



### NEGOTIATORS CALLED IN TO DISARM MAN

A woman was held hostage on Saturday night by a man brandishing a small knife

P2 CRIME



### THE 13 DEVELOPER SAID TO BE SEEKING BUYER

P4 GAMING



### MAPPING A NEW CITY

Little is known about the fast-growing skyscrapers in neighboring Hengqin. The Times explores the urban projects dotting the island's eastern coast

P6-7 GREATER BAY



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

## WORLD BRIEFS

**CHINA** A mobile app used by police to track citizens in China's far west region of Xinjiang shows how some of the country's biggest technology companies are linked to a mass surveillance system that is more sophisticated than previously known, according to a report from Human Rights Watch.

More on p11



AP PHOTO

**NORTH KOREA** State media yesterday showed leader Kim Jong Un observing live-fire drills of long-range multiple rocket launchers and what appeared to be a new short-range ballistic missile, a day after South Korea expressed concern that the launches were a violation of an agreement to cease all hostile acts. More on p13

**CYPRUS** A man who has confessed to killing seven foreign women and girls in Cyprus is being investigated on additional charges of raping a foreign woman he had photographed as a model, a police investigator said yesterday.



AP PHOTO

**ISRAEL-PALESTINE** Israel and Gaza-based militants are digging in for extended fighting after a barrage of hundreds of rockets and retaliatory airstrikes boiled over into a second day, threatening to undo months of Egyptian-brokered efforts to reach a long-term truce. More on p15

**VENEZUELA** Authorities are investigating the cause of a helicopter crash that killed seven military officers while they were heading to a state where President Nicolás Maduro was visiting troops.

More on backpage

DANIEL BEITLER

# Foreign players kicked out of lower leagues

P3 MDT EXCLUSIVE





COURTESY TDM



## MP investigates three loan sharks for murder

**T**HREE loan sharks from Mainland China, aged 29 to 34 years old, have been transferred to the Public Prosecution Office (MP) for further investigation. They allegedly killed their 40-year-old Chinese debtor.

The suspects were charged by the Judiciary Police (PJ) with killing, predatory lending, and organized crime.

The crime was reported by one of the gang who was allegedly overwhelmed with guilt. The Public Security Police Force found and arrested the gang near a hotel in the Outer Harbor area.

The victim borrowed USD50,000 from the three in a casino before losing all money in the following three hours. He was later abducted and taken to a guesthouse in the Praia Grande area where he was beaten several times with leather belts, slippers, and fists over two days. His mouth was covered to stop him screaming for help. Videos of him were taken and sent to his family to threaten them.

The PJ collected evidence at the scene, including the leather belt allegedly used for the beating.

According to public broadcaster TDM, the man suffers from hearing loss and required the assistance of sign language interpreters during the negotiation.

The man initially refused help, but later calmed down and released the woman at around 9:30 pm. The woman was then brought into the food outlet for immediate medical inspection.

The man's conversation with the police officers carried on until around 10 p.m., when he began to become agitated once more. The police officers immediately restrained him and put him under arrest. He was then sent to the hospital where as of yesterday morning, he remained.

The hostage claimed she did not know the man.

### CRIME

# Woman restrained in shocking knife incident

Staff reporter

A woman was restrained by a man believed to have been brandishing a small knife for about half an hour on Saturday night at a food outlet close to the construction site for the Mong Ha Sport Pavilion. As a result of the incident, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) cordoned off a nearby road.

The incident took place at around 9 p.m. in front of a food

outlet located at the Trust Legend residential building next to the St. Paul School. The PSP received a report that a suspected assault was spotted there and teams of police officers, firefighters, and paramedics were deployed to the scene.

The man was seen to be emotional as he restrained a woman while holding a sharp object close to her. According to reports last night, the object was understood to be a small knife incident.

He was reported to be yelling and swinging his limbs in a threatening manner. Paramedics who arrived at the scene initially attempted to calm him down.

Professional negotiators from the Judiciary Police (PJ) subsequently arrived and took over the negotiation. PSP officers stood next to the PJ negotiator with shields in their hands, to be prepared for any possible escalation of the situation.

## ASK THE VET

by Dr Ruan Du Toit Bester

### SENIOR DOG FOOD: AGE SPECIFIC FORMULAS

**I**n order to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle for your pet, owners must know what to look for in senior dog food to suit their animal's needs. Older dogs may not require the same nutrients as puppies or younger dogs, as new nutritional and health issues arise with age. Senior dogs can face problems with decreased activity, joint and bone pain or disease, a weakening immune system, weight gain or loss of appetite, and digestion problems. A proper balanced diet for older pets can help ease these problems and, if started early enough, prevent many of these issues.

#### Vitamins for joints and energy

As a dog gets older and cannot be as active as he used to be, it is important to keep energy levels up and maintain some level of exercise that does not strain the older and less mobile dog. For joint and muscle pain, try glucosamine and chondroi-

tin sulfate vitamin supplements to improve joint movement and ease arthritis in older dogs. Other vitamins and antioxidants such as vitamin B-12 for energy and vitamins E and C to build up immune systems are great additions to your dog's diet.

#### Avoiding obesity

With a decrease in activity and a slower metabolism in older dogs, obesity can become a serious problem. Not only is excess weight bad for a dog's heart and lungs, but can also add extra stress to joints and bones. Special diet and senior dog food formulas are not always the best option for heavier dogs—instead, try reducing portion sizes, and feeding your older dog the smaller portions two to four times a day.

Look for nutritionally balanced foods with good sources of proteins from chicken, beef or lamb, rather than from poultry by-products and meat or

bone meals. Paying more for high quality food will keep your senior dog more healthy and active. By avoiding cheap and unhealthy dog foods from the beginning, you'll minimize possible joint stress, weight problems and low immune health as your dog enters old age.

#### Avoiding unhealthy weight loss

Alternatively, weight loss can be a serious problem for senior dogs as they lose their appetite. Try mixing chicken or beef broth, carrots, canned pumpkin or plain diced chicken to dry food to add some taste and variety to the meals. Don't add too much, or it could upsets your dog's stomach. Maintaining healthy levels of fiber is also important to avoid intestinal problems that can lead to vomiting, diarrhea or constipation. Also, cut out fatty table scraps and treats that aren't low in fat and calories. Older dogs may not be able to digest



table scraps like younger dogs can, leading to digestive issues or weight gain.

Hope this info helps  
Till next week  
Dr Ruan Bester

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DANIEL BEITLER



SPORT

# Macau's lower football leagues to run foreigner-less

Renato Marques

**I**N a change enacted by the Macau Football Association (MFA) and enforced for the first time this season, the teams competing in the lower leagues (Fourth and Senior "Veterans" Division of the MFA competitions) have been forced to exclude all players who do not hold a Resident Card (BIR). According to sources at several clubs, this measure has excluded a significant number of players.

In a statement to the Times, the MFA Competition Department said that the matter has been in discussion for some time and it "has been organizing meetings with clubs." The local association which organizes all championships noted that they support "an open discussion with clubs regarding the regulations and games," noting that the MFA

Executive Committee made all decisions after hearing the clubs speak.

The MFA explained that among those decisions is one to allow the clubs participating in the championships from the First to Third Division to register "eight foreign players and 18 local players."

For the Fourth and Senior Division, each team "can register a minimum of 14 and maximum 18 local players." This decision excludes the participation of foreign players.

According to information that Times had access to, at least one of the clubs involved of this rule through a letter to the MFA which includes a legal opinion.

Failing a dismissal, the letter at least requests that the enforcement of the rule be postponed for one year in order

to give teams enough time to adjust to the new rules which according to them, "come with a very short notice."

The legal opinion in the letter also noted that the decision to enforce a discriminatory rule is invalid in relation to local laws since it is, "inadequate, disproportionate, and unnecessary."

The letter went on to remind the association that lower divisions are not categorized as competitive sports but exist as a way to abide by the idea of "Sports for All," a government initiative promoted through several Sports Bureau programs.

In the same letter, the clubs call for the MFA to consider both the regulations regarding the sport as established by the International governing body FIFA, as well as local government policies on the matter and even human rights laws.

The letter explained that in Macau there is a very high percentage of people who live and work in the region that are not entitled to be residents.

It concluded, "[it] breaks with a long and rooted tradition of cosmopolitanism in Macau and ignores the social reality of the region - hardly comparable to any other country or region, including mainland China."

The letter contended that the reality of Macau's social fabric should have been taken into account by the Executive Committee of the MFA as there are no previous reports showing that these leagues had become crowded by foreign players.

The MFA reaffirmed that it is not trying to exclude foreigners from the championships, stressing, "foreign players are welcome to participate in different [competition] levels [from First to Third Division]."

## WHO regional director meets with Chui

Dr Takeshi Kasai, the Regional Director for the Western Pacific of the World Health Organization, recently visited Macau and met with Chief Executive Chui Sai On. During his visit, Kasai noted the three main directions of his work in the next five years are working toward non-infectious disease prevention, being well prepared for a possible infectious disease cycle, and improving health problems caused by pollution. Kasai also visited the Conde S. Januário Hospital, the Areia Preta Health Center, and the Pac On Camp of the China International Emergency Medical Team (Macau SAR), which was verified by the WHO on April 30. Kasai expressed his appreciation for the work conducted by the Health Bureau on smoking control.

## PSP to take 'rigorous attitude' on taxi surveillance law

On the Sunday talk show hosted by TDM, a representative from the Public Security Police Force (PSP), in response to taxi drivers' worry about the use of surveillance systems on taxis, said that they are going to take "an even more rigorous attitude" to new legislation. The taxi industry voiced concern that there were still a lot of uncertainties about the details of the in-car video and voice recording system. Questions have been officially sent to the Transport Bureau, according to the Taxi Driver Union, but no response has since been received. The new law is to take effect on June 2.

