



**ANM PROPOSES CHANGES TO HOUSING ACTS**  
Among the amendments, the pro-democracy group wants to keep access to public, affordable housing at age 18

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**AFRICAN SWINE FEVER SWEPT THROUGH CHINA, NOT AFFECTING SARs**

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**HE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KIM**  
The world is looking at what the North Korean leader is able to get from Vladimir Putin today in Vladivostok

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

**WORLD BRIEFS**



**NORTH KOREAN** leader Kim Jong Un's most trusted policy adviser apparently has been removed from one of his posts, a South Korean lawmaker said Wednesday, a possible personnel reshuffle in the wake of the breakdown of the North Korea-U.S. summit in February. *More on p12*

**CHINA's** government rejected accusations that it steals technology after a former General Electric Co. engineer and his Chinese business partner were indicted on charges of industrial spying in the U.S. The charges announced earlier this week come amid a tariff war between Beijing and Washington.



**INDIA** A moderate earthquake shook remote northeastern India near the border with China early yesterday, but no damage or casualties were immediately reported. U.S. Geological Survey geophysicist Gavin Hayes said the area in Arunachal Pradesh state is sparsely populated so not many casualties or much damage was expected.

**PAKISTAN** A health official says two new polio cases have been reported in the country's northwest despite efforts against the crippling disease. The announcement came as gunmen killed a policeman escorting polio workers in Buner, a town in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, yesterday.

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**NEW POLICIES ALLOW PRIVATE OWNERSHIP**



# GBA islands for auction

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**HONG KONG**

# Court sentences leaders of Occupy protests

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Renato Marques

THE tourism pressure on the population and parts of the city is one of the concerns expressed recently by several lawmakers in interventions at the Legislative Assembly (AL).

The topic has been previously brought up by several lawmakers, and more recently through a proposal for debate by Sulu Sou last month, which was voted down by the majority of the lawmakers at the AL.

Lawmakers Leong Sun Iok and Song Pek Kei suggested alternative ways that the government can relieve the pressure caused by tourism in the most crowded areas of the city center.

Citing a recently published study from the Institute for Tourism Studies which noted that "optimal tourism capacity" of the region is around 40 million tourists or 110,000 days, Leong proposed the establishment of new tourism sites.

To reduce overcrowding caused by tourism at the usual locations, Leong proposed that the government use the land plot of the former Iec Long Firecracker factory, in Taipa. This land plot is currently in the government's possession and could "be used as a new touristic site," the lawmaker said, adding that other locations for this redirection of tourists could also pass through the Lai Chi Vun old shipyard, "in order to relieve the pressure."

The lawmaker noted that such ideas are in line with the "Macao Tourism Industry Development Master Plan," where it is mentioned that it is "necessary to expand tourism products, develop diversified and rich tourism experiences, and maintain the attractiveness and competitiveness of Macau as a tourist destination."

Leong remarked that the mid-term goals to be achieved in six to 10 years' time "are to promote the development of a theme park, thereby enhancing the entertainment experience" and that the goals to be achieved over 10 years include the construction of a cultural landmark of the city in the new urban areas.

As for lawmaker Song, she also commended on the increasing numbers of visitors and criticized the lack of real measures from the government to reduce the impacts of the rise in tourism.

Song noted that the government has promised to improve infrastructure, public transport network, and hotel facilities, but

## LAWMAKERS AGENDA

# Tourism pressure, new cabinet and prostitution concerns

RENATO MARQUES



Leong Sun Iok



Song Pek Kei

in reality such policies "stood only as words" and no concrete measures have been enforced.

Meanwhile, the exponential growth of visitors has led the services to adopt urgent measures that lack efficiency, leaving stakeholders no time to think and give proper consideration to the right strategies and long term direction, "resulting in problems increasing in a serious and vicious cycle." Song urged the government to deal with the existing problems and predict future issues in advance.

## NEW GOVERNMENT IDEAS AND PROJECTS IN PRE-DISCUSSION

One of the other concerns expressed to at least two other lawmakers were regarding the new Chief Executive (CE) to be elected this summer and, consequently, the new government that he would head.

On the topic, lawmaker Mak Soi Kun expressed his feelings on how the previous governments and government officials have been working, calling for a newer and better

version from the upcoming government.

"The population does not want Macau to have rulers who apologize, justify themselves with outdated laws, or work little to avoid making mistakes," Mak said, adding, "The population expects the new Macau SAR Government to have a new working attitude and, as far as the recruitment of staff is concerned, considering that Macau is a small territory, it will be inevitable that there will be family relations among the leaders." Mak noted nevertheless that the upcoming government "will have to create a fair, impartial and transparent recruitment mechanism for public departments and services." Mak also called for a "more realistic government" with a sense of urgency to "act immediately when receiving requests from the population, avoiding delay in the treatment of cases presented by the people."

"In order to achieve governance with a political system based on reciprocal support and supervision between the executive, legislative and judicial powers, there must be a predominance of the executive power," said the same lawmaker, who stated that this predominance of the executive power would be helped by efficient coordination between services and interdepartmental cooperation.

On the other hand, lawmaker Pereira Coutinho called attention to the fact that many of the voters in the previous election for the CE had complained about not having enough time to address the political programme of the candidate and especially, not having time to discuss or meet with him to ask questions and clarify doubts about such political programmes.

In the lawmaker's opinion, it is necessary that at least the college of 400 voters that elect the CE have enough opportunity to discuss the political program before the election and even provide some input, otherwise the "already limited election would not be more than a 'farce'."

## INSUFFICIENT DETERRENT EFFECTS TO FACE PROSTITUTION

Lawmakers Lam Lon Wai and Wong Kit Cheng have addressed concerns over the growth of prostitution in the community neighborhoods, fearing that the activity would jeopardize public safety. Both lawmakers have called on the authorities to "clean the neighborhoods" by tackling the problem, with added penalties.

Addressing the recently held operations by the police authorities to fight prostitution in the Iao Hon, Patane and NAPE neighborhoods, Wong noted that "due to the limitations of the current legal regime, prostitution is treated as illegal work and the non-compliance with the regime by tourists is treated as an administrative offense, except in cases of crime of control of prostitution or human trafficking."

The lawmaker said that since the deterrent effect of administrative sanctions is insufficient, the incidence of prostitution easily resurges after every police operation.

She says the problem is especially worrying in the Iao Hon neighborhood where the activity is held in residential buildings, resulting in public fears that the situation will affect the normal life and tranquility of residents, as well as "constituting a serious threat to security that will destroy good morals, seriously affecting the growth of children."

To put an end to prostitution, she says that it is necessary to "enforce the combat and increase the sanctions, through a review of the law, so it can have a deterrent effect."

On the other hand, Lam noted that it has been found that prostitution rings make use of non-resident workers (TNR) quotas from several professions such as domestic helpers, masseurs, cooks, cleaning staff, among others, to allow the permanence of such people in the region.

According to Lam, the "false hiring of non-resident workers is not an isolated case," urging the government to review the hiring mechanism of TNR to put an end to a situation he classifies as chaotic.

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# Pro-democrats propose amendment for public house and affordable house acts

Julie Zhu

**T**HE New Macau Association (ANM) is making proposals to the government regarding the social housing act and economic housing act bill.

Yesterday, members of ANM reported details about their proposals to the media.

The four proposals are: to keep the age limit for both social and economic housing at 18 years old; to lift the prohibition of single people applying for social housing; at least half of any family group applying for economic housing must be permanent residents of the SAR; affordable house eligibility should be point-based, meaning that applicants should be ranked based on their evaluation points; and to recover the waiting list mechanism.

As Rocky Chan, member of ANM, explained, the age limit is discriminatory towards youth below 25 years old.

"If the government exclude adults aged below 25 years old from applying to affordable houses, it practices an absolutely differential treatment and discrimination, as it triggers an unnecessary opposition between the government and the youngsters," Chan said.

"It is the government's responsibility to provide enough public houses. Through public consultation, the government learnt that the majority of the public supports recovering the waiting list. However, the government is not accepting the public's opinion. Obviously, the government is not taking the responsibility," said Chan.

Previously, in January, lawmaker Sulu Sou, who is also a member of ANM, called on



Sulu Sou (right) and Rocky Chan

Chief Executive (CE) Chui Sai On to allow the Legislative Assembly (AL) to debate the housing bill amendments. More than three months have gone by since then and the CE has not yet given Sou a reply.

"The bill involves governmental policies; therefore, lawmakers' proposals must be first be approved by the CE," said Sou. "Theoretically, the CE does not need such a long time to consider; he could have replied already. However, as of this moment, we have not received any news."

"According to our understanding, the major responsible

person for the bill, including the Secretary, has not received any news. We will continue following up the CE's office," said Sou.

Previously, the First Standing Committee of AL held four meetings with government representatives concerning the bill.

"These questions were all voiced. Regarding my proposal, the one about half of the applicants having to be permanent Macau residents, it was completely supported by government representatives during the meeting," said Sou.

Currently, the AL is waiting for the government to deliver sta-

tistics concerning the residency of affordable house and public house applicants.

Regarding the age limit, Sou indicated that the majority of the lawmakers and local groups agree to maintain it at 18.

"We hope that people aged between 18 and 24 may also have the right to apply to affordable houses, similar to people older than 25 years old," said Sou, who remarked that the affordable houses' application process is long, and that it is difficult for people aged below 25 to be approved for affordable houses even if they are eligible to apply.

## HK couple busted for selling cocaine in NAPE area

A couple from Hong Kong was arrested for drug trafficking. They had sold cocaine in Macau for the period of about two weeks for MOP80,000, the Judiciary Police (PJ) said yesterday. According to the PJ, police arrested two men in front of a hotel located in NAPE when they were trading drugs from a car earlier this week. One of the suspects is from Hong Kong and is a drug trafficker, while the other man in the car is a buyer and a Macau resident. Police also caught the trafficker's wife in their hotel room and found a total of 14.9 grams of cocaine and 1.9 grams of heroin, worth about MOP50,000. The couple confessed to the police that they were hired by drug dealers to sell cocaine in Macau.

## SK Mak asks questions about Coloane stray dogs

Lawmaker Mak Soi Kun has urged the local government to take care of stray dogs in Coloane. In his written inquiry to the government, Mak wrote, once again, that, "according to some residents living in Coloane," a large number of street dogs appeared in the region. The dogs are said to have had a negative impact on the community's hygiene and environment, with residents worrying about rabies. Mak remarked that the local animal protection law has clearly established penalties for the abandonment of animals. Mak wants the government to explain why there are more street dogs.

## Restaurant, retail business weakens in February

The business performance of restaurants and retail in Macau weakened in February due to the buoyant sales in January prior to the Chinese New Year in early February, the statistics bureau said yesterday. The latest business climate survey report from the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) indicated that 33% of the interviewed restaurants were reporting a year-on-year decline in revenue in February, up by 12% from January. For retail trade, the proportion of interviewed retailers recording a year-on-year sales decrease in February surged by 32% from January to 69%, due to the buoyant sales in January before the CNY, and a higher base of comparison resulting from the festivities that fell in mid-February last year.

# Real estate investment failures top locals' complaints related to mainland

**S**INCE its opening, the Macau Federation of Trade Unions' office in Guangdong province has received more than 100 complaints from Macau residents.

The Guangdong office, which has been open in the Xiangzhou district in Zhuhai for approxi-

mately half a year, has received and served more than 300 people.

The majority of the Macau residents' complaints were related to investment failures in mainland China's real estate market, along with complaints concerning property management and illegal

guesthouses.

According to the association's chief representative, Lee Chong Cheng, who is also a lawmaker at the Legislative Assembly of Macau, most of the complaints were processed by the union.

This week, the federation signed a coopera-

tion agreement with its Zhuhai counterpart, which proposes to form a lawyers' consultation group from both sides in order to coordinate the legal matters of residents from both sides.

The agreement will also result in enhanced communication between, and training

for, leaders.

The Macau Federation of Trade Unions established its Guangdong branch in September of 2018. It seeks to provide help to Macau residents who encounter problems in mainland China with respect to work, investments, business, and education. **JZ**

# Macau celebrates China Space Day for second year

Julie Zhu

**T**HE local Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) and the Science and Technology Development Fund have invited approximately 400 middle school students to participate in the celebration of the China Space Day (April 24), which took place yesterday at the Macao Science Center.

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam was at the ceremony, where he encouraged the local youth to learn more about China's space development and explore their interests in science.

As usual, the Secretary expressed his hope that Macau's teachers and students would embrace the opportunities of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) to contribute to the country's development and global improvement in scientific fields.

China Space Day was celebrated for the first time in Macau in 2017, with the target audience being local youngsters.



