percent yesterday.

To be sure, analysts don't expect China to shift to a significantly tighter stance, especially with rising pork prices boosting inflation. With the bond market

weakening, stocks may still be a preferred alternative. The yield on 10-year government was little changed near a five-month high.

"There is a bit of an overreaction" in equities, said Gerry Alfonso, director of international business department at Shenwan Hongyuan Group Co. "Keeping leverage at reasonable levels will be good for the real economy and in the long term for the stock market."

But with officials now showing concern about the risk of asset bubbles again, the days of making easy money on the stock market may be nearing an end. China's equity market has added USD2.5 trillion in market value since its low in October, and over 50 companies on the CSI 300 have risen more than 50 percent this year, meaning there's a lot of profit for some investors to pocket.

"The market lacks strong momentum to rise further," said Zhang Gang, a Shanghai-based strategist with Central China Securities Co. "Investors are now expecting a shift from unconventional stimulus policies we saw last year to more targeted measures to support the economy." **Bloomberg**

Cindy Wang & Lee Miller

Taiwan health food maker TCI mulls acquisition

TCI Co. is in talks with a health food maker about a potential acquisition this year that's aimed at diversifying its production base, the company says.

The company hopes consumers will be more interested in the products it makes if it has factories

outside China and Taiwan, executive deputy general manager William Liao said in an interview on April 17. TCI is a contract manufacturer of dietary supplements, health drinks and facial masks for other companies, according to its website.

"China will be our growth

driver in the future as it is getting older and richer," he said. "Our growth will benefit from China's consumption upgrade."

Liao said TCI may get a deal done this year if all goes well, but declined to provide details, including the target company's name

and location, or the planned size of a deal. TCI plans to use its own cash for the deal and has TWD4 billion (USD130 million) on hand, he said.

The company paid \$29 million in October for a minority stake in Shanghai Baiyue Biotechnology

Co., according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

The average analyst price target for TCI is TWD585.75, implying a gain of 30 percent from Monday's close, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. That's the third biggest upside among 104

Taiwan-listed companies with a market cap more than \$1 billion and covered by at least seven analysts as of April 22. The company has 13 buys, and no hold or sell ratings.

TCI rose 0.6 percent at the close, paring its drop this year to 13 percent. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

SHAWN MENDES COMING TO VENETIAN MACAO



Grammy-nominated, multi-platinum singer-songwriter Shawn Mendes is coming to

The Venetian Macao's Cotai Arena on October 13, 2019. The concert is produced by

AEG Presents Asia.

The Canadian artist, who built a following in 2013 posting song covers on social media, is making his third solo concert tour this year. Kicking off on October 1, it spans more than 100 dates throughout 2019 across North America, Latin America, Europe, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

Tickets go on sale to the general public from 10 a.m. on April 29.

As the official sponsor of The Shawn Mendes Asia Tour Macao Show, UnionPay International is offering cardholders several exclusive benefits. Bank of China Macau Branch UnionPay credit card holders can purchase advance tickets up to 72 hours before the general public sale, from April 26 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

UM CO-ORGANIZES INTEGRATED CIRCUITS WORKSHOP IN CHENGDU



The first Workshop on IC (integrated circuits) Advances in China, co-organized by the University of Macau's (UM) State-Key Laboratory

of Analog and Mixed-Signal VLSI and the University of Electronic Science and Technology, was held in Chengdu recently.

The workshop aimed to provide a platform for participants to have open technical discussions, to explore collaboration opportunities, and to brainstorm new ideas and directions.

The workshop attracted 150 participants, including industry practitioners and leading Chinese scholars and engineers in the field of integrated circuits who have published papers in journals in the past two years.

The workshop featured six keynote speakers and 21 regular speakers from renowned universities and institutes in China, including the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Tsinghua University, Fudan University, UESTC, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and the UM.



RICHARD LIU

Surveillance clips show Chinese billionaire with accuser

Amy Forliti, Minneapolis

An attorney for JD.com founder Richard Liu said yesterday [Macau time] that surveillance video showing the Chinese businessman in an elevator and walking arm-in-arm with a woman who has accused him of rape provides a different account of what happened that night.

Two edited videos of Liu and his accuser were posted to a Chinese social media site. An attorney for Liu also showed full, unedited surveillance videos to The Associated Press yesterday.

The law firm representing the accuser said the videos are consistent with what she told law enforcement and alleged in a lawsuit filed last week against the businessman and his company.

One of the online videos shows the pair leaving a group dinner in Minneapolis on Aug. 30, with the woman getting up to leave after Liu gets up, then following him out the door. The other video shows the woman holding onto Liu's arm as they walk to her apartment, where she says he raped her as she begged him to stop.

Liu, founder of the Beijing-based e-commerce site JD.com, was arrested Aug. 31 in Minneapolis on suspicion of

felony rape, but prosecutors announced in December that he would face no criminal charges because the case had "profound evidentiary problems" and it was unlikely they could prove his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The woman, Jingyao Liu, is a Chinese college student at the University of Minnesota. She alleges in her lawsuit that she was groped in Richard Liu's limousine and raped in her apartment after a dinner at Origami, a Japanese restaurant in Minneapolis, where she says she felt pressured to drink as Liu and other executives toasted her. At one point, Richard Liu said she would dishonor him if she did not join in, the lawsuit says.

Richard Liu and Jingyao Liu are not related. The Associated Press does not generally name alleged victims of sexual assault without their consent, but the law firm representing the woman said she agreed to be named.

It's not clear who posted the online videos, which were posted on Weibo under an account called Mingzhou Events. The content is edited, but Richard Liu's attorneys in China confirmed their authenticity. The videos contain the same footage as the full surveillance videos seen by the AP. The videos do

not contain audio, and they do not show what happened in Richard Liu's limousine or in the woman's apartment.

Jill Brisbois, Richard Liu's attorney in Minnesota, said in a statement to The Associated Press that the clips "further dispel the misinformation and false claims that have been widely circulated and clearly support the Hennepin County Attorney's Office decision not to file charges against our client."

Two edited videos of Liu and his accuser were posted to a Chinese social media site

Brisbois said the videos speak for themselves and show events as they are happening. While the woman has alleged she was impaired and coerced to drink, she appears to be walking without assistance and linking her arm with the businessman. "The way it gets described sounds so much more nefarious than it actually is," Brisbois said of the dinner. "She's step-in-step with him at every point."

The lawsuit says the woman went to her apartment building with Liu to be polite and respectful, and she believed he was simply walking her to the door.

The surveillance video of Jingyao Liu's apartment complex that was shown to the AP was unedited but packaged to show 11 different camera angles for the relevant time period.

The video shows Richard Liu and the woman walking from the car to her apartment building, and he appears to be holding her arm as they go inside. It shows them walk through multiple lobbies and taking multiple elevators. Initially, Richard Liu's female assistant is with them and Jingyao Liu leads the way. At one point, the assistant does not get on an elevator with Richard Liu and the woman, and when they exit the elevator, she has her hand through his arm and he has his hands in his pockets.