## 90% of spot-checked helmets meet standards

The Transport Affairs Bureau (DSAT) and the Public Security Police Force (PSP) have jointly conducted 15 spot checks on helmets used by motorcyclists between January and April this year. This has seen 188 helmets inspected, of which nearly 90% met the standards set forth in the administrative regulations regarding approved types of helmets. Some 168 of the inspected helmets were models approved by the DAST. Two met legal technical standards but have yet to be approved. Eighteen were suspected not to meet legal standards, and were transferred to the PSP for follow-up action. The DSAT reminded riders to fasten the safety leash when using their motorcycle helmets. Failure to do so will result in a fine of MOP600.

HEALTH

# Two more cases of Rubella discovered

**M**ACAU'S health authority has informed that two new cases of Rubella were discovered on May 3, bringing the total number of recorded incidents of the disease to 33 since the start of the year.

The first of the new

cases was diagnosed in a 41-year-old man living in Macau and working at the Landmark casino. The patient presented himself to health authorities on April 28 with headaches, joint pains of the limbs and rashes in the leg.

On May 2, the patient was transferred to the emergency department of the public hospital for treatment. By the following day, the patient was considered to be in a normal state, without fever, although rashes are still present.

The second case was detected in a 48-year-old male surveyor living in Macau.

On April 22, during a trip abroad, he experienced symptoms of chills and fatigue. On April 30 of April he returned to Macau and on May 2 he went to

the emergency department of the public hospital. He, too, is now considered to be in a stable condition.

Both patients were understood to have traveled to the mainland recently. Their records of Rubella vaccination is unknown.



## GAMING

# South Shore Holdings demotes CEO, said to be scouting buyer

WALT Power has been removed from his position as CEO and executive director of South Shore Holdings Limited (SSH) to be placed in a non-executive director role. It is a dramatic but unsurprising move by the company, following the challenges SSH has faced in getting their embattled Macau luxury hotel, The 13, off the ground.

Casino news website Calvin Ayre reports that it is now believed SSH is looking for a new buyer. The challenges of funding the project as well as construction delays have turned this luxury hotel into a project that seems untenable to maintain.

The 13, located in Macau, has become an albatross to the company, as years of delays and financial setbacks became a drain on the company's holdings.

The 13 was first proposed in 2012 but was not completed until August of last year. The hotel was planned to be the epitome of luxury, providing day spas, luxury suites, and hotels, as well as a health club.

Initially, a casino license was envisioned as part of the project, but SSH announced in early April that they had no plans

PHOTO ARCHIVE



to move forward with a formal agreement to create gambling at the resort. According to the company, no official agreement has been reached with any of the gambling concessionaires related to opening up gaming operations at The 13. This came just days after the company

had announced that their self-imposed March 31 deadline to open a casino had passed.

Power's removal took effect May 1. The former CEO has been with SSH since February 2013 and had served in some of its most important roles, including senior vice president of

operations and chief operating officer at two of its casinos.

Many shareholders hold Power personally responsible for the delays and challenges that have affected the opening of The 13. The new venture cost the company almost MOP450 million in losses in the first six

months. That was 18 times the loss the company reported in the same period of 2017.

According to Calvin Ayre, it is not expected that a replacement will be named for Power, and his influence on future decision-making is likely to be non-existent. **DB**

## Parq Vancouver misses debt payment as casino seeks to refinance

Paula Sambo  
& Natalie Obiko Pearson

LUXURY casino Parq Vancouver's parent company missed an interest payment on a second-lien loan as it struggles to refinance debt taken on to build one of the largest-ever private developments in British Columbia.

Parq Holdings LP was downgraded to selective default from CCC by S&P Global Ratings Thursday after the expiry of a 30-day grace period. The rating company attributed Parq's decision to defer payment to its operational underperformance - which has affected the company's liquidity and its ability to service its debt - as well as struggles to complete a proposed refinancing of its existing ca-

pital structure.

"Parq is solidly on track to close a new equity and finance package, replacing our existing development and construction financing," the company said in an emailed statement.

A crackdown on money laundering in British Columbia - Canada's western-most province - has caused turmoil at Vancouver-area casinos, which for years were known for accepting cash from gamblers arriving with suitcases and hockey bags bulging with bills. Casinos have reported lower revenue and table drops since new rules to more tightly identify sources of funds were implemented last year.

Business has been slower than expected at Parq Vancouver - whose late 2017

opening coincided with the crackdown - and complicated plans to replace costly construction financing with cheaper loans. It lost nearly CAD153 million (USD114 million) in 2018, according to a March 28 filing by Dundee Corp., one of Parq Holdings's two owners.

Parq had aimed to refinance the debt and bring in a new partner by April 30, according to Dundee filings. The company is still current on required interest and principal payments for its first-lien senior secured term loan, according to S&P.

"We will reevaluate our ratings on the company once it successfully executes the proposed refinancing of its existing capital structure," S&P wrote in a note. **Bloomberg**

## Atlantic City's Ocean Casino is finally making money

A perennially challenged Atlantic City casino will finally turn a profit this month and chart the way forward under the ownership of a New York hedge fund.

The Ocean Casino Resort, which until a few weeks ago was known as the Ocean Resort Casino, has greatly reduced its debt and will return to profitability in May, according to Eric Matejevich, the interim CEO managing the oceanfront property while an ownership transfer takes place.

The property, which opened in 2012 as Revel and closed two years later, is in the process of changing hands yet again. It is being transferred from the late Bruce Deifik, the Colorado developer who died in a car crash last month, to hedge fund Luxor Capital, who had agreed to take over and invest \$70

million into the property as Deifik ran out of money to operate it. The deal could close sometime in June.

Of the \$70 million Luxor pumped into the property earlier this year, \$50 million went to pay down debt, leaving it with a greatly improved balance sheet, Matejevich told The Associated Press.

That encouraged David Schwartz, a gambling expert at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

"Reducing the debt load will ease a great deal of pressure, making it easier for the property to invest in facilities and promotions that will draw customers," he said. "Often-times, putting a casino on a more solid financial footing can make a big difference."

The resort had begun to run out of money in September, prompting

Deifik to relinquish ownership in January, after just six months.

The immediate priority was to stop the bleeding; the property had been losing money every month since September, and had fallen below state-mandated liquidity requirements.

"In a lot of ways, we're going faster than we had imagined we could," Matejevich said. "We've largely eliminated losses at the property and we are making a major effort to reintroduce this place to people."

It's a small sample size, but encouraging nonetheless: the casino won more from customers at slot machines this April than in any previous month, and recorded its second-highest hotel occupancy rate. The exact numbers will be released by state regulators later this month. **MDT/AP**



# Gaming sector to require over 7,000 more employees by 2020

DANIEL BEITLER



**T**HE Talent Development Committee has forecast that the gaming industry will need some 7,525 additional gaming employees of primarily high-ranking position and mid-level managers by 2020.

According to the government body, future workforce shortages include positions such as executive director, casino director and deputy director, senior vice president and department manager.

The industry currently employs about 60,000 staff.

In 2018, official data showed that the employment situation in Macau was "favorable" as the general unemployment rate was 1.8 percent and the unemployment rate of local residents was 2.4 percent. These figures are down year-on-year by 0.2 and 0.3 percentage points respectively.

The total labor force was 394,900, with a labor force participation rate of 70.9%.

With a low unemployment rate in the SAR for more than a decade now, the need for more workers in the gaming sector marks a challenge for the city, unless it looks abroad and imports the expertise it needs from other countries or regions.

The SAR government has previously announced its aim to increase local residents working in middle and upper-level management positions, aiming for them to fill 85% of senior positions by 2020.

To that end, it is enacting policies that would facilitate the upward mobility of local resi-

dents, helping them to train and develop skills needed for the sector.

According to a survey it conducted, 97.4% of the city's gaming mid-level employees in 2018 were local residents; and 383 locals were employed in senior-management roles, covering 76.8% of such posts.

Late last year, the industry had 57,246 full-time employees in the sector, an increase of 1.1% year-on-year.

Other positions that will see high growth include facilities maintenance and repair technicians or casino technicians, card room attendants, senior security officers, security control room operators, and casino attendants.

The number of these positions, along with middle and high ranking posts, have also been in growth since 2018, and this is expected to remain the case in the lead up to 2020.

Moreover, the survey noted that portion of low-level positions, such as dealer, would fall by approximately 30% due to the effect of technological innovation.

As more machines and more advanced technology will be used to enhance efficiency and lower demand for human workers, the number of mid-level managers administering these roles might also decrease.

The committee published a catalogue – only made available in Chinese – which told residents about new qualifications and skills required to work in the 95 positions in the industry, to help them advance their careers. LV

## ADVERTORIAL

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#### MGM's Go Green Campaign

On March 28, MGM participated in The Macao International Environmental Cooperation Forum (MIECF) 2019 to showcase MGM's green achievements including our ambition to be aligned with the best green practices and our passion to engage and ignite with our team members, community and guests. In support of MIECF as well as the IACM's Macao Green Week, MGM held its annual company-wide Go Green Campaign from March 20 to April 17 including a host of fun, educational and interactive initiatives aimed at engaging our team members in environmental protection.

#### Food Waste Handling tour for Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT)

On March 20, MGM COTA welcomed faculties, engineers and chefs from IFT to learn about our current status of food waste handling processes and the solid waste management framework. During their visit, we also shared some chef-approved ideas for reducing the food scraps and discussed the challenges in achieving sustainable and integrative food waste handling.



#### Tree Planting by IACM

On March 21, more than 30 MGM team members participated in a tree maintenance program organized by IACM at Ka Ho Reservoir Barbecue Park to help preserve Macau's green spaces under the guidance of IACM's tree specialists. This is the 10th year running MGM has participated in this much-loved activity by our team members as a way to get in the great outdoors and appreciate Mother Nature.