When talking about Macau students' achievements in science, a local middle school teacher, surnamed Chao, said that local students have sufficient knowledge in science, although Macau is not providing the equivalent number of science facilities and events to students.

Chao hopes that more scientists can be invited to Macau to give talks to students.

A local student in his last year of high school, surnamed Teng, complimented the event by saying it helped him learn about the endurance developed and difficulties faced by scientists during the research

process.

"We cannot see those things on the internet. With this event, I heard lots of useful information," said Teng.

China Space Day is aimed at inspiring the whole nation of China, especially youngsters, to admire science and being enthusiastic towards creativity.

# Chui and Leong attend second Belt and Road Forum



**C**HIEF Executive Chui Sai On and Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, are attending the second "International Belt and Road" Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing from today to Saturday, a government official said.

This year's Forum is based on the theme "Belt and Road Cooperation: Shaping the Brighter Shared Future," with the main focus of boosting qualitative development to achieve that Chinese initiative.

The Forum will

include 12 themed debates to promote pragmatic cooperation, with President Xi Jinping addressing the opening ceremony.

For the first time, the Forum includes a session for entrepreneurs, creating a platform for cooperation in the business sector.

At the invitation of the organization, the Macau government will lead a delegation with representatives from the business and industrial sectors, who will take part in various debates. Chui and Leong will speak at some events. **MDT/Macauhub**

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# President Obiang says Equatorial Guinea could be the ninth member of Forum Macau



**E**QUATORIAL Guinea may soon apply to join Forum Macau, said President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo in an interview with the Africa Monitor newsletter in Malabo.

Obiang acknowledged China was the “positive” exception to support his country, “as we are facing many difficulties in attracting investment and financing to diversify the economy.”

The President of Equatorial Guinea noted that conferences to attract foreign companies to invest in the country “have had little success,” as had contacts with foreign governments to secure aid.

“The exception is the government of China, which has granted us a very large loan of USD2 billion,” he said.

This loan does not generate debt for the state, Obiang said, “because it is in a parallel account with a Chinese bank that we are [honoring] to the best of our ability,” he said.

In the interview, the President of Equatorial Guinea, who has been in power for 40 years (making him the longest standing head of state in Africa) said that his government is a good payer and has no debts to foreign companies.

His government, he said, is negotiating a technical advisory with the International Monetary Fund to try to avoid the possible devaluation of the national currency and to balance the State Budget.

In 2015, the Times, citing diplomatic sources, said Equatorial Guinea wanted to join Forum Macau and “apparently it has China’s blessing.”

At the time, Equatorial Guinea was about to celebrate its first anniversary as a member of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) in July. The west central African country, with a population of 1.6 million, is becoming a magnet for Chinese investment in Africa.

According to our sources, “other countries in Africa” are willing to join Forum Macau, even though they are not part of the CPLP. “We are talking about countries that claim to have Portuguese influence in the past,” the diplomat said to MDT back then, and that the language issue “was no barrier.”

The Equatorial Guinea’s membership has added nearly \$20 billion to the combined GDP of the CPLP bloc, which currently represents close to 4 percent of the world total, and is expected to continue growing. **PC/Macauhub**

PUSHING BOUNDARIES, INVENTING NEW PATHS

## MELCO is changing the game in environmental sustainability and beyond

In a new Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility report, Melco Resorts & Entertainment Limited launched “Above and Beyond,” a strategy to set ambitious goals in increasing transparency on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) topics. As a plan, Melco will issue annual updates to share improvements on key performance indicators.

**T**he report is prepared in accordance with principles and disclosures of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards, the most widely-used sustainability reporting framework in the world today. It covers priority ESG topics for resort facilities in Macau and Manila, Philippines.

“Above and Beyond captures my personal commitment to embrace sustainability as a powerful engine for growth and a catalyser for change. At the heart lie four goals that will shape our work in years to come. Our resorts will be carbon neutral. We will take the lead on tackling plastic waste in Macau, and beyond. Through the power of entertainment, we will inspire positive change. And we should continue to be a great community partner, and employer of choice,” says Chairman and CEO Lawrence Ho.

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Above and Beyond sets goals to eliminate the impact of resorts on the climate by 2030. From installing Macau’s largest onsite solar photovoltaic array, to sourcing 100% of electricity from renewables in 2018, to using decomposer technology at City of Dreams, Melco’s pioneering investments in renewable energy are the centerpiece of the plan to achieve carbon neutral resorts. Investment in electric vehicles and energy efficiency also measures in.

Given the significant environmental impact plastics pose, waste practices are being overhauled to achieve zero waste - by sending no waste to landfill with a focus on reducing, reusing and recycling or not incinerating waste without energy recovery - by 2030. Sustainable sourcing efforts are also strengthened by reducing high impact procurement categories, such as cotton, chemicals, and seafood.

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Whether it is innovative projects to promote heritage, programs that support women, investments in local infrastructure, or young people who have been inspired by the world’s best through the Dare to Dream program, Melco works for the long-term benefit of all. The same values inspire its employees to give time to good causes.

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A butterfly garden-themed creative display at the 38th Macao Green Week Carnival demonstrated Melco’s pledge to sustainability



Melco, the only integrated resort operator to support green event as a prime exhibitor, is awarded the Green Booth Award at the 2019 Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum and Exhibition (2019MIECF)

# Guangdong announces policies allowing private ownership of GBA islands

Julie Zhu

COME to GBA to be an island owner," mainland news outlet 21st Century Business Herald wrote in a report about the latest document issued by the Department of Natural Resources of Guangdong Province.

Recently, the department issued the trial measures for the sale of non-resident island use rights (the measures), according to which the Guangdong government will organize bidding, auction or listing (marketing transfer) to sell some of Guangdong's islands. These islands must be in the approval authorization of the provincial government of Guangdong.

The measures specifically emphasized the transferring of utilization rights of non-resident islands by means of marketization.

The measures mean that Guangdong has opened up a market-oriented channel for the operational development and use of non-resident islands.

According to mainland China's definition, non-resident islands are islands which do not implement Hukou (residency) registration for people, meaning that mainland residents are not allowed to use any address of the islands to register their residency. It does not mean that these islands do not have people living there.

The measures will be implemented starting May 10, 2019, with a validity period of 3 years.



Specifically, the measures mainly clarify the key aspects of the preliminary work, organization transfer, and follow-up work for the sale of non-resident islands.

The measures also stipulate that the public tenders' winning bidder shall, within two years from the date of signing the contract, complete a specific plan for the development and utilization of non-resident islands as well as a report on the demonstration of non-resident island development and utilization project.

The Guangdong provincial Department of Natural Resources said that the measures are conducive to organizations or individuals who are interested in using the land to implement their development plan of the islands, as well as to help mobilizing the local enthusiasm for the protection and management of non-resident islands.

According to statistics of mainland's Nanjing University, Guangdong has a total of 715 uninhabited islands, each occupying an area of more than 500 square meters. The same statistics show that Zhejiang and Fujian provinces have 2,883 and 1,250 uninhabited islands, respectively.

Despite the fact that Guangdong does not rank first in terms of uninhabited islands, the province still has the most non-resident islands in the whole country.

On April 12 2011, the State Oceanic Administration of China announced to the public the list of the first batch of non-resident islands for development, and also clearly stated that any enterprise or individual could participate in the development and use of these islands. The list involved eight provinces and 176 non-resident islands, 60 of which belong to Guangdong provinces.

The policy clearly states that the development of these non-resident islands should be dominated by tourism, transportation, industry, warehousing, fisheries, agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, renewable energy, urban and rural constructions, and public services.

Meanwhile, the State Oceanic Administration gave a maximum of 50 years for enterprises or individuals to develop the islands.

Moreover, both foreigners and foreign companies are allowed to apply to use the islands.

Back in 2011, the Guangdong government had already identified 32 of these islands as tourism islands.

It is still unclear whether the islands involved in the measures are related to the abovementioned 60 non-resident islands.

It is worth noting that, from a realistic point of view, after the publication of the 2011 list, the open use of non-resident islands

in China did not advance rapidly, and there was no sign of acceleration of development until 2017.

According to mainland's statistics concerning the islands, between 2011 and 2016, China approved a total of only 17 non-resident islands for development and utilization, which represents less than five per year, since in 2014, there were no approvals.

However, in 2017, China approved nine non-resident islands to public entities, with the approval mainly involving non-resident islands in Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangxi.

In 2017, development of Sam Kok Shan Island in Zhuhai was launched with a total investment of RMB2.2 billion.

The island, which was intended to become a tourism destination in Greater Bay Area, is expected to be partially open in the second half of 2020 at the earliest, and fully open in 2022, with a total tourism capacity of one million people per year.

In 2018, China issued the official documents of opinions on the paid use of sea areas and non-resident islands (the Opinion).

The Opinion proposed to take the lead in promoting the market-oriented use rights of non-resident islands in Zhejiang and Guangdong. The Opinion also expects to fully implement this marketization of non-resident islands in 2019, and it has suggested that China should preliminarily establish a system for the measures.

## Hong Kong targets major events with Kai Tak Sports Park

Renato Marques

THE neighboring region of Hong Kong (HK) is investing a total of HKD30 billion in a mega project that will transform the Kai Tak area into 28 hectares Sports Park, the biggest in the region. The Kai Tak Sports Park aims to attract major international sports events to the city, Chief Executive Carrie Lam said during the groundbreaking ceremony for Kai Tak Sports Park, held on Tuesday. The Kai Tak Sports Park will boast sports and leisure infrastructure with the major highlight being

the 50,000-seater main stadium complete with a retractable roof and a pitch surface that can host football and rugby matches, among others. In addition to the main stadium would be a 10,000-seater multipurpose indoor sports stadium and a public sports ground with a capacity for 5,000 spectators, which are purpose-built to host an extensive portfolio of international, regional, and local events, as well as a full range of community sports and activities.

The park is planned to be completed by 2023 with harsh penalties to be

applied by the HK government to the building contractor in cases of delay, with fines amounting to HKD4.3 million a day, the HK government informed in the project support documents.

Besides the competitive sports-oriented spaces, the public open space will cater to a diverse range of user groups from the community and participatory sports, active recreation, and sports events. From the project support documents, it was also possible to see that the Park includes a main plaza, located in the center of the precinct, capable of holding

community recreation activities and helping to manage visitor flows during major events.

It will also feature an "Event Village," a solution already seen in other major events in HK such as the recently held Formula-E.

This area is located in the surroundings of the main stadium and features a mix of lawn and concrete surfaces suitable for different sports or extension programmes for major events.

An open-air multi-purpose space including public use fitness stations, children's wet and dry



play areas, sculpture trails, and Tai Chi zones are also available in the South Plaza together with the Dining Cove (F&B area) close to the Park overlooking Victoria Harbour.

In addition to restaurants, retail shops, and a health and wellness center, there will be an international-standard bowling center with 40 lanes suitable

for hosting international tournaments.

The Park is completed by the so-called "Neighbourhood Park" area, located at the northeastern corner of the precinct, at the side of the Indoor Sports Center and equipped with courts for ball games as well as a cycling track, a jogging trail, a children's playground, and a recreational lawn area.



## HONG KONG

# Court sentences leaders of Occupy Central movement

Katie Tam &amp; Veta Chan, Hong Kong

A court in Hong Kong handed down prison sentences of up to 16 months yesterday to eight leaders of massive 2014 pro-democracy protests on public nuisance offenses.

The sentences are seen as an effort by the government of the semi-autonomous Chinese territory to draw a line under the protests amid pressure from Beijing. Ranging in age from their 30s to 70s, the nine defendants span generations of Hong Kong citizens who have been agitating for full democracy. The defendants had all pleaded not guilty, calling the prosecutions politically motivated.

Three protest leaders were given 16 months, one of them suspended for two years, two received

eight months in prison and two were given suspended eight-month sentences. Another was ordered to perform 200 hours of community service. One other defendant, Tanya Chan, had her sentencing postponed because of the need to undergo surgery.

It was not immediately clear if they planned to appeal.

"Thank you for the sentencing," Raphael Wong, given eight months, told Judge Johnny Chan. "Our determination on fighting for genuine universal suffrage will not change."

While the charges carried potential sentences of up to seven years, they were still seen as unusually harsh by activists in what they called an attempt to intimidate them into silence.

"The long sentences send a chilling warning to all that there will be serious consequences for

advocating for democracy," said Maya Wang, Hong Kong-based chief researcher for China at Human Rights Watch.

"The Beijing and Hong Kong authorities appear intent on eliminating the only pocket of freedoms on Chinese soil," Wang said. She cited a law against booing the Chinese national anthem and moves to amend the extradition law that could see suspects sent to China, where they'd be unlikely to receive a fair trial.