She leads him up a short stairway, then through another set of doors and continues to link her hand through his arm. As they get off another elevator, she leads him down a hallway to an apartment. She opens the door and goes in, and Richard Liu follows.

In the video, recorded after the alleged attack in the limousine, the woman does not

appear to be distressed.

The other clip that was posted online features surveillance video from the end of the dinner at Origami. It shows Jingyao Liu seated at a table with other men, and Richard Liu is a few seats away, appearing to have an animated conversation with others. One man at the dinner party is slumped over and appears to be passed out.

Jingyao Liu is seen talking to the man next to her, and when Richard Liu gets up to leave, she gets up and appears to follow. They talk as they walk out next to each other. Video from outside the restaurant shows Richard Liu initially walking ahead of the woman and his female assistant. The woman catches up with Richard Liu and he puts his jacket over her shoulders as they walk away next to each other.

The full video provided to the AP shows the woman sitting next to Richard Liu during the dinner and participating in some of the toasts, but showing no outward signs of intoxication. At one point, Liu gets up to go toward the restroom and she follows him, then they return to the table together.

Text messages previously reviewed by The Associated Press and portions of the woman's interviews with police show the woman alleges Liu pulled her into a limousine and made advances and groped her despite her protests.

There is no known video that shows them getting into the limousine.

The lawsuit says Liu raped her at her apartment, again over her protests and resistance. She texted a friend: "I begged him don't. But he didn't listen."

The alleged attack happened while Richard Liu was in Minneapolis for a weeklong residency as part of the University of Minnesota's doctor of business administration China program. The four-year program in the university's management school is geared toward high-level executives in China and is a partnership with Tsinghua University School of Economics and Management.

Jingyao Liu is a Chinese citizen studying at the university on a student visa and was a volunteer in the doctorate program while Richard Liu was there.

Richard Liu, known in Chinese as Liu Qiangdong, is a prominent member of the Chinese tech elite, with a fortune of USD7.5 billion. He is part of a generation of entrepreneurs who have created China's internet, e-commerce, mobile phone and other technology industries since the late 1990s. The son of peasants, Liu built a Beijing electronics shop into JD.com, China's biggest online direct retailer, selling everything from clothes to toys to fresh vegetables. **AP**



President Xi Jinping reviews an honor guard before boarding the destroyer Xining at a pier in Qingdao yesterday

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Xi urges closer naval ties amid regional tensions

CHINESE President Xi Jinping urged closer ties among the world's navies yesterday, amid tensions over China's rapid expansion of its naval forces and forceful assertions of territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Xi's remarks came in an address to foreign naval officers attending a fleet review marking the 70th anniversary of the People's Liberation Army Navy, an event Beijing is using to showcase its growing ability to exert force far from its shores.

Following his speech, Xi boarded the destroyer Xining, one of China's most modern and capable warships, at the northern port of Qingdao to preside at the review, which also is to feature China's sole commissioned aircraft carrier, numerous other surface ships and submarines and a display of naval aviation.

State broadcaster CCTV

showed Xi standing on deck in a heavy coat in thick fog as various ships and submarines sailed by, their officers and crew members wearing formal uniforms and giving salutes.

China's navy will "continue to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with foreign navies, actively shoulder its international responsibilities, safeguard the security of international waterways and provide more public goods for maritime security," Xi was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency.

"Holding high the banner of win-win cooperation, the Chinese military is committed to creating a security environment featuring equality, mutual trust, fairness and justice, joint participation and shared benefits," said Xi, who also heads China's armed forces.

Such rhetoric contrasts starkly with China's aggressive approach

to its territorial claims in the South China Sea, where it has built military installations on man-made islands in the crucial waters, which are also claimed by several other nations.

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea, along with rights to its fisheries and seabed resources.

While Beijing says it upholds the rights to free navigation and overflight in the area, its forces have been accused of challenging or operating dangerously around military vessels and aircraft from other countries, including the United States, as well as harassing fishing vessels from the Philippines and others.

The Philippines earlier this month issued a rare public rebuke of large numbers of Chinese vessels near islands and islets occupied by the Philippines in the disputed waters, saying the Chinese presence was illegal.

The Philippine military has monitored more than 200 Chinese vessels from January to March in a disputed area named Sandy Cay near a Philippine-occupied island called Pag-asa by Filipinos.

Xi's rhetoric contrasts starkly with China's aggressive approach to its territorial claims in the South China Sea

U.S. freedom of navigation operations in which navy ships sail close to Chinese-held is-

lands have been a particular source of friction, with China dispatching ships and aircraft to protest the foreign presence.

China is building naval vessels at a rate outpacing its rivals, including the U.S., and is also establishing a powerful coast guard to back up its territorial claims. Its first domestically built aircraft carrier is set to enter service — with more believed to be in the works — while its missile destroyers and nuclear attack submarines are equipped with increasingly lethal weaponry.

It has also ventured farther from shore than ever, and undertaken international missions including sending ships to patrol for pirates in the Gulf of Aden, evacuating civilians from war-torn Yemen and offering medical services in developing nations as far away as South America.

Tuesday's naval review included 32 Chinese vessels and 39 aircraft, along with 18 vessels from 13 foreign countries friendly to China.

One notable absence was the United States, which did not send a vessel, despite the arrival last week of the 7th Fleet flagship, the USS Blue Ridge, in the semi-autonomous territory of Hong Kong. **AP**

China lashes out at US over Iran oil sanctions move

BEIJING yesterday again lashed out at a U.S. decision to impose sanctions on countries that buy Iranian oil, calling it a violation of China's interests that will intensify turmoil in the Middle East and international energy markets.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said the U.S. is operating outside its jurisdiction in

unilaterally imposing the sanctions. He said normal interactions between Iran and other countries are "reasonable and lawful" and deserving of respect and protection.

"The relevant actions of the U.S. will also intensify the turmoil in the Middle East and international energy market," Geng said.

"We urge the U.S. to

play a constructive role in a responsible manner, instead of the other way around. In addition, we have already made complaints with the U.S. on this matter," he said.

Geng said China will work to safeguard its companies' interests, reflecting its desire to secure foreign markets as it pursues its massive "Belt-and-Road" infras-

structure initiative.

China is one of Iran's biggest oil markets and was a strong backer of the agreement to lift sanctions in return for Iran curbing its nuclear weapons program that was scrapped by President Donald Trump.

The Trump administration said earlier that it will no longer exempt any countries from U.S.

sanctions if they continue to buy Iranian oil, stepping up pressure on Iran in a move that primarily affects the five remaining major importers.

Along with India and U.S. treaty allies Japan, South Korea and Turkey, China was one of the countries primarily affected by the announcement.

Oil prices soared to their highest level since October yesterday.