#### Earth Hour and Green Monday

On April 2, from 8:30am to 9:30pm, MGM once again joined Earth Hour. We joined together with MGM Resorts International properties in honor of this global conservation effort by dimming the property's exterior lighting, as well as powering off and illuminating all treatment rooms at Tria Spa with ambient candlelight. MGM also continued its weekly Green Monday on April 15 in the employee dining room. The special menu included using fresh herbs from MGM's own herb garden for greek salad with purple shiso, beetroots, corn and hairy gourd soup with fresh basil and Nikkei garden fish fillet with thai basil.



#### Go Green Roadshow

To help our employees to Live Green, Eat Green and Shop Green, MGM held a Go Green Roadshow on April 16 and 17, inviting local business StuffBOX for a special staff market including a selection of eco-friendly products such as collapsible cups and containers, glass straws, re-usable food bags and utensils. Alongside this, we also arranged a Recycling Gaming Zone for employees to identify recyclable items with the overall aim to raise awareness of the importance of recycling.



#### Green Tours

On April 24, MGM Sustainability Team have invited more than 60 students, teachers and parents from The International School (TIS) to visit our Aquarium and to attend an Ocean Conservation Talk at MGM MACAU. Among many highlights, the tour participants gained an understanding of how to protect the ocean and how to ensure that our seas are healthy and pollution free.



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JULIE ZHU



The A1 district of Hengqin seen in the center background behind Macau's Sai Van Bridge

## MAPPING A NEW CITY

# The Hengqin we see from Macau

Julie Zhu, Hengqin

**A**CCORDING to the Hengqin new district city master plan 2014-2020, the under-construction city to Macau's west will be divided into 10 sections, each with its own designated function.

Directly opposite of the Special Administrative Region are the central business district (A1+A2), port service zone (B) and the education zone (C), but further inland lie the leisure and tourism zone (D), ecological landscape zone (E), international residence community (F), high-tech research zone (G), culture and creativity zone (H), science and research (I), and integrated service zone (J).

Activity on Hengqin's eastern coast – or zones A through C – might be the most noticeable for those on the Macau side and yet, still, very little is known about these fast-growing skyscrapers. The Times explored the neighboring island to learn more about the urban projects dotting its coast.

## THE FINANCIAL ISLAND

Zone A1 has been designated the 'financial island'. In Zone A1, there will also be the E Fund Management Financial Building (264 meters tall, 56 floors), China Railway Construction Corporation Limited Building, Hengqin Financial Media Center, China Communications Construction Com-

pany Ltd Hengqin Plaza (310 meters tall, 65 floors), China Communications Construction Company Ltd Financial Center (200 meters tall, 42 floors), and the Hong Kong-Macau Financial Center.

The Hengqin International Financial Center, located in the Hengqin District of the Central Business District of Zhuhai Cross Gate (A1+A2), set a new record with its inauguration, becoming the tallest building in Zhuhai. The whole project spans a construction area of about 200,000 square meters and a maximum height of 333 meters. It has four floors underground and 69 floors above ground.

It represents a new generation of multi-functional complexes in Zhuhai, integrating international standard Grade A office buildings, modern exhibitions and comprehensive business facilities.

Meanwhile, boasting a site area of 11,752 square meters, the Hengqin Financial Headquarters will offer a food and beverage facility and serviced apartments.

With a site area of 9,679 square meters, the Hengqin International Exchange Square is a building with 48 stories above ground and four underground, and it will be 200 meters tall.

An investment project of the mainland's Huakai Group, the exchange square will have offices, commercial-serviced apartments and public spaces.

Standing 250 meters tall,

the Hengqin Financial Lease Center is an investment of the Shenzhen Hualong Group.

## COMMERCIAL PORT ZONE

The Hengqin Meiqin Properties Ltd Investment Project was once reported to be a luxury real estate development, however, there are also reports by mainland media indicating it will become a commercial project which will offer offices and malls.

Irrespective of what the project will turn out to be, it is worth noting that there is a reserved connection channel between Macau and Hengqin right next to the Meiqin investment project (shown on the map as a yellow star).

According to Meiqin group's advertisement, the channel is a planned underwater tunnel between Macau and Hengqin, and it will be used as the second port between the two regions. Official sources have not confirmed what the channel will be used for.

The site area is 23,012 square meters, including two office towers, underground commercial space and a parking lot. The developer claimed to have invited designers from the Singapore to plan a green space straight on the building.

South of the Meiqin project is Huace International Building. It is the headquarters of Huace Group, and it covers an area of about 14,310 square meters and a total construction area of 113,214 square meters.

It is said to be imagined as a pleasing artistic landmark for Hengqin. It is also expected to become an international Grade A business center integrating business, office and exhibitions.

The Zhuhai Shenhua Group Headquarters will be composed of four distinguished elements: the headquarters and technical research office building, a high-ranked hotel building, a large-scale conference room, and a multi-floor shopping mall.

The shopping mall has a surface area of 61,304 sqm and each floor is around 16,000 square meters. The headquarters building is 60,527 square meters, while the research building and development has an area of 60,483 square meters and is located on the southern edge of the land plot. The total height of the building is 150 meters. The hotel building is 60,504 square meters in total, with 8,642 square meters dedicated to service functions in the podium and 51,863 square meters dedicated to the rooms in the tower.

## OTHER NOTABLES

The Huafa Plaza is expected to become one of the most dynamic destinations on Hengqin Island. When finished, it will accommodate over 300,000 square meters of boutique retail, food and beverage facilities and office space. The construction phase of the project is expected to be complete in 2019.

The Phoenix Tree Tower does not stand on its own designa-

ted land plot, as there are also other projects in the same area. The Phoenix Tree Tower will be a 188-meter tall building with a total of 40 stories above ground and four floors underground. The tree tower occupies an area of 25,000 square meters and has a total floor area inside of 160,000 square meters.

It has been advertised as a seven-star hotel, office building and shopping mall and has a commercial helicopter pad on its roof.

Behind the Phoenix Tree Tower is the Hengqin International Business Service Base. Located on A2, which is to the north of the Cross-Gate, there will be the Zhuhai International Convention center, Zhuhai International Business Center, Sheraton Hotel, St. Regis Hotel, and a theater developed by Zhuhai Huafa Group.

Located on Zone A1, which is to the south of the Cross Gate, there will be Hengqin Ferretti Asia-Pacific Center project, started on December 16, 2015, with a total investment of RMB3 billion.

The center will set up a high-end Ferretti yacht sales center exhibition center and sailing school. A yacht port will cover an area of more than 70,000 square meters and supporting equipment will also be included.

The rest of the port service zone will include the Hengqin port, integrated transportation hub, a financial center, and Nam Kwong Group integrated building.





## HONG KONG

# Best stock rally since 2015 is now under threat

Kana Nishizawa & Jeanny Yu

**H**ONG Kong stocks' best start to a year since 2015 may be put to the test this month as the benchmark gauge struggles at a key level.

After rising about 16 percent this year, the Hang Seng Index is stuck around 30,000 poin-

ts as drivers of the rally wane: mainland equities are weakening and local borrowing costs aren't so low any more. Chinese investors are also pulling out. On top of that, Hong Kong's economy just saw its weakest growth since the aftermath of the global financial crisis a decade ago.

"I think we are going to have a correction," said Daniel So, a strategist at CMB International Securities Ltd. "Unless we get surprisingly good news from trade talks, the index doesn't have much good news to look forward to in May."

The Hang Seng Index was in technically overbought territory

as recently as April. Optimism over U.S.-China trade negotiations and data showing an improving Chinese economy boosted investor sentiment, sending the gauge to a nearly 10-month high. The index has slipped 0.3 percent since. It eked out a 0.5 percent gain Friday after sliding as much as 0.9 percent earlier in the day.

China stocks - still the world's best performers among major markets this year - are looking vulnerable as the government is seen as less willing to add stimulus. That has taken the momentum off Hong Kong equities, which tend to track the mainland.

China investors sold the city's shares via trading links for four straight days last week, the longest run since early March. Turnover has also declined, with the average value traded set to fall for four straight weeks.

The local economy may not have much support to offer the stock market either. Data released Thursday showed first-quarter gross domestic product grew 0.5 percent from a year ago, the slowest pace since 2009 and below economists' estimates.

A stronger greenback may make Hong Kong equities less appealing as investors shift to higher-yielding assets. The Federal Reserve's latest push back against an interest-rate cut sent the dollar higher late last week. The currency has climbed about 2.1 percent from its January low.

Hong Kong's borrowing costs will also likely remain elevated over the rest of the quarter, according to Carie Li, an economist at OCBC Wing Hang Bank Ltd., who says the city's shrinking cash pool is making banks more reluctant to lend. The one-month interbank rate, known as Hibor, has climbed to 1.99 percent from a low of 0.91 percent in late February.

Not everyone is so pessimistic. May is a good time to add Hong Kong stocks as concern over limited stimulus in China has been priced in and first-quarter earnings look upbeat, according to Steven Leung, executive director at Uob Kay Hian (Hong Kong) Ltd.

CMB's So said that while improving fundamentals would help limit the downside for the city's shares, better macroeconomic conditions and stronger corporate earnings have largely been priced in. "The upward momentum for Hong Kong stocks is weak," he said. **Bloomberg**

## Foreign tour operators visit cities of the Greater Bay

**T**OUR operators from Asia, the Americas, Europe, Australia and Russia have visited cities in the Greater Bay to familiarize themselves with these destinations and explore opportunities for tourism cooperation in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau, according to the Macau Government Tourist Office.

The participants are part of a group of more than 120 operators who were invited by the Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) and the Hong Kong Tou-

risms Board (HKTB) to take part in the 7th International Tourism (Industry) Exhibition, which took place from April 26 to 28.

Continuing multi-destination visits to Foshan, Guangzhou and Kaiping in Guangdong province for representatives of the tourism industry from various countries and regions, organized during the 2018 Tourism Expo, the MGTO and HKTB this year took operators from the United States, Portugal, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, the Phil-

ippines, Indonesia and Taiwan to visit Guangzhou, Zhaoqing, Jiangmen, Macau and Hong Kong to learn about tourism development and visit the famous tourist spots of the different cities.