Supporters and family members applauded the defendants as they entered the courtroom, then stood outside sobbing after the hearing before breaking into chants.

Those convicted included law professor Benny Tai, retired sociology professor Chan Kin-man and pastor Chu Yiu-ming,

who all received 16 months though Chu's was suspended for two years. The others include two current and one former lawmaker, two student leaders and a political activist.

Chan, who will be sentenced June 10, said prior to the hearing that she hadn't lost faith in what the movement stood for. "Although it's an uphill battle, it's not easy, it's time for us to make sure that we are strong enough to face different kind of challenges," Chan said.

The nine were leaders of the "Occupy Central" campaign, which was organized as a non-violent sit-in that became known as the "Umbrella Movement" after a symbol of defiance against police adopted by the street protesters.

Protesters demanded the right to freely nominate candidates

for Hong Kong's leader, who would then be elected by all of the territory's roughly 5 million voters. However, they failed to win any concessions from the government, and Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam was chosen in 2017 from among a slate of candidates approved by Beijing and elected by a 1,200-member pro-China electoral body.

Hong Kong, a former British colony, was handed over to Chinese rule in 1997 under an agreement in which China promised the city could retain its own laws, economic system and civil rights for 50 years.

However, Chinese President and Communist Party leader Xi Jinping has been seen as extending his crackdown on civil liberties to Hong Kong, drawing criticism from commercial and legal associations as well as political, human rights and media groups.

"In the verdict, the judge commented we are naive, believing that by having a occupy movement we can attain democracy. But what is more naive than believing in one country two systems?" Chan Kin-man said before the sentences were issued.

In Taiwan's capital, Taipei, youthful supporters rallied to denounce the convictions and growing pressure from Beijing on both their self-ruled island and Hong Kong.

China has demanded Taiwan agree to its claim to the island as Chinese territory, to be annexed by force if necessary, and accept a "one country, two systems," framework for governing along the lines of that in place in Hong Kong.

The Taiwan supporters chanted "Occupy Central is not a crime" and "The Hong Kong government is unjustified."

"The fact that you care about Hong Kong means you care about your own fate. I think this is very important," Tien-chi Martin-Liao, a member of the Independent Chinese PEN Center, said in an address following the sentencing hearing.

"Your support will be felt in the hearts of those persecuted in Hong Kong, and those who live there," he said. **AP**

## African swine fever not affecting Macau, Hong Kong

WITH the official report coming late last week that the island province of Hainan was positive for African swine fever (ASF), China is now essentially ASF-positive in its entirety.

In the west, Xinjiang was found to be positive in early April, followed shortly by Tibet. The only areas not known to be ASF-positive now are the

city-based zones of Hong Kong and Macau, which are in the extreme south of China.

Since its discovery in China in August 2018, Rabobank estimates that ASF has affected 150 million to 200 million pigs, which is nearly 30% larger than annual U.S. pork production and equivalent to Europe's annual pork supply. The-

se losses cannot easily be replaced by other proteins (chicken, duck, seafood, beef and lamb), nor will larger imports be able to fully offset the loss. The firm believes this will result in a net supply gap of almost 10 million metric tons in the total 2019 animal protein supply, which could be a leading driver of recent pork import announcements.

The recent notice by the OIE, which flagged Cambodia as being positive for ASF, revealed that 400 pigs died from the disease and another 100 pigs were culled. The outbreak is in the northeastern-most Rattanakiri province bordering Vietnam, which was itself found to be ASF-positive on Feb. 19.

Most of Vietnam's 556

cases of ASF outbreak have occurred in this northern area. Some Vietnamese officials have said that the virus may have entered the country via people who brought infected pigs from China or from China-made hog feed.

In a report by the World Organization for Animal Health last week, South Africa now has a case

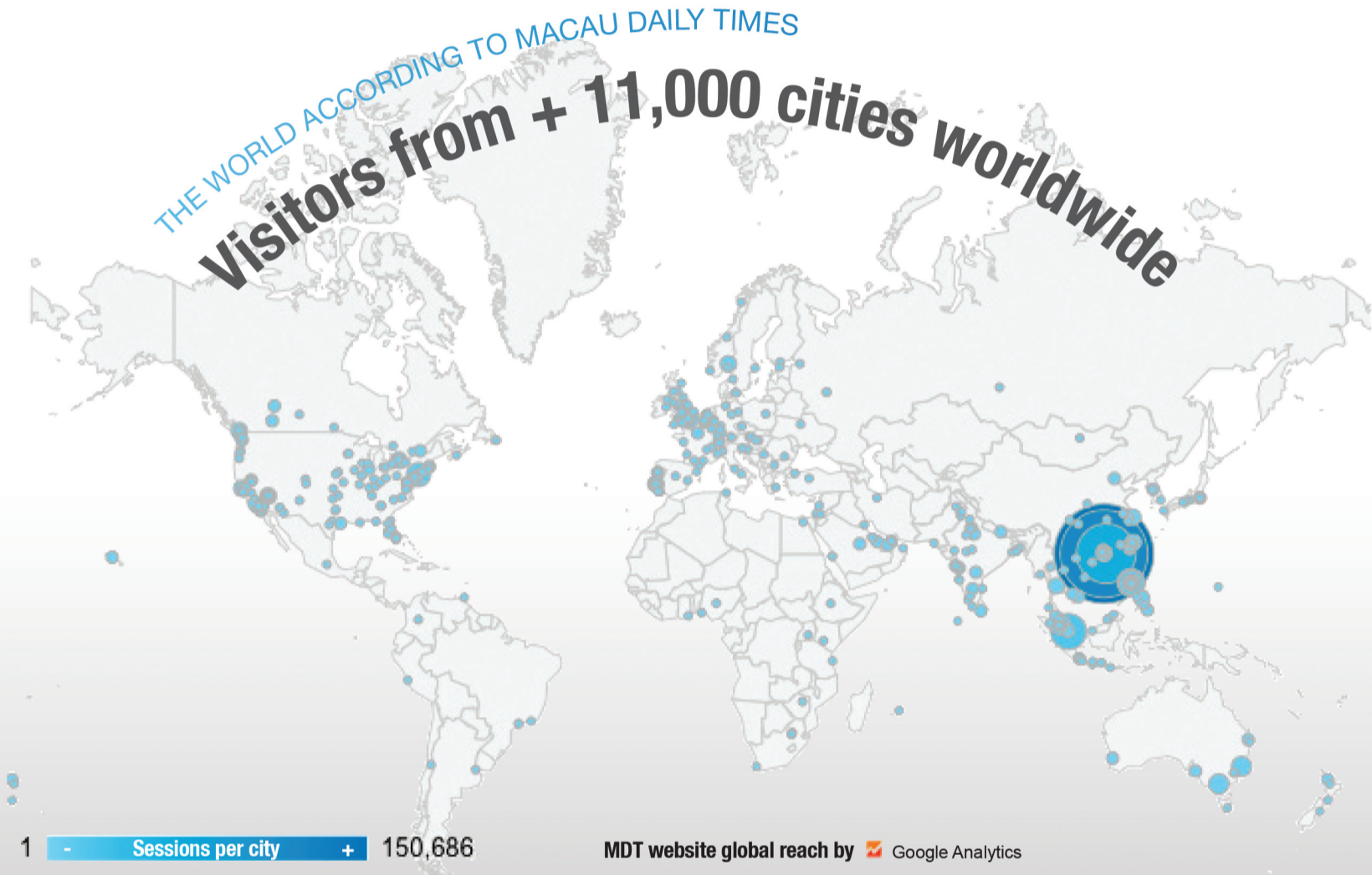
of ASF outside of its ASF control zone (in blue area on map beyond red line of control zone). The announcement was triggered by news of a small pig farm in the country's North West province where 32 of 36 pigs died. Since this was outside of South Africa's control zone for the disease, contact with infected wild pigs is suspected. **MDT/kticradio.com**

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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”



# Nintendo's big rally on China prospects hasn't scared off shorts

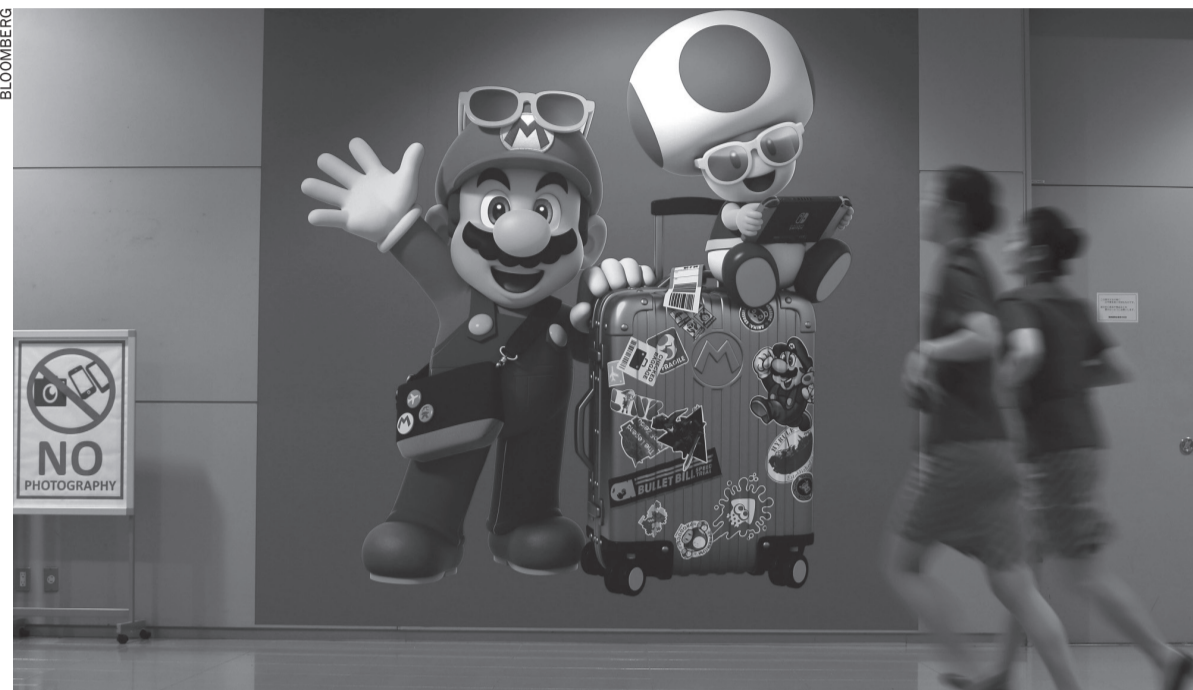
**N**INTENDO Co. shares have surged this year thanks to a stellar games lineup and potential entry into China. But the hedge funds betting against the company aren't going away.

Nintendo's stock has rallied 30 percent this year, the best start since 2015. Still, short sales, or bets the stock will fall, are more than double their level a year ago. Hedge funds even added to those positions last Friday -- the day Nintendo shares rallied 15 percent as China gave a nod to Switch game sales in the country.

The clash raises the stakes for Thursday, when rookie President Shuntaro Furukawa will unveil financial results for the last fiscal year and guidance for the coming one. With short sellers betting against him and analysts expecting more growth, Furukawa faces pressure to meet estimates while avoiding last year's mistake of overselling his prospects.

"Nintendo understands better than anyone how critical it is to maintain the current momentum," said Takao Suzuki, an analyst at Daiwa Securities Group Inc. "Although there's uncertainty over the new hardware and the China launch, we should expect guidance for Switch shipments to keep growing. An outlook for negative growth would be a disaster."

Short interest rose to 1.8 percent of outstanding shares on Friday, from 1.7 percent the prior day, according to IHS Markit. That compares with 0.7 percent a year ago, before hedge funds including Melvin Capital



Management began aggressively shorting the stock. The figure was 1.8 percent on Monday, the latest data available.

"The people who are short are disappointed the platform didn't do better last year, when it was supposed to put up some really big numbers," said Amir Anvarzadeh, a market strategist at Asymmetric Advisors Pte, which advises hedge funds. "Nintendo will continue to release beautiful quirky games like Labo VR, but we just don't think the Switch will expand Nintendo's market share in gaming."

Analysts estimate Nintendo shipped 17.5 million Switch units in the fiscal year that ended in March and that will rise to 18.5 million this fiscal year, according to the average of 12 estimates compiled by Bloomberg.

Growth in the current period

will get a boost from the launch of a new, cheaper version of the Switch, according to two people familiar with the matter who requested anonymity to discuss private plans. The new device will likely be launched by the end of June, according to one of the people. The existing Switch will receive a modest upgrade this year, though a more powerful version is not in the works, the people said.