The sanctions could potentially remove up to 1.2 million barrels of oil per day from international markets, according to industry experts. However, that number will likely be lower, depending on how countries respond and just how much oil Iran continues to export. **AP**

AP PHOTO



SRI LANKA

Minister says Easter bombings a response to NZ attacks

Emily Schmall
& Krishan Francis, Colombo

SRI Lanka's state minister of defense said yesterday that the Easter attack on churches, hotels and other sites in the South Asian nation was "carried out in retaliation" for the shooting massacre at two New Zealand mosques last month, according to a statement.

The minister, Ruwan Wijewardene, told Parliament the government possessed information that the series of bombings in and outside of Colombo that killed more than 300 people were carried out "by an Islamic fundamentalist group" in response to the Christchurch attacks. He did not provide evidence of explain the source of the information.

Wijewardene blamed "weakness" within Sri Lanka's security apparatus for failing to prevent the nine bombings at churches, luxury hotels and other sites.

"By now it has been established that the intelligence units were aware of this attack and a group of responsible people were informed about the impending attack," he said. "However, this information has been circulated among only a few officials."

As Sri Lanka's leaders wrangled the aftermath of an apparent home-grown militant attack and massive intelligence failure, security was heightened yesterday for a national day of mourning and the military was employing powers to make arrests it last used when the devastating civil war ended in 2009.

The six near-simultaneous attacks on three churches and three luxury hotels and three related blasts later Sunday were the South Asian island nation's deadliest violence in a decade. Wijewardene said the death toll from the attack now stood at 321 people, with 500 wounded.

Word from international intelligence agencies that a local group was planning attacks apparently didn't reach the prime minister's office until after the massacre, exposing

the continuing political turmoil in the highest levels of the Sri Lankan government.

On April 11, Priyalal Disanayaka, Sri Lanka's deputy inspector general of police, signed a letter addressed to the directors of four Sri Lankan security agencies, warning them that a local group was planning a suicide attack in the country.

The intelligence report attached to his letter, which has circulated widely on social media, named the group allegedly plotting the attack, National Towheed Jamaar, said it was led by Zahran Hashmi, and was targeting "some important churches" in a suicide terrorist attack that was planned to take place "shortly." The report named six individuals likely to be involved in the plot.

On Monday, Sri Lanka's health minister held up a copy of the intelligence report while describing its contents, spurring questions about what Sri Lanka police had done to protect the public from an attack.

■ All seven bombers were Sri Lankans, but authorities said they strongly suspected foreign links

It was not immediately clear what steps were taken by any of these security directors. Disanayaka did not answer calls or messages seeking comment.

Among the 40 people arrested on suspicion of links to the bombings were the driver of a van allegedly used by the suicide bombers and the owner of a house where some of them lived.

Heightened security was evident at an international airport outside the capital where security personnel

walked explosive-sniffing dogs and checked car trunks and questioned drivers on roads nearby. Police also ordered that anyone leaving a parked car unattended on the street must put a note with their phone number on the windscreen, and post officers were not accepting pre-wrapped parcels.

A block on most social media since the attacks has left a vacuum of information, fueling confusion and giving little reassurance the danger had passed. Even after an overnight curfew was lifted, the streets of central Colombo were mostly deserted Tuesday and shops closed as armed soldiers stood guard.

Sri Lankan authorities also yesterday planned to brief foreign diplomats and receive assistance from the FBI and other foreign intelligence-gathering agencies.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said he feared the massacre could unleash instability and he vowed to "vest all necessary powers with the defense forces" to act against those responsible.

Authorities said they knew where the group trained and had safe houses, but did not identify any of the seven suicide bombers, whose bodies were recovered, or the other suspects taken into custody. All seven bombers were Sri Lankans, but authorities said they strongly suspected foreign links.

Also unclear was a motive. The history of Buddhist-majority Sri Lanka, a country of 21 million including large Hindu, Muslim and Christian minorities, is rife with ethnic and sectarian conflict.

In the 26-year civil war, the Tamil Tigers, a powerful rebel army known for using suicide bombers, was finally crushed by the government in 2009 but had little history of targeting Christians. Anti-Muslim bigotry fed by Buddhist nationalists has swept the country recently, but there is no history of Islamic militancy. Its small Christian community has seen only scattered incidents of harassment. **AP**

VICTIMS FROM AT LEAST 12 COUNTRIES

SRI LANKA

The vast majority of the victims - at least 300 - were Sri Lankan, many from the island nation's Christian minority. Their names and other details of their lives were slow to trickle in and difficult to report, in part because authorities blocked most social media after the blasts.

UNITED KINGDOM

Sri Lanka's top diplomat in Britain says authorities know of eight British nationals killed in the bombings. Among them were lawyer Anita Nicholson, son Alex Nicholson and daughter Annabel Nicholson, her husband, Ben Nicholson, confirmed in a statement. Nicholson said the family was on vacation, sitting in a restaurant at the Shangri-la Hotel, when they were killed. He said, "The holiday we had just enjoyed was a testament to Anita's enjoyment of travel and providing a rich and colorful life for our family, and especially our children." Former firefighter Bill Harrop and doctor Sally Bradley, a British couple who lived in Australia, were killed in one of the hotels, a family statement to The Australian newspaper said.

INDIA

The Indian Embassy in Colombo says 10 Indian nationals died in the blasts.

H.D. Kumaraswamy, the chief minister of southern Karnataka state, mourned the deaths of two fellow Janata Dal Secular party members, K.G. Hanumantharayappa and M. Rangappa.

"I am deeply shocked at the loss of our JDS party workers, whom I know personally," he wrote Monday on Twitter.

UNITED STATES

The State Department says at least four Americans were killed and several others seriously injured. It did not identify the victims.

Fifth-grader Kieran Shafritz de Zoysa, spending a year in Sri Lanka on leave from the private Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C., was among those killed, the school said in an email to parents, according to the Washington Post. The email said, "Kieran was passionate about learning, he adored his friends, and he was incredibly excited" about returning to school.

Dieter Kowalski, who lived in Denver and worked for international education company Pearson, died in the blasts shortly after he arrived at his hotel for a business trip, the company and his family told the AP.

DENMARK

The Bestseller clothing chain confirmed Danish media reports that three of the children of its owner, business tycoon Anders Holch Povlsen, were killed in the attacks. However, spokesman Jesper Stubkier gave no details in an emailed response to a query on the matter and said the company had no further comment.

SWITZERLAND

Switzerland's foreign ministry says a Swiss national, a Swiss dual national and a non-Swiss member of the same family were killed in the bombings. It didn't identify the second country or give other details on the victims.

SPAIN

Spain's foreign ministry says a Spanish man and woman were killed but didn't provide further details. The mayor of Pontecesures in northwest Spain, Juan Manuel Vidal, told Radio Galega that he knew the local pair and says they were in their 30s, according to a report by the Spanish private news agency Europa Press.

AUSTRALIA

Australia's prime minister says a mother and daughter from that country were killed. Manik Suriaaratchi and her 10-year-old daughter, Alexendria, were attending a church service in Negombo when they died.