In Macau, for example, participants visited the world heritage sites, cultural and creative industries sites, the village of Taipa and took a boat trip.

After attending the Macau Tourism Expo, the delegation traveled to Hong Kong, the last stop on the trip, over the Hong Kong-

Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, where in addition to visiting Victoria Dockside and its theme park, they also took part in industry contact meetings.

The Macau Special Administrative Region actively participates in the "Belt and Road" national initiative and construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay, which together with the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge are bringing new opportunities and challenges to the Macau tourism industry. **MDT/Macauhub**

## Shenzhen to build 7,000 5G stations

**S**OUTHERN China's technology powerhouse Shenzhen is expected to build about 7,000 5G base stations this year, local authorities said over the weekend. The city also plans to launch 5G for commercial use by 2020, according to the city's bureau of industry and information technology.

Enterprises based in the tech hub are expected to launch 5G terminal chips in the first half of this year. Smartphones and tablets featuring 5G will be launched gradually from the middle of this year, according to Xu Zhibin, deputy director of the bureau.

"Shenzhen is leading the

world in 5G research and development," Xu said.

The city is also actively promoting the deep integration of 5G with other technologies and products to build a sound and competitive cluster of 5G industry, he added.

Shenzhen said in January that it would launch a pilot project for 5G commercial use in 2019.

That same month, the Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport in southern China's Guangdong Province launched a 5G base station. An indoor 5G network will be installed in the Shanghai Hongqiao Railway Station by the end of this year.

**Xinhua**





# NASCAR data deal could lead to more bets

Dan Gelston, Del.

**N**ASCAR is making its first big play in the world of expanded legal sports betting, hoping a sports data partnership will lead to gamblers being able to bet during races on much more than just who gets the checkered flag.

Genius Sports has become the exclusive provider of NASCAR data to licensed sportsbooks, officials announced Friday.

"NASCAR is one of those sports that I think has an enormous opportunity to present an exciting betting product, particularly in-game," said Genius spokesman Chris Dougan.

Genius Sports will develop an

official NASCAR gambling offering for legal sportsbooks, using NASCAR's official data feed.

The exclusive deal lets Genius Sports help books provide up-to-the-minute odds and a slew of traditional wagers and prop bets.

"We feel that NASCAR has a little more of an upside in the in-race event experience than some of the other stick-and-ball sports," said Brian Herbst, senior vice president of broadcasting and innovation for NASCAR. "The in-game experience that we're building through Genius will have live odds around NASCAR."

So a bettor could watch odds on their selected driver fluctuate throughout the race before

deciding to place a bet. NASCAR hopes that will keep fans interested (Fox Sports has averaged 5.14 million viewers this season) in watching for the duration of a race.

"What could happen in the next five seconds? What could happen in the next lap? It opens the door to a massively exciting new market," Dougan said. "NASCAR is now starting to recognize this is a huge fan engagement tool. We give them that distribution and that reach."

Herbst said it should take six to eight months for the technology to come together for in-race betting, leading to live race odds by the 2020 season.

Before the start of the 2019 season, NASCAR developed an

integrity program and gambling policy in which the sanctioning body granted all teams and tracks the ability to sell marketing sponsorships to sports betting companies and licensed sportsbooks.

Among the restrictions: drivers and team members are banned from betting on races or disclosing confidential information. They are allowed to participate in fantasy sports relating to the three national touring series, Cup, Xfinity and Truck, but may not accept prizes with a value of more than \$250 in any games. The bans are in line with other major sports.

Football, basketball and baseball historically generate the bulk of sports betting in the United States and NASCAR has yet to spark interest among the masses. Even with less inventory than other popular sports, NASCAR's move is an attempt to carve out a sliver of a market with billions bet each year.

Vernon Kirk, director of the

Delaware lottery, said since full-scale sports betting started in Delaware on June 5, 2018, about one-tenth of 1% has been wagered on auto racing (\$208,100 out of \$154.8 million), through April 28.

"I don't think we've done a really good job of taking the tools that our in our tool kit and leveraging those," Herbst said. "We weren't really in the gaming conversation until this year. We're still taking a kind of pragmatic, staggered approach into it."

Nevada's effective monopoly on sports betting ended last spring, when the Supreme Court ruled the ban should be lifted. Casinos in seven other states — Rhode Island, Delaware, Mississippi, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New Mexico — now accept wagers on sports. The list is expected to grow by next year with numerous states considering bills.

There are no betting-sponsored cars scheduled to race Sunday at Dover International Speedway.

Because of its alliance with Dover Downs Hotel & Casino on the same property, Dover opened an on-site kiosk last fall and became the only track that allowed sports gambling on its property. The casino's sportsbook staff will set up on Sunday inside the Delaware Lottery's display near the 46-foot tall Monster Monument at Victory Plaza.

With rain in the forecast for Sunday's Cup race, most of the prop bets like laps led, number of cautions and average speed of the race have all been taken off the board. Kyle Busch is a 3-1 favorite to win and Kevin Harvick checks in with 9-2 odds. Bubba Wallace, who finished second in the 2018 Daytona 500, faces 500-1 odds.

By next year, the betting game changes in a sport looking for growth.

"I think a whole new generation and a whole new demographic could become engaged with NASCAR," Dougan said. **AP**

## corporate bits

### SANDS CHINA'S RESPONSIBLE GAMING PROGRAM CONTINUES



Through its Responsible Gaming Ambassador advanced training program, Sands China is continuing its effort to raise employees' responsible gaming awareness and skills.

The training program utilises both international and local

knowledge, with Professor Bo J. Bernhard, executive director of the UNLV International Gaming Institute, sharing his academic insights and experience from the United States with team members in Macau. Senior counsellors from

the Sheng Kung Hui Gambling Counseling and Family Wellness Centre enhance employees' responsible gaming knowledge and skills in areas such as crisis management and intervention.

The company currently has nearly 530 Responsible Gaming Ambassadors, the gaming operator noted in a statement.

The next round of training is scheduled for September 24-25.

"With this advanced Responsible Gaming Ambassador training, our team members can play a vital role in helping spot the signs of problem gambling," said Winnie Wong, chief responsible gaming officer and vice president of special gaming projects.

### MELCO GROUP ATTENDS BELT AND ROAD FORUM



Melco Group's chairman and CEO Lawrence Ho attended the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, China — a three-day event that attracted 5,000 representatives from 150 countries.

Ho attended the event with Melis Shiacolas, Managing Director of CNS Group; the parent company of The Cyprus Phassouri (Zakaki) Limited, which is a member of the Integrated Casino Resorts Cyprus Consortium.

According to a statement issued by the gaming operator, in Cyprus, this consortium led by Melco Group, is developing and will operate the City of Dreams Mediterranean integrated resort as well as the four Cyprus Casinos "C2" satellite casinos.

"We look forward to continuing our pace-setting commitment to build sustainably and develop integrated resorts with local partners in Macau and beyond," said Ho.

Located in western Limassol, City of Dreams Mediterranean is expected to open in 2021 according to the current timetable, and is set to become Europe's largest integrated resort.





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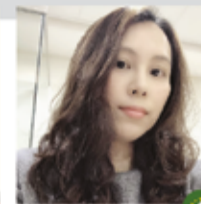
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Property of the Week



**NICE COURT, TAIPA HK\$8,980,000**

1,600 ft<sup>2</sup> 3 2

Bright and spacious three bedroom Apartment in Taipa with Nice views. With good size bedrooms, on of them in suite on the master bedroom with a lot of storage space. Spacious living and dining area with great views. In the complex there is a swimming pool.



Property Hotlist



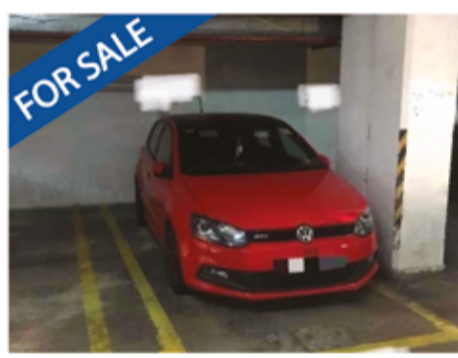
**MANHATTAN, TAIPA**  
**\$24,800/mth**  
 1,366 ft<sup>2</sup>

3   
 2



**PACIFICA, TAIPA**  
**\$9,888,000**  
 1,226 ft<sup>2</sup>

3   
 2



**KINGLIGHT CARPARK**  
**\$1,450,000**



More Listings

For Sale

- [Taipa] Choi Long Meng Chui 3 3 3,398 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$17,800,000** (ref: 18045555)
- [Taipa] Nova Taipa Gardens 4 3 2,500 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$12,500,000** (ref: 18115570)
- [Taipa] Va Fat 2 2 550 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$4,580,000** (ref: 18115566)
- [Taipa] The Buckingham 2 1 1,186 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$8,888,000** (ref: 18025544)
- [Taipa] The Manhattan 3 2 1,720 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$13,600,000** (ref: 16105507)

For Sale

- [Taipa] Nova Park 2 1 1,149 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$10,980,000** (ref: 18015541)
- [Taipa] Va Fat 2 1 638 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$4,580,000** (ref: 17085533)
- [Taipa] Manhattan Carpark **\$1,900,000** (ref: 17035514)

For Rent

- [Coloane] Keck Seng Warehouse 3,788 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$32,000/mth** (ref: 18050678)
- [Macau] Macau CBD Office 1,813 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$21,000/mth** (ref: 19010699)

Recent Movements

- Sold** Supreme Flower City, Taipa  
 4 bed, 2,060 ft<sup>2</sup> (ref: 13105367)
- Sold** Coloane Village, Coloane  
 2 bed, 664 ft<sup>2</sup> (ref: 16095490)
- Rented** Manhattan, Taipa  
 Car park (ref: 1505507RT)

JML in the Community



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XINJIANG

# Mass surveillance more sophisticated than thought



Blake Schmidt

A mobile app used by police to track citizens in China's far west region of Xinjiang shows how some of the country's biggest technology companies are linked to a mass surveillance system that is more sophisticated than previously known, according to a report from Human Rights Watch.