Nintendo has yet to acknowledge the new hardware, but will likely include it in its guidance, leading to a lot of guesswork and reverse-engineering of the figures, analysts said. Any potential revenue from China will most likely not be reflected in the numbers, according to Daiwa's Suzuki.

Nintendo has publicly acknowledged it is working with

Tencent Holdings Ltd. to start selling Switches in China, but said that last week's approval is just one piece of the puzzle. The company must still receive the country's China Compulsory Certificate approval, and each software title will need approval from the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, according to Niko Partners analyst Daniel Ahmad.

That agency is still working through a backlog of game approvals and has only cleared applications from last July, he said. Despite the hurdles, Ahmad expects the Switch to launch in China by the end of the year. Other analysts privately echoed the optimism, although none included potential China sales in Switch shipment forecasts provided to Bloomberg.

What's more certain is the Switch's software lineup for 2019, which is decidedly stronger than last year. The Pokemon franchise, perennially popular, will formally migrate to the Switch from the 3DS later this year. New entries in the Animal Crossing and Luigi's Mansion series are also slated to hit by the end of the year, and analysts expect more big titles to be announced at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in June.

That is projected to drive operating profit to 352 billion yen (\$3.2 billion) in the fiscal year through March 2019, with software sales of 161 million games, according to estimates compiled by Bloomberg. That compares with estimates for the last fiscal year of 260 billion yen and 121 million units.

Then there's Mario Kart Tour, the company's most anticipated mobile game since 2016's Super Mario Run. Slated for a "summer" release, analysts say the title based on the popular racing franchise is the company's best chance to create billion-dollar-grossing app. Releasing Nintendo's smartphone games in China, the world's largest market, could be a bigger opportunity than selling the Switch itself, since consumers there historically haven't bought many consoles.

"We see significant potential for growth should Nintendo expand into the Chinese mobile games market using jointly-developed titles that leverage its compelling IP," Hirotohi Murakami, an analyst at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities Co., wrote in a report. **Bloomberg**

## MARKETS

# Beijing seeks to rectify easing expectation with unusual denials

**C**HINA'S policy makers broke their traditional silence on market rumors and denied speculation of easing moves three times this month, attempting to temper expectations the government will implement greater stimulus measures.

The People's Bank of China said late Tuesday that a media report on potential adjustments to the amount of reserves banks are required to hold was "untrue." Earlier this month, it said it sought a police probe into market chatter

of reserve-ratio reductions.

The National Development and Reform Commission, the nation's economic planning body, also downplayed a widely circulated draft of consumption stimulus last week, telling China Central Television it'll need "repeated research" before issuing any policies.

The active communication is unusual in Beijing, where officials are often reluctant to respond to media reports, in part out of concern a response cou-

ld stoke more speculation. The recent approach may signal authorities want to keep market expectations in line with their stated approach of calibrated easing.

"Three times in a month and at senior levels - it's the first time I've heard" such a response, said Peiqian Liu, Asia strategist at Natwest Markets PLC in Singapore. "Recent meetings by the top leadership have all emphasized a balanced monetary policy - not too loose or too tight. They don't want markets

to have too big a gap in expectations on upcoming policy."

Liu said the central bank may keep using loans via the Medium-term Lending Facility to roll over maturing debt in the open market if economic indicators stay robust, but there is still the possibility of reserve-ratio cuts when growth cools again.

The PBOC offered 267.4 billion yuan (\$39.8 billion) of targeted MLF loans yesterday, a step that reinforces the shift away from broad easing. **Bloomberg**



## EASTERN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

# Richest family in Thailand is getting richer by helping China

Blake Schmidt  
& Naticha Chuwiruch

**CHIA** Ek Chor fled his typhoon-ravaged village in southern China and started a new life in Thailand selling vegetable seeds with his brother in 1921. Almost a century later, with the largest family fortune in the country, his descendants are becoming Chinese President Xi Jinping's key economic allies.

Chia's son Dhanin Chearavanont is senior chairman of Charoen Pokphand Group Co., a vast conglomerate that is the world's biggest producer of animal feed, shrimp as well as a top telecom firm in Thailand. It is at the center of an ambitious plan to turn Thailand's eastern seaboard into a tech hub with bullet trains, 5G networks and smart car factories.

The so-called Eastern Economic Corridor is the flagship program of Thailand's military regime, a bid to leverage Japanese investment and Chinese tech giants like Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. and Huawei Technologies Co. to revive an economy that grew 4.1 percent last year, the slowest rate in emerging Southeast Asia. But a messy March 24 general election means that projects could come under greater scrutiny as critics accuse authorities of dispossessing local farmers to make way for Chinese investors.

"Locals would be downgraded to second-class citizens," said Somnuck Jongmeewasin, a lecturer at Silpakorn University's International College, who studies the EEC. "A colonial era is emerging in the EEC area through Thai-Chinese investment policies."

Xi's signature Belt and Road Initiative has come under fire in countries including Sri Lanka and Malaysia for infrastructure projects that were seen as providing little benefit for the host nations, while saddling them with heavy debts. But the military junta that seized power in Thailand in a 2014 coup has embraced the alliance, promising a 1.7 trillion-baht (USD53 billion) investment to develop three coastal provinces close to the capital - Chachoengsao, Chonburi and Rayong.

They are now among the fastest growing regions in the country, with manufacturing eclipsing tourism from resort towns like Pattaya, famous for its sun- and sleaze-seeking crowds. Roads that ran through fields of rice, coconuts and mangoes are packed with cargo trucks and farms are giving way to industry - chemical plants, a Toyota factory. Oil rigs sit offshore Thailand's biggest port Laem Chabang. Makeshift

Date	Company	Deal
Feb 2013	Ping An Insurance	CP acquired Ping An stake
Apr 2014	Greenland Group	Signs deal with CP to build homes in Thailand
Jun 2014	China Mobile	China Mobile buys stake in CP's True Corp
Jan 2015	CITIC Limited	CP and Itochu acquire 20% stake in CITIC
Jun 2016	Huawei	True Corp deploys 4.5G Huawei network
Nov 2016	Ant Financial	Ant invests in CP's Ascend Money
Sep 2017	Guangxi Construction Engineering Group	Partners with CP Land to develop industrial estate in Rayong
Dec 2017	SAIC Motor	Invests in MG production plant in JV with CP
Apr 2019	China Railway	Part of CP-led consortium that won Thai bullet train bid

CP Group's China Connections Run Deep

stands beneath roadside trees sell palm sugar, sticky coconut rice and sometimes skewers of roasted field mice to the growing numbers of inhabitants.

CP Group is a main conduit for the Chinese investment in the region. A CP-led consortium including China Railway Construction Corp. was the lowest bidder for a 225 billion-baht contract to build a 200-kilometer rail network linking Bangkok's two international airports and another near Pattaya with an industrial zone on the eastern coast. The group is also bidding on an airport zone.

But a change of government could lead to greater scrutiny of EEC deals. With no outright majority in the March election, seven parties opposed to the military are trying to form a coalition government. Meanwhile Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha's military backed party has explored a coalition with the Democrats, which was headed by royalist former premier Abhisit Vejjajiva until he stepped down last month after poor electoral showing. His father was a CP Foods director for more than 15 years. With no clear majority, it could be weeks or months before a new government is formed.

"The military government will continue to exercise full governmental powers," said Harrison Cheng, an analyst for Control Risks. "The picture gets a lot more complicated once a new government is in power, regardless of which coalition takes power."

The opposition has vowed to put up a fight, tired of policies that promote monopolies in the USD455 billion economy, said Bhokin Bhalakula, a former ad-

viser to Yingluck Shinawatra, who was ousted as prime minister about five years ago. Bhokin favors digging a canal across Thailand's narrow isthmus in the south as an alternative growth model to the EEC. The EEC is linked to the military government's 20-year national strategy, which is supposed to be binding on future administrations, potentially setting up flash-points with elected politicians that wish to adopt different priorities.

"They think that bringing giants in will make the economy better, but the little guys at the grassroots aren't benefiting," said Bhokin. "It's just the wealthy who are benefiting."

While Japanese investors such as Hitachi Ltd. led early bets on the EEC, CP's Chinese connections are helping draw technology investment, said Kanit Sangsubhan, secretary-general of the EEC Office. China's investment in Thailand has surged to become the third biggest in approved foreign investment in 2018 after Japan and Singapore.

"The next wave will be focused on high technology, which China is strong in," Kanit said. He said environmental assessments on land use and a tourism plan aim to minimize the impact on local farmers.

CP's ties to the EEC range from automotive - it announced a new car plant in 2017 with China's SAIC Motor Corp. - to real estate, where it teamed up with Guangxi Construction Engineering Group to develop a 3,068-rai (1,212-acre) industrial estate that targets Chinese investors.

Huawei is investing in Thailand's first 5G test bed, even as the U.S. urges allies to ban the company from constructing ne-

xt-generation mobile networks. CP-backed True Corp. is creating an Internet-of-Things lab with Huawei and used Huawei equipment to become Thailand's first 4G provider. A Huawei spokesman said the company was invited to participate in the 5G test bed by the EEC Office.

In a display of how Thailand's EEC is geared toward drawing China's new tech giants, Alibaba billionaire Jack Ma met with Prayuth last year and signed a deal for a "smart digital hub" as part of the EEC. Alibaba signed more EEC deals this month, including an expansion of Thai rice and durian exports through Alibaba's digital platform.

## A colonial era is emerging in the EEC area through Thai-Chinese investment policies.

SOMNUCK JONGMEEWASIN  
SCHOLAR

Separately, CP has a partnership with Ma's Ant Financial, which has a 20 percent share in the Thai group's Ascend Corp., an e-wallet and microloan service. The deal, not part of the EEC, uses CP's network of 7-Eleven shops.

CP said in a statement that the EEC project "will serve to transform the Thai economy and sustain decades of development and growth." It said CP's bid for the

high-speed rail contract is part of a global consortium that includes Thai, European, Chinese and Japanese partners.

Dhanin turned down an interview request for this story. At an event in March, CP Chief Executive Officer Suphachai Chearavanont said, "Thailand will become a hub and have connectivity with the whole region, all the way up to China, Vietnam, Myanmar and Malaysia." Supachai became CEO in 2017 at the same time as his brother Soopakij became chairman, marking the handing over of the family group to the third generation.

The Chearavanont family fortune is Thailand's biggest at \$20.9 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, bolstered by CP's stake in Chinese insurer Ping An Insurance Group, which has tripled in value since the company acquired the shares in 2012. The Thai clan is one of many with Chinese ethnic backgrounds in Southeast Asia, including the Sys in the Philippines and Robert Kuok in Malaysia, who are leveraging generations-old links with China.

Chearavanont's rise hasn't come without controversy. The group in recent years faced allegations along with other companies that its prawn business used a supply chain that relied on slave labor. In 2017, a U.S. court dismissed an injunction to stop CP and others selling prawns unless they were labelled as products of slavery. CP has said it condemns all forms of slavery. In January this year, Thailand ratified the International Labour Organization's convention for the fishing industry.

Technology is also being shared. The venture with Guangxi, called CG Corp., inked a series of agreements including for tech transfer with the Chinese Academy of Sciences. CP Group Vice Chairman Tse Ping, a billionaire nephew of Dhanin's, signed deals in January with the Chinese academy to build "green smart manufacturing" platforms in Beijing and Macau.

The group's reach shows how far Chia has come since founder Chia began importing seeds for Thai farmers. In 1946, he and his brother adopted the Thai family name Chearavanont and named the company Charoen Pokphand, meaning "prosperity to consumers" in Thai.

They built the business by literally moving up the food chain - growing crops for feed, processing packaged foods and owning supermarkets, according to William Kirby, a Harvard Business School professor who has studied the company. It was among the first Thai investors in Shenzhen in the economic opening under Deng Xiaoping, and has continued to spread its business interests.

"This is now a widely diversified group," said Kirby. "In Thailand first, with stakes in agriculture, telecom, 7-Elevens and many other things. Then in China." **Bloomberg**

## BELT &amp; ROAD

# Beijing celebration of building binge overshadowed by debt

Joe McDonald, Beijing

**A**SIAN and African leaders plan to press Beijing at a conference this week to reduce the politically volatile debt burden left by its Belt and Road Initiative to build ports and other trade-related infrastructure.

That may bring a note of conflict to official celebration of President Xi Jinping's signature foreign initiative, which has stirred anxiety in Washington, Moscow and Tokyo about Beijing's strategic ambitions. The meeting starting Thursday brings together leaders or envoys from three dozen countries including Malaysia, Indonesia, Serbia, Myanmar and Kenya.

Debt "is going to be part of the prime minister's focus at the forum," said Billene Seyoum, press secretary for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia.