CHINA

China's foreign ministry says one Chinese citizen was killed in the blasts, while five are missing. Five others were injured, including two who suffered severe injuries.

OTHERS

The Netherlands, Japan and Portugal have confirmed that some of their nationals were among the dead.

MYANMAR'S Supreme Court yesterday rejected the final appeal of two Reuters journalists and upheld seven-year prison sentences for their reporting on the military's brutal crackdown on Rohingya Muslims.

Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo earlier this month shared with their colleagues the Pulitzer Prize for international reporting, one of journalism's highest honors. The reporters were arrested in December 2017 and sentenced last September after being accused of illegally possessing official documents, a violation of a colonial-era law.

The court did not give a reason for its decision, which was quickly decried by rights advocates.

"Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo should never have been arrested, much less prosecuted, for doing their jobs as investigative journalists," said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director for New York-based Human Rights Watch. "Sadly, when it comes to media freedom, both Myanmar's military and the civilian government seem equally determined to extinguish any ability to question their misrule and rights violations."

Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo,

MYANMAR

Court rejects appeal of jailed Reuters reporters

who are being held in a prison in Yangon, were not present for the ruling, but their wives were. Kyaw Soe Oo's wife, Chit Su, broke down in tears when the ruling was read.

"Both he and I hoped for the best," Chit Su told reporters. "I am terribly sad for this decision."

Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, had denied the charges against them and contended they were framed by police. International rights groups, media freedom organizations, U.N experts and several governments condemned their conviction as an injustice and an attack on freedom of the press.

"Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo did not commit any crime, nor was there any proof that they did," Gail Gove, Reuters chief counsel, said in a statement after the ruling. "Instead, they were victims of a police setup to silence their truthful reporting. We will continue to



Reuters journalists Kyaw Soe Oo (left) and Wa Lone

do all we can to free them as soon as possible."

Khin Maung Zaw, a lawyer for the two, said the pair could still seek their freedom by petitioning the president's office or the legislature.

President Win Myint could reduce the sentence, order a retrial or have them released.

Legislative action for a retrial would be a lengthier, more complicated process.

"I am greatly disappointed by the decision of the court because it damaged very much our country's prestige and our right of information and press freedom," Khin Maung Zaw said. "But I'm

not losing hope completely, because all the whole world is on our side. So, as I always said, the case was lost, but the cause was won throughout the whole world."

Myanmar's military launched a brutal counterinsurgency campaign in the western state of Rakhine in 2017, driving more than 700,000 members of the Muslim Rohingya minority to flee to Bangladesh.

The Reuters reporters had worked on an investigation of the killing of 10 Rohingya villagers in Inn Din village, for which the government last year said seven soldiers were sentenced to up to 10 years in prison with hard labor.

Investigators working for the U.N.'s top human rights body said last year that genocide charges should be brought against senior Myanmar military officers, while other critics accused the army of ethnic cleansing. **AP**

AD



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AP PHOTO



ANALYSIS

Kim will go into Putin summit needing a win

Eric Talmadge, Tokyo

WHEN North Korean leader Kim Jong Un meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin for their first one-on-one meeting, he will have a long wish list and a strong desire to notch a win after the failure of his second summit with President Donald Trump.

But it's not entirely clear how much Putin can or will oblige.

Despite a relationship that goes back to the very foundation of North Korea, relations between Pyongyang and Moscow haven't always been the picture of comradery, or even particularly close.

A look at what Kim is hoping to get out of his furtive pivot north, and why he might be looking to shake things up as his talks with the U.S. and parallel campaign to win massive investment from South Korea have stalled:

KIM'S WISH LIST

Kim has two urgent concerns as he heads to the summit.

More than 10,000 North Korean laborers still employed in Russia, many working in the logging industry in the Russian Far East, are being kicked out by the end of this year as a 2017 U.N. sanctions resolution takes effect. The laborers, who previously numbered as many as 50,000, have provided a revenue stream

estimated by U.S. officials in the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Kim regime would like to keep flowing.

Kim is also looking at the possibility of a food shortage this summer. Russia has shown a willingness to provide humanitarian aid and just last month announced that it had shipped more than 2,000 tons of wheat to the North Korean port of Chongjin.

But his decision to more actively court Putin undoubtedly goes deeper than that.

Despite all the talk in Washington about denuclearization, Kim's primary concern is improving his country's economy. After the breakdown in his February summit with Trump in Hanoi, his efforts to get out from under sanctions that are keeping him from doing that have reached an impasse.

North Korea has long depended on China as its primary trading partner. But that reliance, and the influence it threatens to give Beijing, makes many officials in Pyongyang nervous.

Kim has also pushed Seoul hard to participate in joint inter-Korean projects to rebuild its railroads and improve its moribund infrastructure. His appeal to Korean unity, however, has run headfirst into the South's allegiance to Washington, which has warned Seoul against any actions that would undermine sanctions.

According to internal documents obtained by a South Korean researcher and published this week in a Japanese newspaper, Kim wants to boost trade with Russia tenfold — to USD1 billion — by 2020.

That would obviously require some significant easing of sanctions, which would seem unlikely. But it would also require a change in Russian behavior.

Unlike China, which has lots of businessmen on the ground in North Korea, Russia has a very small footprint in the North. Officials have long talked about big projects — including rail routes to Europe, or pipelines across the Korean Peninsula — but Putin hasn't shown much interest in actually carrying them out.

WHY NOW?

The Kim-Putin meeting, whose exact date has not been announced, is coming surprisingly late in the game.

It's been nearly a year and a half since Kim announced his plan to emerge from relative isolation at home and expand diplomatic relations with China and South Korea and open denuclearization talks with Washington.

He has since held four summits with Chinese President Xi Jinping, three with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and two with Trump.

The summitry has done a lot

toward establishing Kim as a serious player on the world stage.

But the Hanoi summit showed his limitations. It ended with no agreements on either denuclearization measures or the lifting of sanctions, which may now be even more difficult to accomplish since both sides are digging in on hard-line negotiation positions.

Kim's decision to meet with Putin now may reflect his frustrations over that.

Putin has more experience with North Korea's leaders than most. He visited Pyongyang in 2000, and met with Kim's father, Kim Jong Il, in Moscow in 2001 and in Vladivostok in 2002. Former President Dmitry Medvedev also met Kim Jong Il in Vladivostok, in 2011.

Moscow played an instrumental role in bringing Kim's grandfather, Kim Il Sung, to power and helped rebuild the country after the 1950-53 Korean War. Those ties fell apart after the 1991 Soviet collapse and Russia's decision to end support for former Soviet allies amid its own economic meltdown.

Like Kim, Putin is no admirer of Washington's use of sanctions as a political tool. Even a cautious statement of solidarity with the North, or a rebuttal of any of Washington's "maximum pressure" policies, would be a win for Kim.

But Putin has a lot on his plate

and good reason to be cautious about making any big new commitments.

