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SINGAPORE IS TOUTED AS MACAU'S NEXT ENGINE OF VISITOR GROWTH, EVEN AMID CONCERNS OF OVER-TOURISM

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REAL ESTATE AGENCY CALLS ON NEXT GOV'T TO RETHINK LAND SUPPLY

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HONG KONG PROTESTORS ARE TURNING ON THE CITY'S DOMINANT BROADCASTER, ACCUSING IT OF HARBORING A PRO-BEIJING BIAS IN ITS COVERAGE OF THE RECENT STRIFE

P8

Trump-Xi The top US and Chinese trade envoys have spoken by phone in their first known contact since Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping agreed to resume stalled talks on ending a tariff war.

Cambodia Seven people have been detained in connection with activities marking the third anniversary of the killing of a prominent government critic, police said yesterday.

Thailand Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha yesterday officially named his new Cabinet, a mix of members of the military government he headed after leading a 2014 coup and key politicians who helped him assemble a majority in the House of Representatives after March elections.

AP PHOTO



India An airline technician was killed when the flaps covering an aircraft's main landing gear accidentally closed on him during maintenance work, the airline said yesterday.

Japan Johnny Kitagawa, a kingpin of Japan's entertainment industry for more than half a century who produced famous boybands including Arashi, Tokio and SMAP, has died. He was 87. More on p13

AP PHOTO



Iran President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday that Britain will face "repercussions" over the seizure of an Iranian supertanker last week that authorities in Gibraltar suspect was breaching European sanctions on oil shipments to Syria.

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**TRAILHIKER
CELEBRATES
10 YEARS
RUNNING THIS
NOVEMBER**

P7

MANDATORY MEASURES PROPOSED TO PROTECT ILHA VERDE HILL

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) will initiate administrative procedures to make the maintenance of Ilha Verde hill mandatory, in case the owner fails to propose a plan for the site's protection before the deadline. The measure is in accordance with the city's cultural relics heritage law. According to the IC, the bureau will give the hill owner 30 days to submit a restoration plan. In 2016, the IC released its opinions on the protection of Ilha Verde, suggesting that the hill, trees, wood, abbey, environmental character and military buildings be maintained. Recently, the IC visited the abbey to learn about the damage to the hill, however, they were unable to enter because the hill is private property.

TEMPORARY FERRY TERMINAL PLANNED AT BARRA

The Marine and Water Bureau has said that the SAR government has plans to build a temporary public ferry terminal at Barra, according to their reply to lawmaker Ho Ion Sang's inquiry. The ferry terminal will be used by vessels carrying tourists. According to the marine authority, the temporary ferry terminal was planned based on Macau's master plan of tourism industry development, which was published in 2017. The plan proposed providing both residents and tourists with new leisure and cultural spaces.

SAFP CLARIFIES CIVIL SERVANT WELFARE RUMOR

The Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) has released a statement to clarify an online rumor relating to civil servants' welfare. According to the SAFP, the rumor indicated that the bureau had issued a notification announcing that civil servants would not receive compensation in the form of days-off when they had already received additional payment from the government. The bureau did not elaborate on the rumor, and instead called on civil servants and the public to stop sharing it. The rumor directs the public to ask the SAFP for further information. The SAFP has received a large number of inquiries.

SINGAPORE PENNED NEXT GREAT ENGINE FOR MACAU TOURISM

DANIEL BEITLER

SINGAPORE has been designated as the next key market for tourism expansion, according to the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO), following similar announcements made in recent years about South Korea and India.

"Macau has not been active in [marketing to] Singapore for a while, so this is a good time to re-tender our relationships and look for new representation here," MGTO Director Helena de Senna Fernandes told TTG Asia. "It's important to make a comeback in the Singapore market."

At an event held in Singapore last Friday, the MGTO announced its partnership with travel blogger Keith Yuen, who traveled across the Greater Bay Area to produce an opinion on tourism development and share it with 80 members of the travel trade from Singapore, Macau and Zhuhai. Yuen also made about 20 social media postings, which earned over 30,000 likes and 1,600 comments from his followers.