In a meeting Wednesday, Xi told Abiy that Beijing had forgiven interest due on loans owed by Ethiopia through the end of 2018, the prime minister's office announced on its Facebook page. It gave no financial details.

Other governments welcomed Beijing's initiative in a region the Asian Development Bank says needs USD26 trillion of investment by 2030 to keep economies growing. But countries including Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand have canceled or renegotiated railways and other projects they concluded were too expensive or unproductive.

Most projects are built by Chinese state-owned companies and financed with loans from government banks at commercial interest rates that critics say could leave borrowers mired in debt they cannot repay.

Beijing also faces grumbling by the United States, Japan,



India and Russia that Belt and Road is a tool to build a China-centered political structure and erode their influence. American officials including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have told countries considering Belt and Road projects to look closely at Beijing's motives and warned about debt.

"BRI project financing will be a main topic for discussion" at the forum, said James Su of research firm Fitch Solutions in an email. He said Chinese leaders appear ready to discuss "more sustainable" financing to ease fears of a "debt trap."

"We see this as crucial for China as it seeks to reduce negative sentiment surrounding the initiative," said Su.

Beijing has given some borrowers more time to repay or made other concessions. Ethiopia's Abiy reached agreement in September to extend repayment for a USD4 billion railway

linking his country with neighboring Djibouti from 10 years to 30 years.

Pakistan, which is building 22 Belt and Road projects including power plants and highways, has run into a debt crunch that forced it to ask the International Monetary Fund for an \$8 billion bailout. But authorities say Prime Minister Imran Khan has no plans to ask China to renegotiate their deals during this week's forum.

China has invested \$13 billion in Pakistan and lent \$6 billion for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a series of 22 projects.

Washington argues the IMF shouldn't help Pakistani repay Chinese lenders.

Despite debt concerns, Ethiopia and other governments express support for Belt and Road and want more Chinese financing.

Kenyan President Uhuru

Kenyatta plans to pursue a \$3.7 billion loan from Beijing this week to extend a Chinese-built railway, his government's ambassador to Beijing, Sarah Serem, told The Nation newspaper.

That is despite complaints the railway is unproductive and cannot pay for itself. The 962-kilometer (597-mile) project is intended to link Kenya with central Africa and Congo.

Kenya owes Chinese banks \$3.2 billion for its first 472-kilometer (293-mile) link from the Indian Ocean port of Mombasa to the capital, Nairobi. Kenya is due to borrow almost \$10 billion from Beijing for the full project.

The Nation said in September that Kenyatta wants China to pay for half of the next stage but other news reports said Beijing balked at that.

Beijing scored a diplomatic coup in March when Italy became the first member of the Group of Seven major econo-

mies, which includes the United States, to sign an agreement to support Belt and Road.

The number of countries that have signed at least preliminary Belt and Road agreements has risen to 115 from 64 in 2013, according to the Chinese government.

"As its relationship with the U.S. has soured, China is increasingly looking to the BRI to provide a tool for geopolitical influence," said Moody's analysts in a report in January.

Elsewhere in Europe, a 42-kilometer (26-mile) Chinese-built highway in Montenegro has prompted complaints the 810 million euro (\$910 million) project is costly and wasteful.

**Most projects are built by Chinese state-owned companies and financed with loans from government banks**

"The project is completely unfavorable for Montenegro," said Ivan Kekovic, a civil engineer in Podgorica, the country's capital.

Montenegrin President Milo Djukanovic defended the deal, saying in an interview any contractors could bid but only Chinese companies submitted concrete proposals.

In the Indian Ocean, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih of the Maldives says he wants to review the country's Belt and Road projects and debt.

Chinese officials say Beijing is learning from experience and examining borrowers closely to make sure they can repay loans.

Possibly due to tighter scrutiny, the number of new Belt and Road projects has plunged.

The total value of new contracts fell 42 percent in the first half of 2018 compared with a year earlier, according to Moody's. AP

## MENG HONGWEI

# Beijing charges former Interpol president with bribery

**C**HINA announced yesterday that it has formally arrested former Interpol President Meng Hongwei on suspicion of accepting bribes.

The indictment from the Supreme People's Procuratorate comes after Meng was expelled last month from public office and the ruling Communist Party.

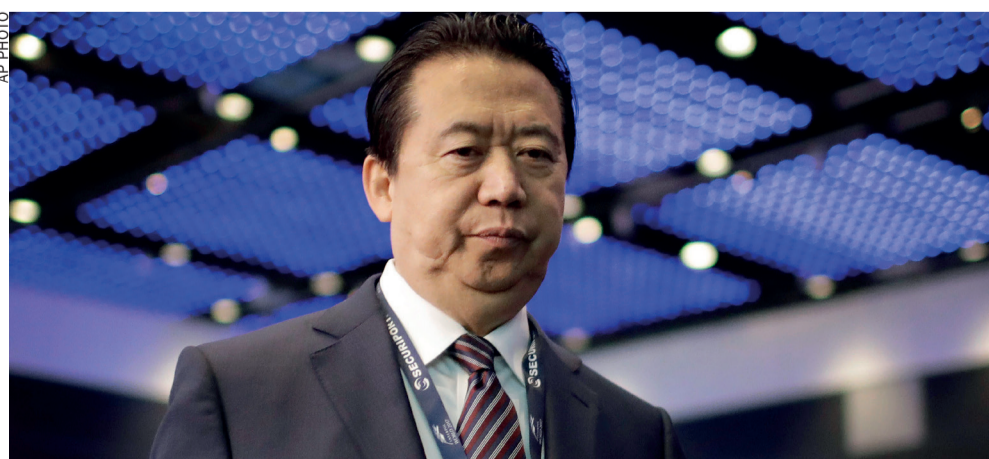
Meng was elected president of the international

police organization in 2016, but his four-year term was cut short when he was detained by Chinese authorities during a visit to China last October. At the time, he was also one of China's vice ministers of public security.

The party's disciplinary committee said an investigation found that Meng was guilty of serious legal violations. It said in a sta-

tement that he abused his power in order to satisfy his family's "extravagant lifestyle."

Meng is among a slew of high-ranking officials who have been ensnared by President Xi Jinping's sweeping crackdown on graft and perceived disloyalty. Corruption charges usually result in convictions and lengthy sentences, including life in prison. AP



Krishan Francis, Colombo

SRI LANKA

# Death toll rises to 359 in bombings, more arrested

THE death toll from the Easter suicide bombings in Sri Lanka rose to 359, police said yesterday, as the country's leaders vowed to overhaul the security apparatus amid a series of intelligence lapses before the attacks.

U.S. Ambassador Alaina Teplitz, meanwhile, told reporters that "clearly there was some failure in the system." Sri Lanka's leaders have said some of the country's security units were aware before Easter of possible attacks, but did not share those warnings widely.

Teplitz said the U.S. had "no prior knowledge" of a threat before the bombings. She said a team of FBI agents and U.S. military officials were helping in the investigation.

The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility and released images that purported to show the seven bombers who blew themselves up at three churches and three hotels Sunday in the worst violence this South Asian island nation has seen since its civil war ended a decade ago.

The government has said the attacks were carried out by Islamic fundamentalists in apparent retaliation for last month's New Zealand mosque massacre but has said the seven bombers were all Sri Lankan. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said investigators were still working to determine the extent of the bombers' foreign links.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara said yesterday morning that 18 additional suspects were arrested overnight, raising the total detained to 58.

The Islamic State group has lost all the territory it once held in Iraq and Syria and has made

AP PHOTO



a series of unsupported claims of responsibility around the world.

Sri Lankan authorities have blamed a local extremist group, National Towheed Jamaar, whose leader, alternately known as Mohammed Zahran or Zahran Hashmi, became known to Muslim leaders three years ago for his incendiary speeches online.

Teplitz declined to discuss whether the embassy or U.S. officials had heard of National Towheed

Jamaar or its leader prior to the attack. "If we had heard something, we would have tried to do something about this," Teplitz said.

The Islamic State group's Amaq news agency released an image purported to show the leader of the attackers, standing amid seven others whose faces are covered. The group did not provide any other evidence for its claim, and the identities of those

depicted in the image were not independently verified.

Meanwhile, in an address to Parliament, Ruwan Wijewardene, the state minister of defense, said "weakness" within Sri Lanka's security apparatus led to the failure to prevent the nine bombings.

"By now it has been established that the intelligence units were aware of this attack and a group of responsible people were infor-

med about the impending attack," Wijewardene said. "However, this information has been circulated among only a few officials."

In a live address to the nation late Tuesday, Sri Lanka President Maithripala Sirisena said he also was kept in the dark on the intelligence about the planned attacks and vowed to "take stern action" against the officials who failed to share the information. He also pledged "a complete restructuring" of the security forces.

Wijewardene said the government had evidence that the bombings were carried out "by an Islamic fundamentalist group" in retaliation for the March 15 mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand, that killed 50 people, although he did not disclose the evidence.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told reporters in Auckland yesterday that she'd had no official word from Sri Lanka, or seen any intelligence reports, to back that up. However, she added that Sri Lanka was in the early stages of its investigation.

An Australian white supremacist was arrested in the Christchurch shootings.

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 rebel army had little history of targeting Christians and was crushed by the government in 2009. Anti-Muslim bigotry fed by Buddhist nationalists has swept the country recently but Sri Lanka has no history of Islamic militancy. Its small Christian community has seen only scattered incidents of harassment. **AP**

KOREA TENSIONS

# Seoul lawmaker: Top Kim Jong Un adviser removed from post

**NORTH** Korean leader Kim Jong Un's most trusted policy adviser apparently has been removed from one of his posts, a South Korean lawmaker said yesterday, a possible personnel reshuffle in the wake of the breakdown of the North Korea-U.S. summit in February.

The head of the South Korean parliament's intelligence committee, Lee Hye-hoon, cited South Korea's main spy agency as saying that Kim Yong Chol lost his Workers' Party post in charge of relations with South Korea earlier this month. He

was replaced by the little-known Jang Kum Chol as the director of the party's United Front Department, Lee said.

Lee said she obtained the information at a private briefing from the National Intelligence Service.

Kim Yong Chol has been North Korea's top nuclear negotiator and counterpart of U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo since Kim Jong Un entered nuclear talks with the U.S. early last year. He traveled to Washington and met President Donald Trump twice before Kim's two summits with Trump.

His rise had baffled many North Korea watchers because he handled South Korea ties, not international or U.S. relations. Previously, he was a military intelligence chief believed to be behind a slew of provocations, including two deadly attacks in 2010 that killed 50 South Koreans and an alleged 2014 cyberattack on Sony Pictures. Both Seoul and Washington imposed sanctions on him in recent years.

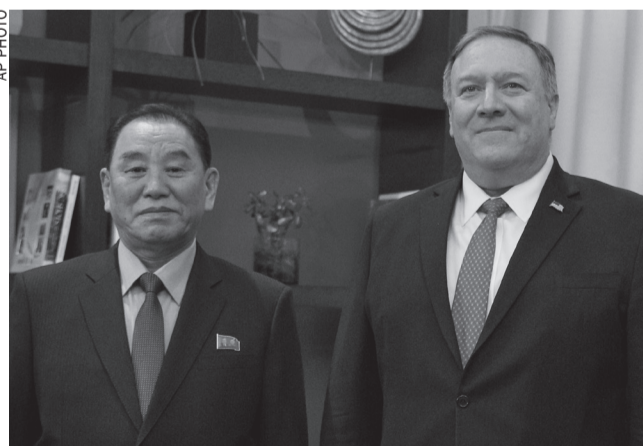
The NIS and the Unification Ministry, a Seoul agency responsible for North Korea ties, said they could not immediate-

ly confirm the information on Kim Yong Chol.

The NIS has a spotty record in confirming developments in North Korea. But if confirmed, Kim Yong Chol's replacement would add to speculation that he is being sidelined from nuclear diplomacy to take the responsibility for the failure of the February summit in Hanoi.

Kim Jong Un, who is desperate to revive his country's moribund economy, returned home empty-handed from Hanoi after Trump rejected his calls for easing U.S.-led sanctions in return for dismantling a key nu-

AP PHOTO



Kim Yong Chol (left) with Mike Pompeo in January

clear complex, a limited denuclearization step.

Kim Yong Chol wasn't among a list of officials accompanying Kim Jong Un on his current visit to Russia (see p14). Many experts in South Korea said North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho and First Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui would take the lead in the nuclear diplomacy.

"(Pyongyang's) significantly diminished reliance on Kim Yong Chol is a very positive sign for the denuclearization negotiations between North Korea and the United States," said Cheong Seong-Chang, an analyst at South Korea's Sejong Institute. He called Kim Yong Chol "most responsible" for the second summit's failure due to his hard-line stance. **AP**

# New Zealand and France to call for an end to online terror

Nick Perry, Wellington

**N**EW Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said yesterday that she and French President Emmanuel Macron will host a meeting in Paris next month seeking to eliminate acts of violent extremism and terrorism from being shown online.