He particularly doesn't want to anger China. Immediately after seeing Kim, Putin will fly to Beijing for a major international meeting on China's "Belt and Road" initiative, which could be lucrative for Russia.

WHAT'S NEXT?

If Putin chooses to take a more hands-on approach to North Korea, Washington's efforts to keep Kim's focus on denuclearization could get a lot more complicated.

He has already expressed his opposition to Trump's sanctions-centric approach.

It's also in Putin's general interest to weaken Washington's influence in the region — though, like China, Russia does not want a chaotic collapse in the North that would create a wave of refugees and economic instability.

So what's the bottom line?

Even if he isn't planning to make any immediate changes in his policies toward Pyongyang, meeting with Kim provides a good opportunity for Putin to reassert himself as a player in a contest for political influence that is, after all, right on his own border.

And for Kim, with the pressure from Washington not likely to let up soon, keeping all options open makes a lot of sense. **AP**

Revulsion in Northern Ireland over riot, fatal shooting

Gregory Katz, London

THE dramatic riot in Londonderry last week was starkly reminiscent of the violence that plagued Northern Ireland for decades before the 1998 peace agreement. The result was both tragic and familiar: the death of a young journalist, apparently hit by a stray bullet.

The riot started yesterday evening, after police in Northern Ireland moved into the Creggan housing complex in Londonderry, searching for weapons and members of dissident groups. They were pelted with gasoline bombs and other objects, and several armored police cars were set alight.

The riot attracted a crowd of residents and journalists. At one point, a gunman wearing a balaclava stepped out from behind a building, fired shots at the police and then took cover. No police were hit, but a bullet struck 29-year-old journalist Lyra McKee in the head, killing her.



McKee had been well known for writing about the struggles of growing up gay in Belfast and about the legacy of violence in Northern Ireland. Her funeral is scheduled for Wednesday in Belfast.

A small group called the New IRA admitted responsibility yesterday for the journalist's death

and apologized to McKee's partner and family. The unusual apology may be seen as a response to the overwhelming public condemnation of the shooting and the nearly universal grief at McKee's death.

The New IRA, which has been increasingly violent in recent years, does not accept the Irish

Republican Army's historic decision to lay down its arms and pursue a political settlement, a strategy that led to the signing of the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement. The New IRA believes challenging the British presence in Northern Ireland is the best way to achieve its longtime goal of a united Ireland.

Two teenagers were arrested in the case last weekend but were released without being charged. A 57-year-old woman was arrested under the Terrorism Act on Tuesday morning but has not been identified or charged. Police have not said what role she is suspected of playing.

The IRA that spearheaded decades of violence in Northern Ireland known as "The Troubles" was extremely well organized and had some international political support as well as overseas connections that provided weapons and explosives. The IRA and its political leaders Gerry Adams and the late Martin McGuinness declared a cease-fire in 1994 and, through its

political wing Sinn Fein, helped bring about the 1998 agreement that set up a power-sharing government that includes those who want a united Ireland and unionists who want continued ties with the United Kingdom.

The IRA no longer functions as an armed movement, but some small dissident groups have not put down their arms. Of these, the New IRA has the highest profile, but they have very little political support in the general population.

The use of firearms aimed at police last week marked an escalation, and follows a trend set in January when the New IRA was responsible for a car bombing that caused no injuries in Londonderry, which is typically called Derry by residents who resent the British presence.

The group also claimed responsibility for a series of letter bombs sent to the British mainland recently. British security services are spending more time and resources monitoring dissidents in Northern Ireland and have judged the threat of more terrorism in Northern Ireland as "severe."

But the dissident groups do not seem to be gaining public backing and the apparently accidental killing of McKee seems to have sparked a backlash against violence. **AP**

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what's ON



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TIME: 12pm-8pm (closed on Tuesdays)
UNTIL: July 12, 2019
VENUE: Taipa Village Art Space
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2857 6212

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

SWOLE, BUZZY, AMONG NEW WORDS IN MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

Get swole, prepare a bug-out bag, grab a go-cup and maybe you'll have a better chance of surviving the omnicide.

Translation: Hit the gym and bulk up, put a bunch of stuff essential for survival in an easy-to-carry bag, grab a drink for the road, and perhaps you'll live through a man-made disaster that could wipe out the human race.

Swole, bug-out bag, go-cup and omnicide are just a few of the 640 additions to Merriam-Webster's dictionary added Monday.

Deciding what gets included is a painstaking process involving the Springfield, Massachusetts-based company's roughly two dozen lexicographers, said Peter Sokolowski, Merriam-Webster's editor at large.

They scan online versions of newspapers, magazines, academic journals, books and even movie and television scripts until they detect what he calls "a critical mass" of usage that warrants inclusion.

The words are added to the online dictionary first, before some are later added to print updates of the company's popular Collegiate Dictionary, which according to company spokeswoman Meghan Lunghi, has sold more than 50 million copies since 1898, making it the "best-selling hardcover book after the Bible."

"So many people use our website as their principal dictionary and we want it to be current," Sokolowski said. "We want to be as useful as possible."

The latest additions include mostly new words, or phrases, but also some old words with new meanings or applications.

Take unplug and snowflake, for example. Unplug means to literally tug an electric plug from a wall socket, but now, it also has a more metaphorical meaning, as in to disconnect from social media, he said.

And yes, a snowflake is still a beautiful ice crystal that floats from the sky during winter, but it now also has a usually disparaging meaning of "someone who is overly sensitive," according to Merriam-Webster's definition.

Some of the words have been around for decades, but are included in the dictionary because of increased usage.

Omnicide, which means "the destruction of all life," dates to the Cold War and was used in reference to the threat of nuclear annihilation, but lately it has been used to define the risk of other man-made disasters, primarily climate change.

Popular culture — movies, TV and sports — is a common source of new words, such as buzzy, an adjective that literally means creating a buzz, such as a "buzzy new movie."

And then there's EGOT, a noun that refers to an entertainer who has won an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony. Audrey Hepburn, Marvin Hamlisch, Mel Brooks and Whoopi Goldberg are among the elite group

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 II - O Combate
17:35	Palcos Agora
18:05	Sonhar era Fácil
19:00	TDM Entrevista (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Montra do Lilau
21:50	LiteraturAqui
22:20	Network Negócios
23:15	TDM News
23:50	5 Para a Meia-Noite
01:30	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:15	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

24 Apr - 01 May



AVENGERS: ENDGAME

ROOM 1
2:30, 5:45, 9:00pm

ROOM 2

4:15pm
Director: Anthony Russo, Joe Russo
Starring: Brie Larson, Scarlett Johansson, Karen Gillan
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 181min

P STORM

ROOM 2
2:15, 7:30, 9:30pmDirector: David Lam
Starring: Chrissie Chau, Louis Koo, Kevin Cheng
Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)
Duration: 96min

WONDER PARK

ROOM 3
2:15, 5:45pmDirector: Dylan Brown
Starring: Sofia Mali, Jennifer Garner, Ken Hudson
Language: Cantonese
Duration: 85min

THE QUEEN'S CORGI

ROOM 3
4:00, 7:30pmDirector: Vincent Kesteloot, Ben Stassen
Starring: Jack Whitehall, Julie Walters, Tom Courtenay
Language: Cantonese
Duration: 85min

HOTEL MUMBAI

ROOM 3
9:30pmDirector: Anthony Maras
Starring: Dev Patel, Armie Hammer, Nazanin Boniadi
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 123min

this day in history



1975 BAADER-MEINHOF BLOW UP EMBASSY

A tense stand-off at the West German embassy in Stockholm has ended in violence, with the death of at least three people.