The app uses facial recognition technology from a firm backed by Alibaba Group Holding to match faces with photo identification and cross-check pictures on different documents, the New York-based group said last week. The app also takes a host of other data points - from electricity and smartphone use to personal relationships to political and religious affiliations - to flag suspicious behavior, the report said.

The watchdog's report sheds new light on the vast scope of activity China is monitoring as it cracks down on its minority Muslim Uighur population in a bid to stop terrorism before it happens. The U.S. State Department says as many as two million Uighurs are being held in camps in Xinjiang, a number disputed by Chinese authorities even though they haven't disclosed a figure.

In an address last week, U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo urged corporate America to think twice before doing business in Xinjiang.

"We watch the massive human rights violations in Xinjiang where over a million people are being held in a humanitarian crisis that is the scale of what took place in the 1930s," he said, according to comments released by the State Department. Human Rights Watch said that so-called data doors at checkpoints may be vacuuming up information from mobile phones from unsuspecting citizens. Some Xinjiang residents who suspected their phones were being used as monitoring devices even buried them in the desert, a move that could later hurt them if the system loses track of their phone, according to Maya Wang, a China researcher for Human Rights Watch.

"The political reeducation camps are one pen, but then you have a series of bigger pens that are like virtual fences," Wang said.

China's State Council Information Office did not reply to a request for comment sent by fax. The government has said the surveillance measures in Xinjiang are necessary to prevent terrorism and grow the region's economy.

Human Rights Watch said information in the report is based on reverse-engineering the police app, which communicates with a database known as Integrated Joint Operations Platform, or IJOP. The group said it enlisted Berlin-based cybersecurity firm Cure53 to conduct a technical assessment of the app after finding that it was publicly available online last year.

IJOP is mainly a tool for data collection, filing reports and prompting "investigative missions" by police. The report called for China to shut down the database behind the app, and for foreign governments to impose targeted sanctions such as visa bans and asset freezes against leaders in Xinjiang.

Human Rights Watch said the mobile app was developed by a unit of state-owned China Electronics Technology Group Corp, a Fortune 500 company known as CETC with USD30 billion in revenue and 169,000 employees. The group has expanded its various operations abroad, from developing smart city solutions in Tehran to a cooperation agreement with German engineering group Siemens.

CETC did not respond to calls and emails requesting comment.

The app uses facial recognition technology developed by Beijing-based Megvii under the brand Face++. The company, which sells licenses to use Face++ facial recognition in mobile apps, was considering an initial public offering to raise as much as \$1 billion in Hong Kong, Bloomberg News reported in January.

Megvii said it doesn't have any relationship with the IJOP database nor knowledge of why its technology appeared in the police app. It said it has a contractual relationship with CETC for a Face++ license related to the use of e-government services such as paying bills or unlocking a mobile device.

"Megvii does not host any third party data nor does it have any access to the IJOP platform or the national ID database," the company said in an emailed reply to questions, adding that Human Rights Watch didn't provide access to the full report before it was published.

Megvii's investors include Alibaba Group Holding - co-founded by China's richest man, Jack Ma - and its affiliate Ant Financial Services, as well as Sinovation Ventures and Foxconn Technology Group. Alibaba and Ant declined to comment, while neither Sinovation or Foxconn

responded to requests for comment.

Beyond collecting data and tipping off the police, the IJOP-linked app has a range of other functions. It provides a system for officials to communicate across voice, email and telephone calls, uses Baidu map functionality for geolocation, and allows officials to search for information about people using their name and various other inputs.

Baidu declined to comment.

The Human Rights Watch report provides insight into what type of behavior puts Xinjiang's citizens on the radar of authorities. Those particularly at risk include people who move in or out of a registered residence, download certain software or content on a mobile phones, or have links to people who are abroad.

**The government has said the surveillance measures in Xinjiang are necessary to prevent terrorism and grow the region's economy**

The report includes screenshots of the app, which prompts authorities to choose whether data collection is happening in home visits, on the streets, in political education camps, during registration for travel abroad, or when dealing with Xinjiang residents living in the mainland. Higher-level officials with administrative rights also have a sixth choice: collecting information from foreign nationals who have entered Xinjiang.

Officials are then prompted to log on and input data ranging from a person's height to blood type and political affiliation. Another page examined by Human Rights Watch shows 36 "person types" that attract special attention, including people who don't socialize with neighbors or those who use "an abnormal amount of electricity."

The app also uses the central IJOP system to send instructions for officers to investigate certain individuals, prompting them to collect identifying information such as vehicle color and type and log whether they use one of 51 "suspicious" internet tools like WhatsApp or Virtual Private Networks.

**Bloomberg**



# Supporters of billionaire's accuser decry censorship

Yanan Wang, Beijing

FOR three years, Chen Chun published articles on his public WeChat account touching on politics, philosophy and current affairs — subjects that are often censored on Chinese social media.

More recently, the writer in southern China has focused on the country's growing #MeToo movement. He drew attention to several sexual assault cases, and collected money for victims' families.

Yet it was only after Chen advocated support for Jingyao Liu, a woman who accused online shopping giant JD.com founder Richard Liu of rape in Minnesota, that his account was permanently shut down.

WeChat informed Chen this week that his account could no longer be used because it shared an online petition in support of Jingyao Liu which "violated regulations." Five other accounts that were circulating the petition with the hashtag #HereForJingyao have also been disabled in recent days.

"This is a pretty big case," Chen

told The Associated Press. "It's quite meaningful because in China we haven't yet had a case that reaches this level."

Billionaire Richard Liu is the most high-profile Chinese businessperson to be publicly accused of sexual assault. University of Minnesota student Jingyao Liu alleges in a lawsuit filed in Minneapolis last month that the 46-year-old internet tycoon forced himself upon her in his vehicle and later raped her at her apartment last summer.

The two Lius are not related. Richard Liu is also known by his Chinese name, Liu Qiangdong.

Richard Liu was initially arrested on suspicion of felony rape, but prosecutors announced in December that he would not face criminal charges because the case had "profound evidentiary problems." His defense attorneys said at the time that his arrest was based on a false claim.

Jingyao Liu was 21 years old when the alleged attack took place, according to the lawsuit. The Associated Press does not generally name alleged victims of sexual assault without their consent, but the law firm repre-

senting her said she agreed to be named.

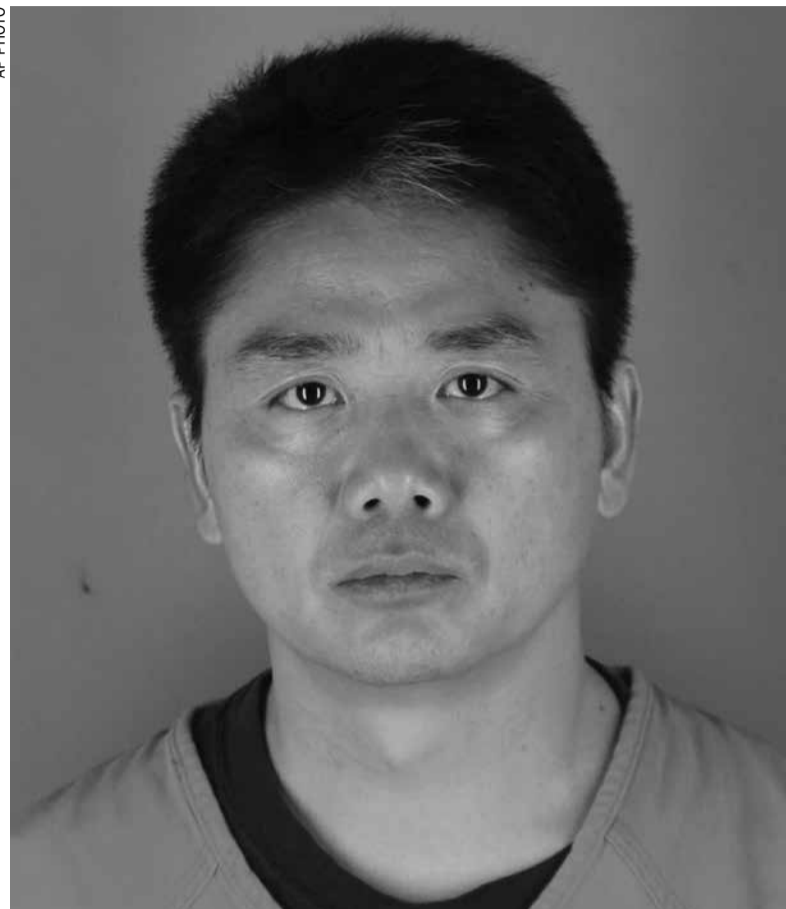
She is seeking damages of more than USD50,000.

The case has stirred intense online debate, as China's #MeToo movement grapples with the first allegation against a prominent business leader. Advocacy for sexual assault victims has gained considerable traction despite persistent censorship, but most of those publicly accused have been university professors.

"This case is different because it involves a business mogul," said Chen, who believes that Richard Liu's financial might has allowed him to press a strong defense in the court of public opinion — an option not available to most who have been accused of sexual assault in China. JD.com is China's biggest online direct retailer, and his fortune is estimated at \$7.5 billion.

Supporters of both parties have waged aggressive online public relations campaigns claiming to show the truth of what happened the night of the alleged rape.

Last Monday, two edited surveillance videos of Richard Liu and Jingyao Liu were posted



on China's Twitter-like Weibo platform by a recently created anonymous account. The videos show the two at a group dinner, in an elevator and walking arm-in-arm that night.

An attorney for Richard Liu, who showed the AP full, unedited surveillance videos from a restaurant and apartment complex, said they provide a dif-

ferent account of what transpired.