Macau's tourism chief reasoned that cultural ties between the peoples of Singapore and southern China might make it easier to entice more visitors from the city-state to visit Macau. It was a sensible market for expansion, she said, especially as many Singaporeans can trace their roots back to the Pearl River Delta region.

The MGTO is looking to open



an office in the city-state "sometimes next year," according to Senna Fernandes.

Following years of targeted promotion, South Korea has emerged as Macau's largest non-Chinese source market for visitors. More than a quarter-million South Korean tourists traveled to Macau in the first quarter of 2019, about the same number as those from Taiwan.

Similar calls to promote Macau as a tourist destination in India have not been as successful.

The call for more tourists comes at an unusual time for Macau, which has been grappling with how to manage ever-growing numbers since the start of the year. The

number of visitors to Macau rose more than 21% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2019, according to official data provided by the local government, fueling concerns of over-tourism.

Last year's influx of 35.8 million tourists represented an almost 10% rise from 32.6 million in 2017. At its current growth trajectory, Macau is on track to break the symbolic 40-million mark this year, previously earmarked by Macau's Institute for Tourism Studies as the city's "optimal tourism carrying capacity."

The rapid rise in the number of visitors has become a source of concern for the Macau public, especially as gaming receipts and other

tourism spending are growing at a much slower pace or not at all.

Casino revenues during the first half of the year contracted 0.5% compared with the equivalent period in 2018, according to the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau. The same rate of decline was measured in the first quarter of 2019.

Tourism spending is also markedly down this year in per capita terms. It measured just MOP1,634 per visitor in the first three months of this year, down about 15% from a year earlier.

According to the available surveys, most retailers and restaurateurs do not anticipate a pickup in their business in the short-term.

GAMING

Regulator meets with industry to caution against online casinos

MACAU'S Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) met yesterday with representatives of junkets and the city's six gaming operators where it stressed the need to adhere to local and foreign laws on gambling and the promotion of games of chance.

The meeting comes days after Chinese state media reported that junket promoter Suncity Group has been operating an online casino based overseas, but targeting mainland gamblers.

Suncity has staunchly denied the allegation, saying it neither owns any gambling tables nor operates

any online gambling activities. The firm said its business operating in Macau and elsewhere are all licensed and conducted under the supervision of the concerned governments.

Nevertheless, DICJ Director Paulo Martins Chan reminded participants at the meeting that the local

government does not allow the gaming sector to carry out any promotion of online gambling placing bets via telephone and other related activities through casinos located in the SAR.

Chan urged the casino concessionaires and sub-concessionaires to strictly supervise junket promo-

ters in order to prevent the misuse of Macau's casinos for the promotion of online games or proxy betting. He also appealed to the gaming operators to meet with their respective junket promoters, in order to remind them of the need for strict compliance with legal regulations.

The DICJ also stressed that any violation of the law by a junket promoter - even if such a violation takes place outside of Macau - could have implications for the suitability of the junket to operate in the SAR. **DB**

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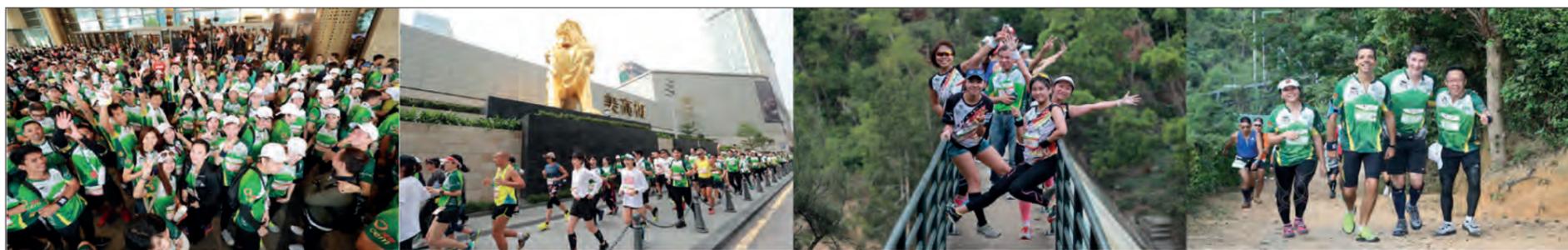
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Diagonal parking abandoned by gov't, but