Five Baader-Meinhof guerrillas had been holding 11 people hostage, including the German ambassador to Sweden, for almost 12 hours.

Shortly before midnight, a cache of dynamite detonated, setting the building on fire. Staff in the embassy could be seen at the windows, calling for help.

Journalist Roger Schoter described the scene as one of "turmoil and confusion".

"From what we can see the entire first floor of the embassy is ablaze," he said. "Flames are shooting out of the windows."

The extent of the injuries suffered by those inside the embassy is still not clear, although at least one of the guerrillas is believed to have died.

The group are thought to have shot dead two of the hostages, both attachés at the embassy, during the 11-hour siege.

Military attaché Colonel Andreas von Mirbach died soon after the embassy was seized. The economics attaché, Heinz Hallagaart, was also shot shortly before the blaze which destroyed the four-storey building.

The guerrilla group were demanding the release of the 26 Baader-Meinhof group members currently in prison in Germany.

Among them are four of the founders of the group: Gudrun Ensslin, Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof and Jan-Karl Raspe, due to go on trial in Stuttgart next month.

The German government were anxious to avoid a second humiliation after being forced to release five Baader-Meinhof prisoners in exchange for the kidnapped opposition leader Peter Lorenz two months ago, and refused the demands point-blank.

The Swedish justice minister, Lennart Gerjer, was given the task of breaking the news to those inside the embassy.

"They could not believe this," he said. "We told them the only realistic thing they could do was to leave the country, and the Swedish government was prepared to help them do this on condition they released their hostages."

Immediately after the explosion, police said most of the guerrillas, gave up without a fight. At least one is said to be critically injured.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Four of the five Baader-Meinhof members were immediately deported back to West Germany. The fifth was too badly injured to be moved, and later died in hospital.

The German ambassador and the remaining nine hostages escaped from the embassy, most with only light injuries.

The trial of the 26 Baader-Meinhof prisoners began in 1976 and lasted almost two years in all, the longest and most expensive trial in West German history.

Three of the four main defendants were sentenced to life imprisonment. The fourth, Ulrike Meinhof, committed suicide in prison during the trial. The other three hardliners also committed suicide in 1977, bringing to an end the "German Autumn", in which the country was gripped by a series of terrorist attacks.

The Baader-Meinhof gang continued to be active until the early 1990s, when it was finally disbanded.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Anytime you negotiate with another person, you should put yourself in that person's place to get a better understanding of what he or she expects and is willing to give.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You are feeling protective of someone - maybe to the point of madness! Just let it go as much as you can and learn from your feelings. Sometimes you don't have to act to get what you want.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Your desires make you stand out today - but that's okay. Just make sure that you're not too pushy, or someone with more intense energy may push right back! Express yourself clearly.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Are you feeling nervous about something? Say no! You should only agree to things that seem absolutely right at the gut level, even if people are pushing you and it's hard to refuse.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Your family needs you - and that goes both ways! Give someone what they need (instead of what they want, maybe), and you should find that things start to get better and better for all of you.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Pay attention! If you're not really listening to what others have to say, then you are sure to miss out on some important clues. Life could be really easy for you, but only if you're open to the truth.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 It may be time for an inventory - or a house-clearing! If you can handle the stress of a yard sale, you may find that you can get ready for that move that may be coming up, and defray its costs.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Inner strength is vitally important right now - and you have more than you need! You can resist others' attempts to sway you and ensure that your voice gets heard by the right people.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Keep up the inward pressure - you know that your energy is slightly out of whack, but if you don't keep up the thinking and introspection, you never know what you might miss out on later.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Your friends are rock-solid today - you can count on them for almost anything, even the flaky ones! It's a good day for you to check into some new activity that can draw you all even closer together!

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You can't quite put your finger on it, but you know that you need to deal with your ambitions today. It may be time for you to step up and ask for that promotion - or change careers entirely!

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You can't quite figure out what's going on with your interior life today - at one point, you know just what you need, then you seem to change your mind almost immediately! Wait 'til tomorrow to choose.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

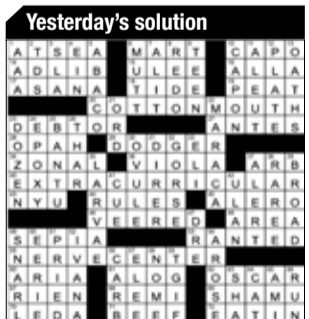
Sudoku puzzles categorized by difficulty: Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each category contains a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION. It lists weather for various cities in CHINA and the WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Linebacker Junior; 5- Year in Edward the Confessor's reign; 8- Cake decorator; 12- Hightails it; 13- Once ___ time...; 15- Sitarist Shankar; 16- Let ___; 17- Present at birth; 18- Auth. unknown; 19- Milk cows; 22- Not pos.; 23- Proverb ending?; 24- Winglike parts; 26- Soup spoons; 29- Affront; 31- Throng; 32- Bowling alley divisions; 34- Ration out; 36- ___ Ben Adhem; 38- Twangy-sounding; 40- Completed; 41- Vice follower; 43- Let me repeat...; 45- It may be picked; 46- Sunless; 48- Ecclesiastic; 50- Snatch; 51- Verily; 52- Luau staple; 54- Accessible; 61- "Giant" author Ferber; 63- ___ cotta; 64- "Star Wars" princess; 65- ... so shall ye ___; 66- Swung around; 67- Help in a heist; 68- Wight or Man; 69- ___ Miz; 70- Polanski film; DOWN: 1- Lost traction; 2- I could ___ horse!; 3- Prefix with dexterity; 4- Log-on need; 5- Movie-rating org.; 6- Mississippi senator Trent; 7- ___ the finish; 8- Tax-deferred nest egg; 9- Tubular pasta; 10- Bacchanalian cry; 11- Fight site; 13- Insanitary; 14- Poe's middle name; 20- Southern pronoun; 21- Literary lioness; 25- ___ Lang Syne; 26- Like ears; 27- Native; 28- Slowpoke; 29- Violinist Stern; 30- Quinine water; 31- Dallas player, briefly; 33- Road curve; 35- Lunar New Year; 37- The Beatles' "Back in the ___"; 39- Floating leaf; 42- Latin I word; 44- Insect-repelling chemical; 47- Borders on; 49- Inveigh against; 52- Gilpin of "Frasier"; 53- Keats creations; 55- Exchange for money; 56- Rock's Motley ___; 57- "___ Tu" ('70s hit); 58- Nixon pal Rebozo; 59- Untruths, tells falsehoods; 60- Breaks bread; 62- Goon;



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Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert (left) fouls Houston Rockets guard James Harden (13)

NBA

Jazz stave off elimination with 107-91 win over Rockets

John Coon, Salt Lake City

DONOVAN Mitchell turned a rough start into a fantastic finish.