"The way it gets described sounds so much more nefarious than it actually is," said attorney Jill Brisbois. "She's step-in-step with him at every point." While the woman has alleged she was impaired and coerced to drink, she appears to be walking without assistance and linking her arm with the businessman's. AP

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NORTH KOREA

# Kim oversees missile firing drills, tells troops to be alert

Kim Tong-Hyung, Seoul

**N**ORTH Korean state media yesterday showed leader Kim Jong Un observing live-fire drills of long-range multiple rocket launchers and what appeared to be a new short-range ballistic missile, a day after South Korea expressed concern that the launches were a violation of an inter-Korean agreement to cease all hostile acts.

Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said Kim expressed "great satisfaction" over Saturday's drills and stressed that his front-line troops should keep a "high alert posture" and enhance combat ability to "defend the political sovereignty and economic self-sustenance of the country."

The weapons launches were a likely sign of Pyongyang's growing frustration at stalled diplomatic talks with Washington meant to provide coveted sanctions relief in return for nuclear disarmament. They also highlighted the fragility of the detente



between the Koreas, which in a military agreement reached last September vowed to completely cease "all hostile acts" against each other in land, air and sea.

South Korea said it's "very concerned" about North Korea's weapons launches, calling them a violation of the agreements to reduce animosities between the countries. The statement, issued after an emergency meeting Saturday of top officials at the presidential Blue House in

Seoul, also urged North Korea to stop committing acts that would raise military tensions and join efforts to resume nuclear diplomacy.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff initially said on Saturday that the North launched a single missile from the site near the coastal town of Wonsan but later said in a statement that "several projectiles" had been fired.

In its updated assessment, the JCS did not confirm whether the

North fired a ballistic missile, but said a "new tactical guided weapon" was among the weapons tested by the North, which also included 240 millimeter- and 300 millimeter-caliber multiple rocket launchers. The JCS said the various projectiles flew from 70 to 240 kilometers before splashing into sea.

The North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper published photos that showed Kim, equipped with binoculars, observing tests of different weapons systems, including multiple rocket launchers and what appeared to be a short-range missile fired from a launch vehicle, and also an explosion of what seemed to be a target set on island rocks.

"Praising the People's Army for its excellent operation of modern large-caliber long-range multiple rocket launchers and tactical guided weapons, he said that all the service members are master gunners and they are capable of carrying out duty to promptly tackle any situation," the KNCA paraphrased Kim as saying.

"He stressed the need for all the service members to keep high alert posture and more dynamically wage the drive to increase the combat ability so as to defend the political sovereignty and economic self-sustenance of the country and [...] the security of the people from the threats and invasion by any forces," the report added.

The North Korean missile appeared to be modeled after Russia's 9K720 Iskander mobile short-range ballistic missile system, said Kim Dong-yub, an analyst from Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies. The solid-fuel North Korean missile was first revealed in a military parade in Pyongyang in February last year and is likely the unspecified tactical weapon the North said it tested last month, he said.

The new missile would be potentially capable of delivering nuclear warheads and striking targets as far away as 500 kilometers, which puts the entire Korean Peninsula within reach, said Kim, who based his analysis on the capabilities of the Iskander and North Korea's current levels in missile technology.

The missile is also likely designed to be maneuvered during flight and warhead delivery, which would make it less likely to be intercepted by missile defense systems, he said. **AP**

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## THAILAND

# Newly crowned king grants titles on second day of rituals

Grant Peck, Bangkok

THAILAND'S newly crowned King Maha Vajiralongkorn yesterday performed the second day of coronation activities, granting new titles to members of the royal family in front of an audience of dignitaries including top government officials and senior Buddhist monks.

On Saturday, Vajiralongkorn took part in an elaborate set of rituals, a mix of Buddhist and Hindu Brahmanic traditions, which established his status as a full-fledged monarch with complete regal powers.

Vajiralongkorn — also known as King Rama X, the 10th king of the Chakri dynasty — had already been serving as king since the October 2016 death of his father, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who was on the throne for seven decades.

The 66-year-old monarch began yesterday morning's event in a hall at Bangkok's Grand Palace by paying respects in



front of portraits of his late father and his mother, who has been hospitalized for an extended period. The 86-year-old mother, known as Queen Sirikit, was granted a new official title of Queen Mother.

Vajiralongkorn's son, Prince Dipangkorn Rasmijoti, was one of the family members granted a fresh name for the new reign. He turned 14 on April 29 and is the heir presumptive.

While Saturday's ceremonies were solemn and heavily tinged with age-old rites, including the prominent presence of Brahmin priests, yesterday's event was slightly more relaxed, though also steeped with

traditional royal and Buddhist gestures.

The live television coverage of the event showed some glimpses of informality: the king's wife, who was granted the title Queen Suthida last week, exchanging a brief aside with Vajiralongkorn; two of his daughters in a warm hug after the second one returned from receiving her new title.

The king wore his normal modern royal uniform with a white tunic, a strong contrast with the traditional vestments with gold embroidery that he wore the previous day. During the final portion of Saturday's coronation, he also wore the

"Great Crown of Victory," said to date from 1782. The crown is 66 centimeters (26 inches) high, weighs 7.3 kilograms and is ornamented with diamonds set in gold enamel.

Duangkamol Siriwiwattanukul said she traveled from the northeastern province of Sakon Nakhon, 542 kilometer (337 miles) northeast of Bangkok, to watch the royal events on a video screen set up outside the palace.

"I am very happy and feeling goosebumps," she said, gripping a portrait of her monarch. "Every time I see the king, my tears come out."

There was a 7-kilometer royal procession in which the king will be carried on an elaborate palanquin through nearby city streets to visit four important temples and allow the public to pay homage to him.

Today the king will greet the public from the balcony of the Grand Palace in the late afternoon and then hold a reception for the diplomatic corps. AP

## SRI LANKA

## Police ask public to hand in blades following bomb

POLICE in Sri Lanka have requested members of the public hand over swords or other large knives to the nearest police stations after hundreds of such blades were discovered in Mosques and homes during searches in the aftermath of Easter Sunday suicide bomb attacks.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara said Saturday that those possessing knives used for day-to-day legal purposes need not hand them over.

In addition to illegal blades, Gunasekara said searches uncovered large amounts of camouflaged materials similar to those worn by the military.

He said those too needed to be handed over to police on Saturday and Sunday.

More than 250 people were killed and hundreds were wounded when Islamic extremist suicide bombers attacked three churches and three tourist hotels in Sri Lanka on April 21. AP

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# Gaza-Israel fight escalates with sides readying next phase

Ivan Levingston  
& Saud Abu Ramadan

**I**SRAEL and Gaza-based militants are digging in for extended fighting after a barrage of hundreds of rockets and retaliatory airstrikes boiled over into a second day, threatening to undo months of Egyptian-brokered efforts to reach a long-term truce.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday he instructed the army to continue its "massive attacks" in Gaza, and to bolster forces near the coastal strip. Meanwhile, militant groups threatened to send rockets deeper into Israel and to ruin the Eurovision song contest that Israel is set to host later this month, a prime tourist draw. Israel's security cabinet met yesterday to discuss the flareup.

"They thought that because it's before the Memorial Day of Israel and the Independence Day of Israel and the Eurovision which is in a week or two in Israel, Israel will not retaliate, but it was a huge mistake," former Israeli National Security Adviser Yaakov Amidror said on a press briefing. Israel marks its memorial and independence days this week.

Ten Palestinians, including at least six militants, and an Israeli man have been killed since lower-level fighting erupted on Friday. A Palestinian baby and her pregnant mother were



among the dead, with Gaza officials blaming Israel and an Israeli military spokesman saying they were killed by rockets fired from Gaza that fell short.

## LOW BOIL

Gaza militant groups, who had sought to trade longer-term quiet for an influx of aid to the impoverished territory, have accused Israel of not honoring commitments under a previous

cease-fire. They've also pledged to be an obstacle to the Trump administration's peace plan, which is expected to be presented next month.

For more than a year, Hamas has been sponsoring weekly protests at the border designed to draw attention to the Palestinians' plight and deflect popular anger over Gaza's crushing poverty away from its own failures and onto Israel. Gaza has

been under an Israeli and Egyptian blockade since the Hamas takeover, and is imposed by the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority, which is locked in a power struggle with Hamas, have intensified Gaza's distress.

Despite repeated rocket attacks over the past year, the Israeli government has refrained from the sort of full-scale wars with Gaza it's waged three times since Hamas, considered a

terrorist group by the U.S. and European Union, seized control of the strip in 2007. But Israel's deterrent capabilities have been eroded as militants take more risks amid the deepening humanitarian crisis, and the Israeli government has little appetite to reoccupy the enclave 14 years after withdrawing all troops and Jewish settlements from the area.

Israeli officials have said their priority is to confront Iran's attempts to entrench itself militarily in Syria, on Israel's northern border. To keep tensions with Gaza in check, Netanyahu agreed several months ago to allow infusions of tens of millions of Qatari dollars to flow to the territory of nearly 2 million people. Opposition leader Benny Gantz - a former military chief and Netanyahu's main rival in Israel's recent election - has likened that arrangement to paying protection money to a mafia.

## LATEST FIGHTING

Schools were closed on both sides of the border, and Gaza City streets were empty on the eve of Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month. Israel sent troop reinforcements and is mobilizing an armored brigade for contingencies, and limits were placed on large gatherings.

Tensions began rising Friday afternoon when a sniper backed by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group shot two Israeli soldiers, and two protesters and two militants were killed by Israeli fire.

Rocket bombardments began Saturday morning, with about 450 rockets fired by midday yesterday. More than 100 were intercepted by missile defense batteries. **Bloomberg**

## VENEZUELA

# Guaido doesn't rule out US military action

Jose Orozco

**V**ENEZUELA'S opposition leader Juan Guaido said he cannot rule out the option of the U.S. military working with his nation's armed forces to oust President Nicolas Maduro, telling the Washington Post that such an offer from the Trump administration would have to be voted on in the parliament he leads.