Ardern said she and Macron will ask world leaders and chief executives of technology companies to agree to a pledge called the "Christchurch Call," named after the New Zealand city where an attack took place last month.

Ardern didn't release any details of the pledge, saying they were still being developed.

She said she'd been talking with representatives from companies including Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and Google along with world leaders and felt they could reach consensus by keeping the pledge tightly focused.

"This isn't about freedom of speech," Ardern said. "It's specifically focused on eradicating



New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

those extreme acts of terrorism online."

The man accused of murdering 50 people in two Christchurch mosques on March 15 livestreamed the attack on Fa-

cebook after mounting a camera on his helmet. The chilling 17-minute video was copied and viewed widely on the internet even as tech companies scrambled to remove it.

Ardern said the shooter had used social media in an unprecedented way to promote an act of terrorism and hate. She said nobody would argue that a terrorist had the right to lives-

tream the murder of 50 people. "No tech company, just like no government, wishes to see violent extremism and terrorism online," Ardern said. "And so we have a starting point that is one of unity."

In an opinion piece in the Washington Post last month, Facebook founder and chief executive Mark Zuckerberg called for governments and regulators to play a more active role from in policing the internet.

"As part of this, we have a responsibility to keep people safe on our services," Zuckerberg wrote. "That means deciding what counts as terrorist propaganda, hate speech and more. We continually review our policies with experts, but at our scale we'll always make mistakes and decisions that people disagree with."

In his op-ed, Zuckerberg didn't directly address problems with livestreaming, although he did say it was impossible to remove all harmful content from the internet.

Ardern said Macron had played a leadership role among the Group of Seven major economies in trying to eliminate online terrorism, and his role would complement her experience from the recent Christchurch attacks when they co-chair the May 15 meeting. AP

AD



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## RUSSIA-NORTH KOREA

# Kim upbeat as he arrives for Putin summit

Iuliia Subbotovska,  
Hyung-Jin Kim &  
Kim Tong-Hyung, Vladivostok

**S**MILING and upbeat, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un yesterday stepped off his khaki-green armored train in far-eastern Russia for a much-anticipated summit with President Vladimir Putin that comes amid deadlocked diplomacy on his nuclear program.

Kim, dressed in a black coat and a fedora, first met with Russian officials at Russia's Khasan train station near its border with the North, before traveling on to the Pacific port city of Vladivostok for a summit with Putin today.

Speaking to Russia's state-owned Rossiya-24, Kim said that he is hoping for a "successful and useful" visit and would like to discuss with Putin the "settlement of the situation in the Korean Peninsula" as well as bilateral ties with Russia.

Kim sat down with local officials as well as a Russian deputy foreign minister in Khasan before traveling on. It was his first visit to Russia as North Korean leader; his late father, Kim Jong Il, visited in 2011.

"I have heard a lot about your country and have long dreamt of visiting it," Kim was quoted as saying. "It's been seven years since I took the helm, and I've only just managed to visit."

Kim evoked his father's "great love for Russia" and said that he intends to strengthen the ties between the two countries.

Kim arrived in Vladivostok aboard his armored train early evening yesterday. He was greeted by a military orchestra before he got into his personal limousine that traveled with him, and drove away. He is expected to attend a dinner reception hosted by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Trutnev, according to South Korean media.

After his summit with Putin, Kim may tour neighboring facilities or landmarks before departing for home tomorrow. Primorye governor Oleg Ko-



In this image taken from the RU-RTR Russian television, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (right) is greeted by Russian officials in Vladivostok railway station yesterday

zhemyka told Rossiya-24 that Kim would be meeting "ordinary people" who all favor closer ties with the North.

Kim would also be offered traditional Russian dishes as borscht, pelmeni, or meat dumplings and caviar — though he brought his own cooks with him, Kozhemyaka added.

Separately in Moscow, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu hosted his North Korean counterpart to discuss "international security," the Russian military said.

Kremlin adviser Yuri Ushakov told Russian media the summit will focus on North Korea's nuclear program, noting that Russia will seek to "consolidate the positive trends" stemming from President Donald Trump's meetings with Kim.

In February, Kim's second summit with Trump in Hanoi ended without any agreement because of disputes over U.S.-led sanctions. There have since been no publicly known high-level contacts between the U.S. and North Korea, though both sides say they are still open to a third summit.

Kim wants the U.S. to ease the sanctions to reciprocate some partial disarmament steps he took

last year. But the U.S. maintains the sanctions will stay in place until North Korea takes more significant denuclearization steps.

Some experts say Kim could try to bolster his country's ties with Russia and China. Others say it's not clear how big a role Russia can play in efforts to restart the nuclear negotiations. The summit could allow Putin to try to increase his influence in regional politics and the standoff over North Korea's nuclear program.

"Kim wants to show that he's cooperating with Russia too, rather than looking to only the U.S. and China. But I think it's not easy for Russia and China to provide North Korea with practical assistance that leads to the inflow of dollars," said Chon Hyun-joon, a former senior researcher at the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul.

North Korea has increasingly expressed frustration at the deadlocked negotiations. Last week, North Korea tested a new weapon and demanded U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to be removed from nuclear talks.

Putin's adviser added that the Kremlin would try to help "create precon-

ditions and a favorable atmosphere for reaching solid agreements on the problem of the Korean Peninsula."

Ushakov pointed at a Russia-China roadmap that offered a step-by-step approach to solving the nuclear standoff and called for sanctions relief and security guarantees to Pyongyang. He noted that the North's moratorium on nuclear tests and scaling down of U.S.-South Korean military drills helped reduce tensions and created conditions for further progress.

Ushakov said that Putin-Kim summit's agenda will also include bilateral cooperation. Russia's trade with North Korea is minuscule at just \$34 million last year, mostly because of the international sanctions against Pyongyang.

Russia would like to gain broader access to North Korea's mineral resources, including rare metals. Pyongyang, for its part, covets Russia's electricity supplies and investment to modernize its dilapidated Soviet-built industrial plants, railways and other infrastructure.

A city of more than half a million, Vladivostok was in gridlock as traffic was blocked in the city center because of Kim's visit. **AP**

## KEY MOMENTS IN KIM JONG UN'S DIPLOMATIC CHARM OFFENSIVE

**February 2018:** North Korea sends hundreds of people to Pyeongchang Games in South Korea, including Kim's sister, who conveys her brother's desire for a summit with President Moon Jae-in.

**March 7, 2018:** After visiting Kim in Pyongyang, South Korean presidential envoy Chung Eui-yong says Kim is willing to discuss the fate of his nuclear arsenal with the United States. Days later, President Donald Trump accepts Kim's invitation to meet following a conversation with Moon's envoys.

**March 27, 2018:** Kim makes a surprise visit to Beijing for a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in an apparent move to strengthen his leverage ahead of his negotiations with Trump.

**April 21, 2018:** North Korea says it has suspended nuclear and long-range missile tests and announces plans to close its nuclear test site as part of a move to shift its national focus and improve its economy. Trump tweets: "This is very good news for North Korea and the World" and "big progress!"

**April 27, 2018:** Kim holds a summit with Moon. The leaders announce vague aspirational goals of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and permanent peace.

**May 7, 2018:** Kim meets Xi again in China and calls for stronger strategic cooperation between the traditional allies.

**May 9, 2018:** U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visits Pyongyang to prepare for the planned Trump-Kim summit. North Korea releases three Americans who had been imprisoned, and they return with Pompeo to the United States.

**May 24, 2018:** North Korean diplomat Choe Son Hui releases a statement referring to Vice President Mike Pence as a "political dummy" for his critical comments on the North and saying it was up to the Americans whether they would "meet us at a meeting room or encounter us at nuclear-to-nuclear showdown."

Trump announces he's pulling out of his summit with Kim, citing the North's "tremendous anger and open hostility."

**May 26, 2018:** Kim and Moon meet at a border village in an effort to revive the summit with Trump.

**June 1, 2018:** After meeting North Korean envoy Kim Yong Chol at the White House, Trump says his meeting with Kim Jong Un is back on for June 12.

**June 12, 2018:** Trump and Kim meet in Singapore, where they repeat the first inter-Korean summit's vague statement on the peninsula's denuclearization without describing when and how it will occur.

**June 19, 2018:** Kim visits Beijing for his third meeting with Xi, who praises the "positive outcome" of the Trump-Kim meeting.

**Aug. 24, 2018:** Trump cancels a scheduled trip to North Korea by Pompeo citing lack of "sufficient progress" on denuclearization.

**Sept. 19, 2018:** Kim and Moon hold their third summit in Pyongyang and the North says it's willing to permanently dismantle its main nuclear complex in Yongbyon if the United States takes unspecified corresponding measures.

**Jan. 1, 2019:** Kim in his New Year's speech says he hopes to continue his nuclear summitry with Trump, but also that he would seek a "new way" if the United States persists with sanctions and pressure against the North.

**Jan. 8, 2019:** Kim visits Beijing for his fourth summit with Xi, vows to "achieve results" on the nuclear standoff in his next summit with Trump.

**Feb. 8, 2019:** Trump announces the Vietnamese capital, Hanoi, as the venue of his second summit with Kim.

**Feb. 27-28, 2019:** Trump and Kim's second summit breaks down over what the Americans describe as excessive North Korean demands for sanctions relief in exchange for partial disarmament steps limited to the Yongbyon complex.

**April 13, 2019:** Kim says he is open to a third summit with Trump, but sets the year's end as a deadline for Washington to offer mutually acceptable terms for an agreement.

**April 23, 2019:** North Korea says Kim will soon visit Russia to meet with Putin.

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**what's ON****SEE SAW ZINE?**

TIME: 12pm-8pm (closed on Tuesdays)  
UNTIL: July 12, 2019  
VENUE: Taipa Village Art Space  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2857 6212/ 2857 6118

**ONENESS: CALLIGRAPHY BY PROFESSOR JAO TSUNG-I**

TIME: 10am-6pm (No admission after 5:30pm, closed on Mondays)  
UNTIL: September 30, 2019  
VENUE: Jao Tsung-I Academy  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2523

**MANDARIN'S HOUSE**

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Wednesdays, open on public holidays)  
ADDRESS: No. 10, Travessa de António da Silva  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 8820

**STROLLING AND FEELING: WATERCOLOUR PAINTINGS OF LAI IENG**

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)  
UNTIL: June 16, 2019  
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

**STAMPS AROUND THE WORLD – LIECHTENSTEIN, KINGDOM OF STAMPS**

TIME: 9am-5:30pm (closed on public holidays)  
UNTIL: May 31, 2019  
VENUE: Temporary Gallery, Communications Museum  
ADMISSION: MOP10  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2871 8063

**Offbeat****'SNOT OTTER' NAMED PENNSYLVANIA'S OFFICIAL AMPHIBIAN**

Pennsylvania's new official amphibian is a slimy, 2-foot-long (0.6-meter) salamander that needs clean streams to thrive.

Gov. Tom Wolf signed legislation this week granting the honor to the Eastern hellbender, a nocturnal animal whose colorful nicknames include snot otter, lasagna lizard and mud devil.

Members of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's student leadership council have spent three years campaigning to get it designated as the state's official amphibian, helped by Lycoming College's Clean Water Institute.

It's the largest salamander in North America.

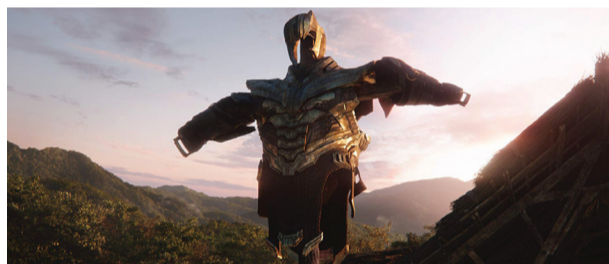
Wolf says the most recent official designation of that type in the state occurred in 1974, when the firefly was named Pennsylvania's official insect.