RENATO MARQUES

LAST May, the topic of parking space design in Macau, namely for motorcycles, was brought to the Legislative Assembly (AL) by lawmaker Sulu Sou's initiative.

Sou asked the government about the possibility of changing the current design of Macau's "right-angled" parking spaces to diagonal spaces, or 'angled bays', following worldwide trends on the matter.

In reply, the Transport Bureau said it would not consider the design, claiming that adopting it would reduce the number of parking spaces available in the streets of Macau.

According to the lawmaker, there was initially a time when the bureau said it would "actively consider" the proposal. However, it has now revised its intentions.

In fact, diagonal parking, also known as back-in angle parking, has gathered support from municipalities and governmental organizations worldwide, who have adopted it as the safest solution in both street and off-street parking design.

According to a California-based parking design consultancy com-

pany, diagonal parking spaces have pros and cons.

As stated in their report on the topic, "the cons of angled parking spaces are that they usually require traffic to be one-way, which can be frustrating to drivers."

As for the pros, the company highlighted the ability to park and exit the parking spaces, as well as the requirement for a smaller turning radius. The company also noted that diagonal spaces were "less likely to get blocked in (in the case of cars) and [less likely to lead to] entangled handlebars and side mirrors (in case of motorcycles)."

The consultancy company also noted that the design "can fit more spaces per square foot," noting that diagonal parking spaces allow for narrower bays compared to normal right-angled parking spaces.

Similar remarks are found in a study by the Department of Urban Planning Affairs of the Ministry of Municipalities & Agriculture of the Kingdom of Bahrain, which compared different design solutions and angles ranging from 30 to 60 degrees.

The study found that for comfortable use, a right-angled parking spot needed to be double the width



of a spot angled at 30 degrees, noting that this was especially important for cars, to allow door opening and the circulation of pedestrians between vehicles.

Other studies were conducted by municipalities in Brazil, Argentina,

Hawaii and Spain. All found angled bays were the best solution for "narrow one-way streets" - as is the case for much of Macau - in order to "facilitate the circulation of traffic, especially of trucks and buses."

David Percy, a professor of Mathe-

matics at the University of Salford, U.K., presented a similar study in which he proposed simply repainting the lines, transforming right-angled parking spaces into 45-degree spaces, as a solution to the lack of parking spaces in parking lots.

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private lots see advantage

Percy proposed a solution that would allow for more efficient use of existing parking spaces, by realizing that vehicles parked at 45 degrees had no need for wide central aisles, as the vehicles do not need to be completely pulled out of the bay, reducing the wide corridors between parking spots that are "wasting precious parking space."

According to official statistics from the Transport Bureau (DSAT), as of the end of 2018, there were about 124,000 registered motorcycles in Macau. With an estimated 60,000 motorcycle parking spaces, this is more than double the number of parking spaces available.

Meanwhile, there were approximately 126,000 public and private parking spaces for cars in Macau.

Although according to the stance of transport officials the Macau government seems to have abandoned the idea of diagonal parking, it remains popular in the private sector.