Guaido, who is the National Assembly president and is recognized as the country's legitimate leader by President Donald Trump and about 50 other countries, suggested he expected many more defectors from the military, along with Maduro's resignation, after the opposition leader led a failed uprising this week. The



move to push out Maduro and call for free elections still needs more military support, he said.

Instead of unilateral U.S. intervention, Guaido said such an operation would have to be accompanied by Venezuelan forces, wi-

thout offering further details. He said he welcomes U.S. deliberations on military options because his movement is also considering all possibilities.

Tensions continue to run high after Guaido's failed attempt to overthrow

Maduro, and the so-called Lima Group last week decided to enlist Cuba in brokering a solution to the turmoil. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau joined the group of 14 mostly Latin American countries in turning to Venezuela's closest ally to try to move forward from a standoff that's also drawing in Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned Trump against U.S. interference in Venezuela during a May 3 phone call. Trump told reporters that Putin had assured him Moscow isn't seeking to "get involved" in the crisis either, despite assertions by the U.S. president's top national security advisers that the Kremlin talked Maduro out of leaving the country after Guaido's attempt to

bring down the regime.

Those advisers, U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and National Security Adviser John Bolton, were briefed "on a wide range of military options," in Venezuela on May 3, the Pentagon said in statement.

The U.S. may be weighing options, but military action would mark a strategic shift for Trump who campaigned against what he called "stupid wars" and has staked his presidency on withdrawing from engagements elsewhere, including Afghanistan. Military action could also rile allies like Brazil and other nations in Latin America, where the U.S. has a troubled history of intervention in countries from Nicaragua to Chile.

Guaido's plan remains to continue to reach out to Maduro loyalists, combined with international pressure and street protests, he told the Post. While the failed uprising may have shown the opposition was not as strong as it hoped, it also showed Maduro is weaker than expected, he said.

Maduro is also seeking to shore up his support among the armed forces and visited a military base on Saturday for the third straight day. State television showed Maduro walking on dirt roads flanked by hundreds of uniformed soldiers after commanders briefed him on military issues. There were 3,500 soldiers at the site, according to state television.



## what's ON



**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

**MACAU GIANT PANDA PAVILION AND PAVILION OF RARE ANIMALS**  
**TIME:** 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm daily  
**VENUE:** Seac Pai Van Park  
**ADMISSION:** MOP10 (Pavilion of Rare Animals)  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 2888 0087

**MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE**  
**TIME:** 10am-6pm daily (Except on Thursdays; open on public holidays)  
**VENUE:** Macau Science Center  
**ADMISSION:** MOP25 (Exhibition Centre)  
 MOP60 (Planetarium 2D dome or 2D sky shows)  
 MOP80 (Planetarium 3D dome or 3D sky shows)  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 2888 0822

**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

**TREASURE OF SACRED ART OF ST. JOSEPH'S SEMINARY**  
**TIME:** 10am-5pm daily (closed on Wednesdays, open on public holidays)  
**VENUE:** St. Joseph's Seminary and Church, Rua do Seminário  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 2835 7911

## Offbeat

## IGUANA THROWN AT RESTAURANT MANAGER IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY

An iguana injured when a man pulled the lizard from under his shirt and threw it at an Ohio restaurant manager remains in protective custody at a humane society that is awaiting court permission to provide medical treatment.

The turquoise female iguana that police named "Copper" has a broken leg, metabolic bone disease and other ailments, Lake County Humane Society officials told WEWS-TV. The animal needs surgery that will cost about USD1,600, but that can't happen until a judge gives approval because the Humane Society is not its owner, society intake coordinator Allison Rothlisberger said Saturday.

The Humane Society is seeking tax-deductible donations to pay for the surgery. Copper is receiving basic care for now to make the lizard as comfortable as possible, Rothlisberger said.

The iguana's 49-year-old owner has been charged with cruelty to animals and disorderly conduct, both misdemeanor charges.

According to authorities, the man threw a menu at a waitress at a Perkins Restaurant in Painesville on April 16. When a manager intervened, the man removed the iguana from beneath his shirt, twirled it around and threw it at him, police said. Authorities haven't said what provoked the attack.

Painesville is roughly 30 miles (48 kilometers) north-east of downtown Cleveland.

## TV canal macau



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

## Cinema



## CINETEATRO

01 - 08 May

## AVENGERS: ENDGAME

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

ROOM 2

4:45, 8:00pm

Director: Anthony Russo, Joe Russo

Starring: Brie Larson, Scarlett Johansson, Karen Gillan

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 181min



## P STORM

ROOM 2

2:30pm

Director: David Lam

Starring: Chrissie Chau, Louis Koo, Kevin Cheng

Language: Cantonese (Chinese &amp; English)

Duration: 96min



## 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



## 1976 HUGE EARTHQUAKE ROCKS ITALY

A powerful quake in north-east Italy has left at least 60 people dead and many more buried under rubble.

The strongest of three major tremors measured 6.5 on the Richter scale and struck at about 2000GMT affecting six European countries - France, West Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia as well as Italy.

Broken communications links have made information hard to come by.

It is believed hundreds have been trapped under fallen buildings in the small town of Maiano in the foothills of the Italian Alps - 50 families under two blocks of houses and 60 diners at a restaurant that collapsed.

So far the Italian news agency Italia has reported 15 bodies pulled out from the nearby town of Buia, six deaths in San Daniele del Friuli, three in Gemona and one in Udine, the epicentre of the quake.

In the cities of Venice and Trieste, thousands of people rushed out into open spaces when the earthquake struck.

Police reported chaos on the roads as people escaped built-up areas to spend the night in the open.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The following 12 months saw hundreds more tremors in the region, the largest of which struck in September. Altogether, the May and September quakes killed 951 people, injured 2,400 and left 45,000 homeless. Damage was estimated at £3,000m. The Italian government came under strong criticism for allowing red tape to hamper reconstruction of the area.

When Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti visited the region in September, he was greeted with angry protests from refugees who had been living in tents for four months.

Tent cities were - eventually - replaced with 20,000 prefabricated houses. Using donations from the European Community, the government had spent £250m by the end of 1976 to rebuild the infrastructure of the region and rehouse its inhabitants.









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TENNIS

# Nadal confident arriving in Madrid despite disappointing run

AP PHOTO



Tales Azzoni, Madrid

**R**AFAEL Nadal hadn't started the clay-court season with these many setbacks in four years.

Not since 2015 had Nadal arrived at the Madrid Open without having won a title either in Monte Carlo or in Barcelona, the tournaments that mark the start of clay swing in Europe.

That year, Nadal was coming off a series of injuries and ended not reaching the final of either tournament. He also didn't win the title in Madrid, Rome and the French Open, dropping out of the top five in the rankings for the first time in a decade.

Now things are different, though.

Despite the disappointing results, the second-ranked Nadal says there is no reason for concern.

"My confidence is back," Nadal said after the semifinal loss to Dominic Thiem in Barcelona, which ended his run of three straight titles in the tournament. "I really believe that I made very good improvements to create a good base to try to achieve my goals during the next couple of weeks."

Nadal will be trying to win his third straight French Open title — and 12th overall — at Roland Garros in June.

He lost to Fabio Fognini in the semifinals at Monte Carlo, where he also had won three titles in a row. The only other time Nadal hadn't won either in Monte Car-

lo or in Barcelona was in 2014.

"Against Fognini I played the worst match probably in 14 years on clay. [Against Thiem] I played a good match. I was competitive and I enjoyed the match. I really felt competitive for the first time in a way that I want to feel myself. I am happy and I am confident that I made a big improvement."

The 17-time Grand Slam winner has won a clay-court title in each of the last 15 seasons. He is an eight-time finalist in Madrid, with his last of five titles coming in 2017. He was defeated by Thiem in the quarterfinals last year.

Nadal will start this year's campaign against the winner of the match between young Canadians Felix Auger-Aliassime or

Denis Shapovalov, a semifinalist last year. Auger-Aliassime is one of the sensations on tour this season, having reached the final in Rio and the semifinals in Miami.

The other half of the Madrid draw has top-seeded Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer, who will be making his return to clay-court tournaments after two seasons. The 37-year-old Federer, a three-time champion in Madrid, is preparing to make his first French Open appearance since 2015.

Federer hasn't played on clay since Rome in 2016, but is looking for his third title of the season to add to his triumphs in Dubai and Miami. The only other player with two titles this

season is Thiem, who beat Federer in the Indian Wells final. Federer and Thiem could meet in the quarterfinals in Madrid.

The defending champion in Madrid is Alexander Zverev, the German who did not drop his serve in his winning campaign last year. He will start this year's tournament against David Ferrer, the veteran Spaniard who is retiring following the tournament in Madrid.

Petra Kvitova will defend her title in the women's side. The second-seeded Czech is a three-time champion in Madrid and the tournament's most successful women's player with 27 wins and six losses. Naomi Osaka is the top-seed player this year in Madrid. **AP**

MOTORSPORT

# Quartararo becomes youngest MotoGP pole-sitter at 20

**F**ABIO Quartararo became the youngest pole-sitter in MotoGP history at 20 when he qualified fastest at the Spanish MotoGP on Saturday.

At 20 years, 14 days, the Frenchman beat the previous record set in 2013 by Marc Marquez, who was 20 years, 62 days.

"I never expect that I can make pole position today so it's really amazing,"

Quartararo said. "All the team have worked a lot throughout the weekend, and I want to thank them for making this possible."

The race on Sunday gives him a chance to become the youngest premier grand prix winner, another record held by Marquez since that same weekend in the United States in 2013.

Quartararo, 10th in the standings after three races, set a lap record in

qualifying of 1 minute, 36.880 seconds at the Circuito de Jerez. He was 0.082 seconds faster than Yamaha SRT teammate Franco Morbidelli, and 0.090 quicker than three-time defending champion Marquez, who starts third on a Honda.

It was the first time an independent team finished first and second in MotoGP qualifying since the Japanese Mo-

toGP in 2017.