Mitchell dominated in the fourth quarter, rallying the Utah Jazz to a 107-91 victory over the Houston Rockets in Game 4 of their Western Conference series yesterday [Macau time].

Mitchell scored 19 of his 31 points in the final quarter to help the Jazz pull away for their first win in the series.

Utah staved off elimination and forced a Game 5 on Wednesday.

Mitchell's late-game performance helped the second-year guard make up for struggles earlier. He turned the ball over twice in the first two minutes and shot just 36 percent from the field in the first three quarters before going 6 of 12 in the fourth.

Mitchell never lost confidence that he could turn it around.

"My teammates have had my back with every mistake, everything I've done well," Mitchell said. "When you have that support system in the locker room every day, it makes it easier when you start the game with two straight turnovers."

Jae Crowder scored 23 points. Ricky Rubio chipped in 18 points and 11 assists and Derrick Favors finished with 12 points and 11 rebounds.

James Harden scored 30 points to lead Houston. Chris Paul added 23 points, eight rebounds and seven assists. Eric Gordon chipped in 16 points.

Utah's offense got a major boost from Crowder and Rubio in the first quarter. The duo combined for 25 points on 9-of-11 shooting in the period to help the Jazz carve out a double-digit lead.

Then the Jazz opened the fourth quarter with a 15-1 run and outscored the Rockets 31-12 during the period.

"Of course, we wanted to end it tonight," Harden said. "We had plenty of opportunities. They made some plays in that fourth quarter and we didn't."

Mitchell scored 13 points in three minutes to fuel the run after totaling just 12 points in the first three quarters. He capped off the surge with back-to-back 3-pointers, giving the Jazz a 91-80 lead with 9:02 remaining.

Mitchell provided his biggest highlight later in the quarter when he threw down an incredible alley-oop dunk after catching an errant pass from Royce O'Neale.

"We've had our backs against the wall plenty of times the past two years we've been together as a team," Mitchell said. "This is familiar ground with us. Everybody responded the way we expect them to, but the biggest thing for us is take what we did today and multiply it."

Crowder got things going by scoring five of Utah's first six baskets. Rubio built on the momentum by fueling a 14-1 run with four baskets and a pair of free throws. It helped the Jazz build a 30-16 lead with 3:03 left in the quarter.

"Both of them attacked," Utah coach Quin Snyder said. "Jae got downhill and attacked the rim. Ricky did the same thing."

Houston had three straight turnovers to open the door for Utah to seize a double-digit lead. The Jazz scored 10 points off six Rockets turnovers in the quarter.

"We did things that are uncharacteristic of a team that wants to win," Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni said.

An 8-0 run, capped by Austin Rivers' dunk off a steal by Paul, helped Houston trim the deficit to 30-24 before quarter's end.

The Rockets continued to cut into the lead during the second quarter, but could not overtake

Utah until the third. Houston opened the quarter on a 10-2 run, sparked by back-to-back 3-pointers from Gordon. Harden capped it off with three free throws to give the Rockets a 57-55 lead.

Houston led for much of the third quarter after going 8 of 12 from 3-point range in the quarter. The Rockets never built more than a five-point advantage, however, before Mitchell's fourth quarter performance.

"I felt like they'd thrown their haymaker, trying to knock us out," Crowder said. "We stood tall and took those punches and came out ready to play in the fourth quarter."

LIMITED STRENGTH

Clint Capela had a limited impact after battling a virus. Capela finished with just four points on 1-of-6 shooting to go along with seven rebounds and zero blocks.

"He didn't have the force he usually does," D'Antoni said.

It opened the door for the Jazz to dominate around the basket. Utah finished with a 52-35 edge on rebounds and outscored Houston 52-22 in the paint. The Jazz almost doubled up the Rockets on the offensive glass with a 16-9 advantage.

"It's just draining when you

play great defense and give up offensive rebounds," Harden said.

FINISHING STRONG

Snyder inserted Favors in the lineup in place of Rudy Gobert for the final 4 1/2 minutes of the fourth quarter. The move paid off.

Favors totaled six points and six rebounds in 10 minutes in the quarter. All but one rebound came during the final three minutes to prevent Houston from making a late rally, like in Game 3.

Gobert totaled four points, nine rebounds, and three blocks in 24 minutes. He admitted to being surprised by the decision, but took it in stride.

When he's on the floor and I'm on the bench, of course I want to be out there, but if he has a great game and the team is winning — that's the most important thing," Gobert said. "That's all that matters."

TIP INS

Rockets: Harden and Gordon each shot 50 percent from 3-point range. ... Houston committed 16 turnovers leading to 21 points for the Jazz. ... The Rockets finished with just five bench points.

Jazz: After starting 4-of-6 from 3-point range, Utah missed 13 of its next 14 shots from long distance. ... Royce O'Neale grabbed a playoff career high 11 rebounds. O'Neale also finished with 11 points. The Jazz outscored Houston 52-22 in the paint and 17-3 in second chance points.

Game 5 is in Houston today [Macau time]. **AP**

opinion

Macau Matters

Richard Whitfield



AMERICA'S REAL CRISIS — OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS

The February 23rd issue of The Economist contains a very sobering article about the opioid crisis currently unfolding in America. This problem can be effectively modeled as a disease epidemic that has already killed several hundred-thousand Americans and is likely to kill another half-million as it runs its course over the next 10 years. I cannot understand why the greedy pharmaceutical companies and prescribing doctors, and the lax government officials, involved in this totally preventable epidemic are not in jail for criminal negligence and crimes against humanity. I pray that the relevant medical officials in Macau and the pan-Pearl River Delta are aware of the problem and are taking strong steps to ensure that a comparable epidemic does not happen here.

The dangers of opioid addiction have long been known and under-played. Morphine injections that were invented during the American Civil War were touted as a life-saving medical breakthrough, but more recent studies suggest that as many as 100,000 veterans from this war were addicted to morphine. Up until the 1990's medical morphine and heroin usage was very limited, but then Purdue, a private pharmaceutical firm, released OxyContin as a prescription pain relief drug. It releases Oxycodone which is a powerful opioid that is as strong as heroin, and twice as strong as morphine. Other pharmaceutical companies quickly released similar drugs. They claimed, without supporting evidence or drug trials, that these opioids were wonder drugs that could safely relieve chronic pain with less than a 1% chance of the patient becoming addicted.