**TV canal macau**

13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	O Capitão Desconhecido
16:00	Maior que o Pensamento - Parte III - Liberdade
17:05	Zeca Afonso Ao Vivo no Coliseu
18:05	Sonhar era Fácil - Fim
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
21:55	Todas as Palavras
22:20	As Linhas de Torres - Fim
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Arquivos do Entendimento - A Diplomacia 'As Grandes Embaixadas'
00:20	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:05	RTPi Directo

**cinema****CINETEATRO**

24 Apr - 01 May

**AVENGERS: ENDGAME**ROOM 1  
2:30, 5:45, 9:00pmROOM 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, 9:30pm

Director: David Lam  
Starring: Chrissie Chau, Louis Koo, Kevin Cheng  
Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)  
Duration: 96min

**WONDER PARK**ROOM 3  
2:15, 5:45pm

Director: Dylan Brown  
Starring: Sofia Mali, Jennifer Garner, Ken Hudson  
Language: Cantonese  
Duration: 85min

**THE QUEEN'S CORGI**ROOM 3  
4:00, 7:30pm

Director: Vincent Kesteloot, Ben Stassen  
Starring: Jack Whitehall, Julie Walters, Tom Courtenay  
Language: Cantonese  
Duration: 85min

**HOTEL MUMBAI**ROOM 3  
9:30pm

Director: Anthony Maras  
Starring: Dev Patel, Armie Hammer, Nazanin Boniadi  
Language: English (Chinese)  
Duration: 123min

**this day in history****1974 REBELS SEIZE CONTROL OF PORTUGAL**

Army rebels are in control of Portugal tonight after an almost bloodless dawn coup ended nearly 50 years of dictatorship.

Shortly after midnight, tanks rolled into the centre of Lisbon. The Salazar Bridge over the River Tagus was seized and the airport, radio and television centres were taken.

Troops armed with machineguns stormed the barracks where the Prime Minister, Dr Marcello Caetano, and several of his ministers had taken refuge.

The former deputy armed forces minister, General Antonio de Spínola, received the surrender of the prime minister, who has now fled into exile to the Portuguese island of Madeira.

By sunrise the Movement of the Armed Forces, or MFA, was in control. It issued an immediate proclamation appealing for calm and patriotism.

After almost five decades of dictatorship, it promised to restore civil liberties and hold general elections to a national assembly as soon as possible.

The MFA condemned Portugal's foreign policy. After 13 years of fighting, it said, Portugal had been unable to achieve peace "between Portuguese of all races and creeds".

It also called for a clean-up of state-run institutions which had legitimised the abuse of power.

A seven-man junta, led by General Spínola, would oversee the transition period until democracy could be established.

General Spínola and his troops received a hero's welcome from crowds, who gave them cigarettes, food, newspapers and carnations which were in full bloom at the time.

In one violent outburst, up to six civilians were killed after shots were fired from the headquarters of the police station - and troops responded by storming the building.

The Democratic Elections Commission group, which contested last year's parliamentary elections against the Government, issued a statement today saying that the group considered as positive "an act which could lead to the overthrow of a regime which for 50 years has oppressed the people of Portugal."

The majority of Portuguese troops, nearly 140,000 out of 204,000, are posted overseas, propping up Portugal's tottering colonial empire in Angola, Guinea and Mozambique.

General Spínola was sacked from his job as deputy armed forces minister last month after writing a book, Portugal and the Future, in which he argued that the Portuguese could not win its African wars by military means alone.

He was Governor and Commander in Chief of Portuguese Guinea between 1968 and 1972 and was widely respected for trying to win over the hearts and minds of the local population.

His book was regarded as heretical by the country's right-wing establishment - in particular his stated claim that Portugal was not defending the West and its civilization by colonising African states.

Courtesy BBC News

**IN CONTEXT**

The 25 April coup became known as the Carnation Revolution. It ended the longest dictatorship in Europe, the Estado Novo.

The new regime pushed through a rapid and hasty programme of decolonisation. Over the next few years Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Cape Verde Islands, Sao Tome and Principe, and Angola all became independent.

General Spínola served briefly as interim president and was succeeded by General Francisco da Costa Gomes.

Between them they nationalised about 60% of the economy and carried out a major redistribution of land.

Hundreds of political prisoners were released.

Over the course of the next decade a stable two party system was established.

Caetano spent the rest of his life in exile in Brazil.

Freedom Day is now celebrated as a national holiday on 25 April.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Take a look around your home. Are the possessions you see the ones you want to slowly grow old with? If not, then let that be the fire under you to start making sure your hard work pays off, sooner rather than later.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You may not have much money at your disposal these days, but you still have some old standbys in your arsenal. Flattery comes to mind, as does happiness and, of course, sex appeal. Do some self promotion.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Don't let something like bills get the better of you. Deal with things quickly and effectively. Why save the best for last? Pull out some of your hidden strengths before you think you need to and tackle them head on.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 If you've been meaning to socialize for a while now, it's a good time to follow through. That doesn't mean you have to spend more than you have. People are receptive to any invitation you extend, even if it's just for a beer.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You may not have much to show off these days, but you're having a hard time convincing your heart of that fact. It's just as well. Your big ego is an excellent defense against reality, so don't bother deflating it just yet.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Make sure you don't spend any time with people you aren't compatible with. You have enough on your plate, or not enough as the case may be, to deal with any unnecessary stress. Surround yourself with friends.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Your life seems either great or awful, depending on which books you're looking at. If that's too rocky a ride for you, don't look at any long term projections. Stick with the day to day accounts instead.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Things haven't gotten their ugliest yet. To keep them from getting there, enjoy the beauty of the circumstances you find yourself in, instead of thinking they could be better. That should give you the peace of mind to forge on.

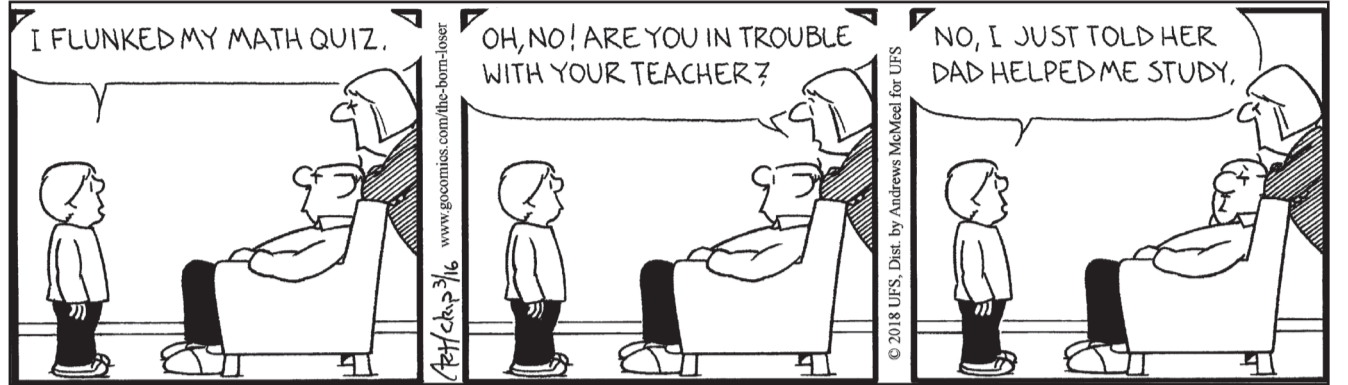
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Nothing is too mundane to ask for, because the universe is listening. While you have its undivided attention, throw in some requests for things that have nothing to do with money. Small details are as valuable as gold.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Don't be tempted to slack off. You'll have plenty of time for relaxation tomorrow. For today, stay disciplined. Bills are piling up and you won't be getting any discounts any time soon.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Is it true that the rich are eccentric and the poor are just plain weird? You don't want to find out. Curb your odder tendencies at least long enough to get a paycheck.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 The pen might be mightier than the sword but is it mightier than the dollar? Words are still free, and some are even beautiful. Surround yourself with anything resembling a love letter instead of tackling your bills.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

WEATHER

CHINA

Table showing weather conditions (MIN, MAX, CONDITION) for various Chinese cities like Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.

WORLD

Table showing weather conditions (MIN, MAX, CONDITION) for world cities like Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Headed for overtime; 5- Comin' \_\_\_ the Rye; 9- Deadly black snake; 14- Kachina doll carver; 15- Nothing, in Nantes; 16- Arm of the sea; 17- Yalies; 18- Fencing blade; 19- Hood-shaped anatomical part; 20- Achievement; 23- Bronx attraction; 24- Beehive State native; 25- Line on a weather map; 29- Effortless; 31- U.S. soldiers; 34- Long-tailed parrot; 35- Alternative to a shower; 36- Newman's Own competitor; 37- Like afterschool activities; 40- Water testers; 41- Calculus calculation; 42- Steal, ransack; 43- Tiny tunnel; 44- Cornerstone abbr.; 45- Flirting man; 46- U-turn from WSW; 47- Gives birth to; 48- County in central England; 56- Defense covering; 57- Bow-toting god; 58- Close; 60- Either of two Chinese dynasties; 61- Facilitate; 62- Irene of "Fame"; 63- Harass; 64- Flat sound; 65- "Rule, Britannia" composer;

DOWN: 1- Everyday article; 2- Kansas city; 3- Grand in scale; 4- Part of CD; 5- Shudder; 6- African wader; 7- Rod's partner; 8- That's \_\_\_ haven't heard; 9- Huge; 10- Make \_\_\_ for oneself; 11- Fr. miss; 12- I've \_\_\_ had; 13- Rat-\_\_\_; 21- Longtime Boston Symphony conductor; 22- Japanese dish; 25- \_\_\_ man with seven wives; 26- Word after Anglo; 27- Group of eight; 28- Obstructs; 29- Having auricular protuberances; 30- Big name in razors; 31- Australian cockatoo; 32- \_\_\_ at the office; 33- Less doubtful; 35- Songwriter Bacharach; 36- Regrets; 38- Lawsuits; 39- Collide; 44- Vigor; 45- Hoi polloi; 46- Low-budget prefix; 47- \_\_\_ Perot; 48- Refrain syllables; 49- \_\_\_ go brag; 50- \_\_\_ old cowhand...; 51- Golf pegs, northern English river; 52- Chapters of history; 53- Ancient Peruvian; 54- Posterior; 55- Work for; 59- \_\_\_ Dawn Chong;

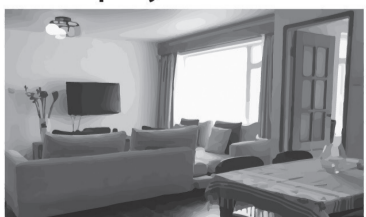


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## NBA

# 76ers season has gone south with each visit to Toronto



Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid (21), of Cameroon

Dan Gelston, Philadelphia

**T**HE 76ers have gone south in Toronto.

Sixers coach Brett Brown wants the season series to come with an asterisk.

Sure, the Raptors went 3-1 against the Sixers, but Philadelphia has evolved thanks to a pair of splashy trades this season that could skew the perception that Toronto has been the dominant team in the series. The Sixers head this week to Toronto for Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinal with their starting five intact for the first time all season: All-Stars Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons, midseason acquisitions Jimmy Butler and Tobias Harris, and JJ Redick failed to start a game together against the Raptors.

"We all understand what the math says with our success in Toronto, and it's not flattering," Brown said. "But it's also not directed to the team that we have. And so you can credit it or you can discredit it. I'm discrediting it. I think that we have a new group, we have a new opportunity."

The Sixers and Raptors both dropped their playoff opener before winning four straight; the Raptors against Orlando and the 76ers eliminated Brooklyn. The two franchises have not met in the playoffs since Allen Iverson, now a postseason regular at his courtside seat, and the Sixers needed seven games to top Vince Carter and

the Raptors in 2001.

Toronto's homecourt edge as the No. 2 seed in the East looms large — the Sixers have lost 13 straight games at Scotiabank Arena since their last win there on Nov. 10, 2012.

The Raptors made their own big deal when they acquired Marc Gasol from the Memphis Grizzlies at the trade deadline and will count on him to try and limit Embiid. Gasol didn't play in any of the four games in the season series. The Sixers know they'll have their own challenges in slowing down the skilled passer as well as Kawhi Leonard and former Villanova star Kyle Lowry.

The dog days of the Process well behind them, the Sixers were built to make a deep run this season. Brown has proclaimed the Sixers are good enough to play for a championship and general manager Elton Brand made the bold deals for Butler and Harris to give the star power needed to get there. Team owner Josh Harris has offered only lukewarm support for Brown and made no guarantee the coach would return for a seventh season.

Beating the Raptors could cool that hot seat.

"We have a team that is slowly coming together," Brown said. "They don't have the luxury of lots of games and lots of context to share upon. And so you have Jo, you don't. You have Jimmy Butler, you don't. These guys have been great on trying to form a team."

The Sixers tanked in a surprising Game 1 loss to Brooklyn, then made all the right plays over the next four games that was highlighted by a dominant 120-100 Game 5 yesterday. The Sixers stunned the Nets with a 14-0 run to open the game in front of the loudest and rowdiest packed house of the season and never faced any fight from a Brooklyn team ready for summer break.