"For sure it's really special, it's incredible," Quartararo said. "For a rookie team it's amazing to have a one-two. We hope we can make this more often throughout the season."

Championship leader Andrea Dovizioso starts fourth on a Ducati.

Yamaha's Valentino Rossi, who trails Dovizioso by three points overall, qualified 13th. **AP**

GOLF

# Korhonen beats Hebert in playoff to win China Open

**M**IKKO Korhonen of Finland held his nerve on the first playoff hole to edge Benjamin Hebert and complete his comeback to win the Volvo China Open on Sunday.

Korhonen started the final round three shots behind Hebert, the overnight leader, but closed the gap after shooting a 6-under 66 to finish in a tie with the Frenchman on 20-under 268. And he didn't take long to wrap up the title, sinking an eight-footer for a birdie on the first playoff hole.

Chinese golfer Kuang Yang, who became youngest person to make the cut at a regular European Tour event — outside the majors — at 14 years, 6 months, 12 days, shot a final-round 73 to finish in a share of 55th place with a 4-under 284.

Jorge Campillo (67) of Spain, who was in the final group with Korhonen and Hebert, just missed out on the playoff on 19 under to finish third. Local favorite and 2016 winner Li Haotong was another three shots back in fourth. **AP**



opinion

**Tax Matters**

Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa



**THE HONG KONG-MACAO CEPA**

According to the “one country, two systems” principle, China encompasses three separate customs territories – Mainland China, and the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions. From an economic and trade standpoint, the three territories operate in the international market as if they were independent countries – even though they are territories of a single sovereign state.

With the aim to promote their economic prosperity and development, these territories have entered into bilateral agreements covering trade in goods and services, investment, intellectual property and economic and technical cooperation – the so-called CEPA (Closer Economic Partnership Arrangements). CEPA are free trade agreements that are in line with the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, and provide for preferential access for the products and residents (individuals and enterprises) of one of the signatories to the market of the other signatory.

Three CEPA are currently in force: (i) the Mainland and Hong Kong CEPA (signed on 29 June 2003), (ii) the Mainland and Macao CEPA (signed on 17 October 2003), and (iii) the Hong Kong and Macao CEPA (signed on 27 October 2017). Both Mainland and Hong Kong CEPA and Mainland and Macao CEPA came into effect on 1 January 2004, whilst the Hong Kong and Macao CEPA was implemented on 1 January 2018.

Since it came into force, several additional supplements have been signed regarding the Mainland and Macao CEPA, broadening the areas, products and services subject to the terms of the agreement. Generally, almost all products of Macanese origin which are permitted to be imported into the Mainland are exempted from import duties (in order to benefit from this exemption, the products must be “made in Macao”, i.e. they must fulfil certain rules of origin criteria). In addition, certain service sectors are granted preferential access to the Mainland market, provided that the service supplier attains a “Macao Service Supplier” certificate.

The Hong Kong and Macao CEPA was subject to the scrutiny of the WTO, which approved it on 1 April 2019 as an agreement that complies with the principles and rules of the WTO. Its declared objectives are to achieve liberalisation of trade between the Hong Kong SAR and the Macao SAR, strengthen trade and investment cooperation between the two territories and promote their joint development by (i) reducing or eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers on the trade of goods, (ii) reducing or eliminating all discriminatory measures on the trade of services, (iii) promoting and protecting investment, (iv) promoting trade and investment facilitation, and (v) promoting economic and technical cooperation.

According to some available data, the bilateral trade in goods between the two territories (Hong Kong and Macao) amounted to about HKD\$50 billion in 2017. Direct investment from Hong Kong into Macao amounted to about HKD\$80 billion and from Macao into Hong Kong to about HKD\$50.2 billion at the end of 2017. Bilateral trade in services amounted to about HKD\$14.5 billion in 2016.

Since Hong Kong and Macao are already territories that, save for some exceptions, do not apply any tariffs on imports, the Hong Kong and Macao CEPA mainly promotes, in its two annexes, the specific commitments of Hong Kong (Annex 1) and Macao (Annex 2) to the liberalisation of trade in services for the other party. Hong Kong has committed to make additionally available to Macanese service suppliers 105 service sectors in Hong Kong; Macao has committed to make additionally available to Hong Kong service suppliers 72 service sectors in Macao.

Considering the above-mentioned figures, it is easy to understand that the elimination of barriers to trade and investment between the two territories is highly important. The CEPA arrangements seem to be good instruments to pursue the “one country, two systems” principle and the objectives of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

**THE ‘AVENGERS ENDGAME’ NEARS GLOBAL BUZZ RECORD WITH OVER \$2 BILLION**

“Avengers: Endgame” has crossed the \$2 billion mark at the global box office in record time and is leaving newcomers in its dust.

The Walt Disney Co. estimates Sunday that the Marvel blockbuster has added \$145.8 million from North American theaters and \$282.2 million internationally in its second weekend in theaters bringing its global total to \$2.2 billion.

“Endgame” is one of 5 movies to ever reach that

mark and, not accounting for inflation, is now the second biggest film of all time worldwide behind “Avatar’s” \$2.8 billion. “Avatar” reached \$2 billion in 47 days of release compared with 11 for “Endgame.”

New films picked up scraps at the domestic box office, including “The Intruder,” with \$11 million, “Long Shot,” with \$10 million, and “Uglydolls” with \$8.5 million.

**Self-improvement guru set to face ‘sex slave’ accusers**



Keith Raniere (second from right) in an April 2018 courtroom sketch

It was called “collateral” – Inude photos and other embarrassing material that female members of an upstate New York self-improvement group turned over to their “masters” to ensure obedience, silence and sexual fealty to the organization’s spiritual leader, Keith Raniere.

Now some former members of the group, NXIVM, are poised to break their vow of silence for the first time by testifying against Raniere, who has been compared to a cult leader. Opening arguments are set for Tuesday at a federal court in Brooklyn.

Among the more sensational allegations: Some women “slaves” in a secret NXIVM sorority were branded with Raniere’s initials as part of their initiation. Others were threatened with the release of their collateral if they didn’t have unwanted sex with him.

Prosecutors have been tight-lipped about who will testify about the sorority, called DOS, an acronym for a Latin phrase roughly translated as “Lord/master of obedient women.” There’s speculation that former members of Raniere’s inner circle including TV actress Allison Mack and Lauren Salzman, the daughter of the group’s top executive, could take the witness stand against him.

U.S. District Judge Nicholas Garaufis has yet to rule on a request by prosecutors to protect the privacy of some alleged victims, referred to as “Jane Does” in court papers, by only using their first names, nicknames or pseudonyms while they testify –

measures needed to protect them from “potential harassment” and “undue embarrassment.”

Raniere, 58, has pleaded not guilty to sex-trafficking and other charges. His lawyers have opposed what they call “unusual and dubious” protections that would violate his constitutional right to confront his accusers. They add it would “unfairly signal to the jury that, in the court’s view, the witness is a victim of a sex crime who is in danger.”

Either way, the case has resulted in a dramatic downfall for Raniere from a time when he was known as “Vanguard” by devotees in the United States and Mexico.

Promotional material for the now-disbanded NXIVM once hailed him as a “scientist, mathematician, philosopher, entrepreneur, educator, inventor and author” who has “devoted his life to developing new tools for human empowerment, expression and ethics.”

Last year, after a New York Times expose on the group and reports that investigators were interviewing some women who had defected from DOS, Raniere fled to Mexico. He was ultimately found staying with Mack and other women in a luxury villa in Puerto Vallarta and taken into custody on a U.S. warrant.

Mack, best known for her role as a young Superman’s close friend on the series “Smallville,” also was charged, along with Clare Bronfman, an heir to the Seagram

liquor fortune who bankrolled NXIVM. Salzman and two others also faced charges.

But after prosecutors added child exploitation charges against Raniere earlier this year based on evidence he had sex with a 15-year-old girl, all of his co-defendants pleaded guilty.

Salzman admitted in her guilty plea they she held a Mexican woman hostage in an upstate home for more than two years under threat of having her deported, “if she did not complete labor requested by myself and others.”

At her plea hearing, Mack tearfully said she had collected “collateral” against women and expressed regret about getting involved with Raniere – a change of heart from when she told The New York Times that, as one of the DOS “masters,” she saw the women’s servitude and willingness to be branded as acts of devotion.

Authorities say the branding was done using a cauterizing pen without anesthesia by a doctor who is now under investigation by state health officials.

Eight “Jane Does” in that case have refused to answer questions, saying through their lawyers “the branding was a voluntary free expression of personal beliefs.”

In the court papers, defense lawyers have similarly claimed the alleged victims were never abused. The women are instead described as “independent, smart, curious adults” in search of “happiness, fulfillment and meaning.” **MDT/AP**

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	60-80 Moderate	
High Density Residential Area	40-60 Moderate	
Ambient	55-75 Moderate	

SOURCE: DSI/MG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**SYRIA** Warplanes struck a hospital in Syria’s northwestern Idlib province yesterday, knocking it out of service, as government forces continued to bombard the rebel-held region following insurgent attacks last week.



**UK** Britain’s Conservative government and opposition Labour Party have a duty to strike a compromise Brexit agreement to end months of political deadlock over Britain’s exit from the European Union, Prime Minister Theresa May said yesterday.



**USA** A military-chartered jet carrying 143 people landed hard, then bounced and swerved as the pilot struggled to control it amid thunder and lightning, ultimately skidding off the runway and coming to a crashing halt in a river at Naval Air Station Jacksonville.

**USA** An explosion and fire at an Illinois silicone factory claimed a second victim yesterday (local time) when an employee taken to a hospital after the blast died, a local coroner confirmed, and the official death toll is expected to rise to four as authorities suspended the search for two other bodies believed to be in the rubble.



**PANAMA** Panamanians were choosing yesterday among seven mostly business-friendly candidates to lead this Central American trade and financial hub for the next five years in a presidential election focusing on corruption and slowing economic growth.