Opioid sales quadrupled between 1999 and 2011 and the number of overdose deaths exploded while Americans did not report any reductions in chronic pain rates. The problems were evident by 2012, but in 2015 American doctors were still prescribing 4 times the number of opioids that were being prescribed by European doctors. American government drug agencies have still only issued a few regulations to control medical opioid use and still do not seem to accept the severity of the problem.

It is now estimated that 2.1 million Americans are addicted to opioids, but only 20% of them are receiving treatment. These addicts are a broad selection of the population from teenagers to grandparents. Each year 1-4% of them will die from an overdose.

As these addicts have more problems getting doctors to continue their legal, and subsidized, prescriptions they start to buy drugs on the open market. They cannot afford to personally pay the US\$50/pill price for OxyContin and similar properly manufactured drugs and quickly turn to the illegal trade in heroin and fentanyl which sell for about US\$5/"pill equivalent". The illegal trade is very problematic because of poor quality control and because fentanyl is about 50 times stronger than heroin. Because of poor quality and strength control it is very easy for addicts to overdose using illegal drugs, which now account for 70% of deaths but nearly all initial addiction is still related to legal prescriptions.

Well proven mathematical epidemic models indicate that there will be around 500,000 opioid overdose deaths in America between 2016 and 2025. This is many more than the cumulative American deaths from HIV, and American service deaths during the entire Vietnam War. It is also substantially more than will die from car accidents or gunshot wounds. It is estimated that this epidemic cost 2.8% of American GDP in 2015.

We really do not want to have a similar problem in Macau.

THE NEW UKRAINIAN LEADER'S CAMPAIGN TOOK PAGE FROM SITCOM SCRIPT

The president-elect of Ukraine does not have a political record that foreign governments and companies can search for clues. For now, a 51-episode TV sitcom might offer the clearest view of what kind of leader Volodymyr Zelenskiy will be.

Zelenskiy, a career comedian, foretold his future when he took the starring role in "Servant of the People." The series, created by Zelenskiy's production company, follows a high school teacher

who finds himself elected to Ukraine's highest office thanks to a recorded rant that goes viral.

The show, which premiered in 2015, is the first Ukrainian series bought by Netflix. In an interview earlier this year, Zelenskiy told foreign journalists he wanted to put "a dream country" on the small screen. The latest season was filmed and aired after Zelenskiy declared his candidacy for the real presidency on New Year's Eve.

Powerful quake hits Philippines, day after deadly temblor



Damaged St. Catherine church is seen following a 6.1 magnitude earthquake that also caused the collapse of a commercial building in Porac township, Pampanga province yesterday

Bullit Marquez, Porac

A new powerful earthquake hit the central Philippines yesterday, a day after a magnitude 6.1 quake rattled the country's north and left at least 16 people dead, including in a collapsed supermarket, where rescuers scrambled to find survivors.

The U.S. Geological Survey put the magnitude of yesterday's quake at 6.4, while the local seismology agency said it was 6.5. The quake was centered near San Julian town in Eastern Samar province and prompted residents to dash out of houses and office workers to scamper to safety.

There were no immediate reports of casualties or major damage from the new quake.

Classes and office work were suspended in San Julian, where cracks on roads and small buildings and a church were reported. Power was deliberately cut as a precaution in the quake's aftermath, officials said.

Meanwhile, rescuers worked overnight to recover bodies in the rubble of a supermarket that crashed down in Monday's quake, which damaged other buildings and an airport in the northern Philippines.

The bodies of five victims were pulled from Chuzon Supermarket and seven other villagers died due to collapsed house walls in hard-hit Porac town in Pampanga province, north of Manila, said Ricardo Jalad, who heads the government's

disaster-response agency.

An Associated Press photographer saw seven people, including at least one dead, being pulled out by rescuers from the pile of concrete, twisted metal and wood overnight. Red Cross volunteers, army troops, police and villagers used four cranes, crow bars and sniffer dogs to look for the missing, some of whom were still yelling for help Monday night.

Authorities inserted a large orange tube into the rubble to blow in oxygen in the hope of helping people still pinned there to breathe. Yesterday morning, rescuers pulled out a man alive, sparking cheers and applause.

Jalad said at least 15 people died in Pampanga province, including those who perished in Porac town. The quake damaged houses, roads, bridges, Roman Catholic churches and an international airport terminal at Clark Freeport, a former American air base, in Pampanga. A state of calamity was declared in Porac to allow contingency funds to be released faster.

A child died in a landslide in nearby Zambales province, officials said.

At least 14 people remained missing in the rice-growing agricultural region, most of them in the rubble of the collapsed supermarket in Porac, while 81 others were injured, according to the government's disaster-response agency.

The four-story building housing the supermarket

crashed down when the quake shook Pampanga as well as several other provinces and Manila, the Philippines' capital, on the main northern island of Luzon.

More than 400 aftershocks have been recorded, mostly unfelt.

The U.S. Geological Survey's preliminary estimate is that more than 49 million people were exposed to some shaking from the earthquake, with more than 14 million people likely to feel moderate shaking or more.

Clark airport was closed temporarily because of damaged check-in counters, ceilings and parts of the departure area, airport official Jaime Melo said, adding that seven people were slightly injured and more than 100 flights were canceled.

In Manila, thousands of office workers dashed out of buildings in panic, some wearing hard hats, and residents ran out of houses as the ground shook. Many described the ground movement like sea waves.

A traffic-prone Manila street was partially closed after a college building was damaged by the quake and appeared to tilt slightly sideways toward an adjacent building, officials said. Many schools and government offices, including courts, in the densely packed Manila metropolis were closed yesterday to allow inspections of their buildings.

Philippine seismologists said the back-to-back quakes in the last two days were unrelated and caused by different local faults. AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	25-45 Good
High Density Residential Area	15-35 Good
Ambient	20-40 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

MYANMAR More than 50 people are believed to have died in a mudslide at a jade mining site in northern Myanmar, a lawmaker representing the area said yesterday. Tin Soe said three bodies have been recovered and 54 people remain missing after the accident Monday night in the Hpakan area of Kachin state.



NORTHERN IRELAND Police Service said they have arrested a woman under the Terrorism Act in connection with the slaying of journalist Lyra McKee (pictured). The arrest of the 57-year-old under the Terrorism Act came as an Irish Republican Army splinter group admitted that one of its "volunteers" killed journalist McKee.

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US A man regularly volunteered to fly sick people in remote parts of the country to hospitals in Houston and Dallas was at the controls of a twin-engine airplane that crashed Min the Hill Country of central Texas, killing all six aboard. Jeffrey C. Weiss, 65, was a senior vice president for investments at Raymond James and Associates in Houston.



MALAWI The World Health Organization says Malawi has become the first country to begin immunizing children against malaria, using the only licensed vaccine to protect against the mosquito-spread disease. The parasitic disease kills about 435,000 people every year, the majority of them children under 5 in Africa.