Embiid, who missed a playoff game with a bad left knee, offered a brash take on Philly's postseason run.

"You've got some great teams in the league. We're about to play one of them and then the next one will not be easy, either Milwaukee or Boston," he said.

Embiid took a parting shot on Instagram before the series started and took a social media sabbatical. He posted a slideshow of him playing against Brooklyn, Toronto, Boston and the Golden State Warriors — a possible combination of teams that Sixers would have to beat to win their first NBA title since 1983.

Even with the knee injury, Embiid had four double-doubles in four games against the Nets, the first 76er to open the playoffs with four straight since Hall of Famer Charles Barkley in 1986. Dating to last season, Embiid has scored 20-plus points in five straight playoff games, the longest streak since Iverson did it a franchise-best 22 straight times from 2001 to 2003.

"I didn't finish up the regular season, so just getting my rhythm and getting healthier and just doing the right things I think is working out well," Embiid said. "Still got a long way to go, but as long as I'm alive, I've got to keep pushing."

He wants to keep that push going into June. **AP**

## MOTORSPORTS

# SMI wants to become private NASCAR track operator

**T**HE parent company of Speedway Motorsports Inc. has made an offer to acquire all of its outstanding common stock, the second move of its kind involving one of the key racetrack operators in NASCAR in the past five months.

Sonic Financial Corp. has offered to buy back all outstanding SMI stock for USD18 per share. The stock closed at \$13.94 yesterday and the 52-week high for the stock was \$18.36.

Bruton Smith is the founder and majority stakeholder

in SMI, which operates eight tracks that host NASCAR Cup Series races. Smith and his family also own Sonic.

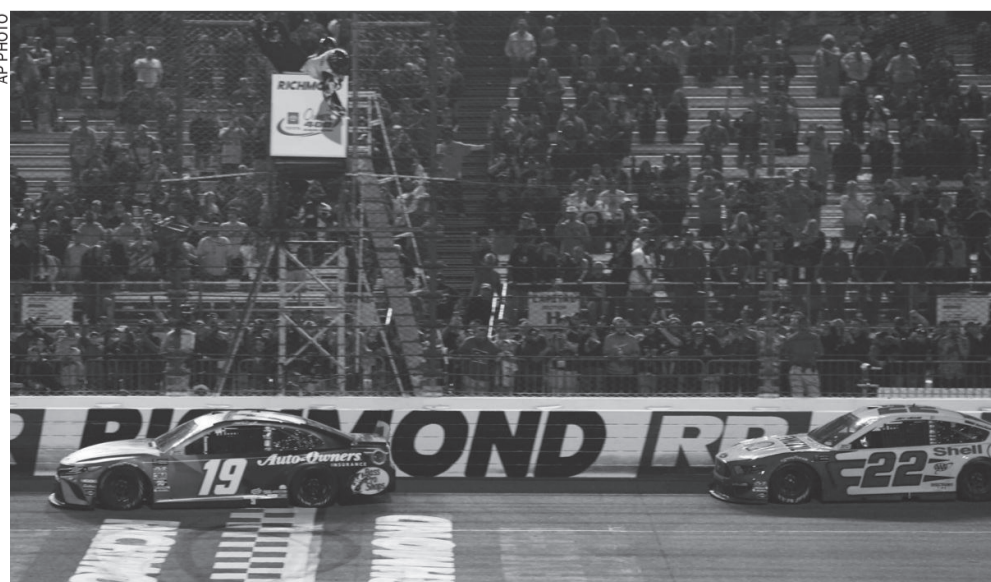
NASCAR in November offered to acquire all the outstanding shares of Class A and B common stock of International Speedway Corp. not already owned by the controlling shareholders of NASCAR. ISC hosts 12 Cup Series races each season.

If the ISC and SMI deals go through, the two top track operators in NASCAR will become private

companies. That could ease any restructuring of the stagnant stock car racing series.

In a letter Sonic sent to the SMI board of directors, the company noted "NASCAR racing has faced several challenges in recent years, and the company has been impacted by these challenges. NASCAR has indicated the sport would benefit from structural change."

SMI believes it will be better positioned during a NASCAR overhaul as a private company. **AP**



opinion

**World Views**

Adam Minter, Bloomberg

**CHINA'S GREAT PIG PANDEMIC SHOULD WORRY ALL OF US**

It's a familiar and ominous story. A deadly pathogen with no known cure begins spreading in China. Rather than acknowledge the problem, officials throughout the Chinese government shut down media coverage, while under-reporting infection and mortality rates for fear of career and political repercussions. Just as the true scale of the epidemic emerges, Chinese officials declare victory.

In 2002 and 2003, that was roughly the course of the deadly, incurable SARS pandemic that emerged in southern China and disrupted global travel, commerce and health. In 2018 and 2019, it's an accurate description of how China has mismanaged an epidemic of African swine fever that's on course to kill 130 million pigs - or roughly one-third of China's herd, the biggest in the world.

This wasn't supposed to happen. Post-SARS, China supposedly reformed its system so that secrecy, careerism and concerns over China's international image wouldn't again take precedence over public health. Thankfully African swine fever only affects pigs. But the epidemic highlights how hard old habits die, and how systemically unprepared China is to report and manage the inevitable next epidemic that kills people.

For decades, the Chinese government's top priority has been the preservation of social stability. Mainly this is promoted through economic development policies designed to enrich and placate China's vast population, especially in the countryside.

Meanwhile, events that the government views as potentially threatening tend to be suppressed. For example, in 1976, the government censored reporting on the Tangshan earthquake, a catastrophic event that killed more than 500,000 people, for fear of how the public would react to the death toll and the government's inadequate response.

That preference for secrecy in the face of natural and human-made disasters didn't dissipate in the wake of China's economic opening. In fact, it's strengthened over the decades as the government has prioritized economic growth as the all-purpose solution to China's ills. Insofar as news about natural disasters might inhibit investment and disrupt business, it's clearly unwelcome.

China's hierarchical system remains fragmented and autonomous below the top levels of power.

Despite President Xi Jinping's efforts at bureaucratic reform, this chaotic structure tends to bog down policymaking and confuse lines of authority. For example, during the SARS crisis in 2002 and 2003, the Ministry of Health was politically subservient to provincial governments and its recommendations were viewed as guidelines, not directives. Likewise, provincial governments had limited obligations to communicate with the Ministry of Health or the central government.

The result was an uncoordinated political process in which local officials prioritized provincial needs - most notably, promoting growth (and thereby, their own careers) - rather than calling attention to the emerging epidemic. The Communist Party also proved reluctant to distract officials and the public from a politically crucial Party Congress. The immediate needs of the public, insofar as they were considered at all, were subservient to the needs of the bureaucracy.

At first glance, African swine fever doesn't seem to have much in common with the SARS pandemic. But, from the perspective of officials, it's also a serious threat to social stability. In China, where pork is the staple protein, rising pork prices play an outside role in the country's inflation rate. That fact appears to be undercutting post-SARS reforms intended to create more transparency during natural disasters. In recent months, there have been numerous reports of pig death undercounts and coverups, and widespread efforts to suppress and censor news coverage while promoting a false narrative that the epidemic is under control (it's not).

While the outbreak may not be as immediately dangerous to humans as SARS, the official response should worry Chinese, as well as public health authorities globally. Thanks to its geographic position on migratory bird routes, its vast and largely unregulated livestock industry, and its weak public health institutions, China is a prime candidate to serve as the incubator for the next pandemic capable of killing millions of humans. Ensuring that Beijing responds to that epidemic in a responsible manner must be a global priority.

**THE WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES MORE TRADE TALKS WITH CHINA**

The White House says a U.S. delegation will travel to Beijing next week to continue trade negotiations, and a Chinese delegation will return to Washington for additional talks starting May 8.

President Donald Trump has slapped tariffs on USD250 billion in Chinese imports in a dispute over Beijing's aggressive drive to challenge U.S. technological dominance. China has retaliated by targeting \$110 billion in U.S. products.

The two countries are in talks to settle their differences.

Press Secretary Sarah Sanders says U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin will travel to Beijing for talks that begin April 30. Vice Premier Liu He will lead the talks for China.

Sanders says topics for next week's discussions include protection of intellectual property, agriculture and enforcement.

**Amal Clooney: Prosecute Islamic State extremists for rape**

Edith M. Lederer, United Nations

**H**UMAN rights lawyer Amal Clooney yesterday [Macau time] demanded justice for victims of an "epidemic of sexual violence" in conflicts, especially rapes and other abuses perpetrated by Islamic State extremists in Iraq and Syria.

The rights activist told the Security Council that if the U.N.'s most powerful body cannot prevent the prevalence of sexual violence in wars all over the world, "then at least it must punish it" and make justice a priority.

Clooney, who is married to actor George Clooney, addressed the council along with Nobel Peace Prize laureates Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege to spotlight the need to prosecute perpetrators and help survivors.

But the resolution adopted by the council after they spoke was watered down to win approval, and while it made some advances it failed to take the significant actions they urged.

The resolution eliminated long-used language on providing "sexual and reproductive health care" to survivors of rape and abuse to avert a veto from the Trump administration. And it eliminated a positive reference to the International Criminal Court's work in prosecuting alleged perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict.

French Ambassador Francois Delattre told the council after the vote that eliminating the reference to sexual and reproductive health of victims of sexual violence "is unacceptable and undermines the dignity of women."

"We are worried that the threat of veto was used to question 25 years of advances in this area," Delattre said. "It is intolerable and incomprehensible that the Security Council is incapable of acknowledging that these women and girls who suffer from sexual violence in conflict, and who obviously didn't choose to become pregnant, should have the rights to terminate their pregnancy."

The vote on the German-



Nadia Murad Basee Taha (right) and Amal Clooney during a Security Council meeting on sexual violence at United Nations headquarters in NYC

drafted resolution was 13-0, with Russia and China abstaining.

Russian Ambassador Vasily Nebenzia said Moscow opposes sexual violence and demands "the elimination of this loathsome war crime." But Russia abstained because the resolution gives new powers to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and other U.N. officials and bodies, he said.

**■ If the UN's most powerful body cannot prevent the prevalence of sexual violence in wars, 'then at least it must punish it'**

The resolution expresses the council's deep concern at "the slow progress" in addressing and eliminating sexual violence in conflicts, declaring that these acts often occur with impunity, "and in some situations have become systematic and widespread, reaching appalling levels of brutality."

It calls for governments to ensure that survivors of sexual violence "receive the care required by their specific needs and without any dis-

crimination." It says victims should have access "to national relief and reparations programs, as well as health care, psycho-social care, safe shelter, livelihood support and legal aid."

German Ambassador Christoph Heusgen said the resolution his nation introduced makes "considerable progress" by concentrating on accountability and survivors and by "putting sanctions much more in the center of actions."

But, he added, "we didn't achieve everything."

Heusgen said Amal Clooney and the two Nobel laureates told him to "push ahead" with the resolution without a reference to "sexual and reproductive rights." He noted the resolution does refer to a 2013 resolution in which those rights are mentioned — and because of that the rights remain international law.

Clooney called the resolution "a welcome step forward" but said "we must go further."

She challenged the Security Council to prosecute Islamic State militants just as the victorious Allies prosecuted Nazi criminals after World War II at the Nuremberg trials.

"This is your Nuremberg moment," she said.

Clooney is the legal counsel to Murad and other members of Syria's Yazidi minority who were sexually abused by IS extremists. She said Murad has spoken of only one fear — that IS militants "will just shave off their beards and go back to their lives; that there will be no justice." AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	30-50 Good
High Density Residential Area	15-35 Good
Ambient	20-40 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**PHILIPPINES** President Duterte threatened to ship truckloads of garbage back to Canada and dump some of it at Canada's embassy in Manila if Canadian officials don't take back the waste that Filipino officials say was illegally transported to the country years ago. More than 100 containers of household trash were shipped from Canada to the Philippines in 2013-14.



**AFGHANISTAN** Afghan and international forces have killed more civilians in the war with the Taliban and other militants in the first three months of this year - the first time deaths caused by government forces and their allies have exceeded those of their enemies, a new U.N. report says.



**GRAND CANYON** Another visitor to Grand Canyon National Park has died after falling over the edge of the South Rim, authorities said. A 70-year-old woman fell about 61 meters over the rim, the second over-the-edge death this month within the confines of the park, according to the park officials.



**JAGUAR** Land Rover is facing stiff headwinds in the U.K. and in China, the world's largest car market, but the storied British automaker sees the U.S. as a relative oasis. Plummeting China sales, Brexit tremors and tightening European emissions rules forced JLR parent Tata Motors to take a record USD3.9b writedown last year. But sales in the U.S. rose 7.3% to a record of almost 123,000 vehicles.