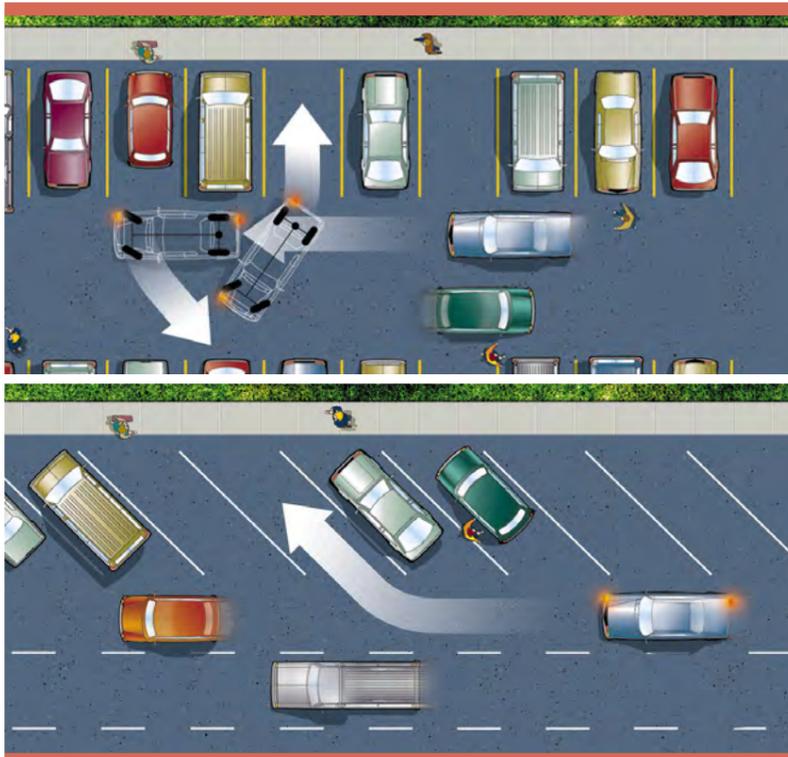
Many private parking lots are adopting the solution to organize motorcycle parking and save space.

An example of this can be found in Macau, in the land plot granted by the government for the parking of public buses, in which a company used this system to design motorcycle

parking for the use of company staff.

Other examples can be found across the city in several private parking facilities, showing that the government, private companies and residents seem to have very different ideas on this topic.

Last month, Sou held a poll on Facebook with over 1,700 people participating. The poll found 92% of voters supported a diagonal parking system, while the current system found support from only 8% of the respondents.



BUSES

Macau needs more time to study service contracts, subsidies

JULIE ZHU

THE government needs more time to study the arrangement of bus contracts in the city, according to Lei Cheng I, chairman of the Follow-up Committee for Land Affairs and Public Concessions of the Legislative Assembly (AL), following a meeting between the committee and government representatives, which included Raimundo Arrais do Rosário, Secretary for Transport and Public Works.

The government also needs to decide how to calculate the subsidies for bus companies, said Lei.

Lawmakers are concerned about the complexity of calculating the subsidies, including the fact that the government must consider the types of buses and travel distances.

Some lawmakers suggested that the government could subsidize bus companies according to the

DANIEL BEITLER



number of passengers. However, the suggestion was met with disagreement from government representatives, who were apprehensive about the possibility of bus companies being unwilling to operate unpopular routes if subsidies were calculated based on the number of passengers.

The short renewal of bus service contracts between the government and the two bus operators, Transmac and TCM, will expire

on October 31. The two companies operate 84 routes in total.

According to Rosário, the government is still discussing the details of the contract with the two companies. Whether the contract will be renewed or whether there are other ways of managing the service remains to be decided.

Rosário declined to reveal further details at the current stage, indicating that the matter is not an easy one. He hopes that

the public can give the government more time to study the matter.

On July 31, 2018, the bus service notarization contract signed by the Macau government and the three bus companies (Transmac, TCM, New Era) expired, and the government renewed the contract for a short period of 15 months. Following the renewal of the contract, a TCM and New Era merger was approved by the SAR government.

TAXIS

INFRACTIONS HAVE DROPPED 77% SINCE NEW LAW TOOK EFFECT

JULIE ZHU

IN June, 113 taxi offences were recorded by the Public Security Police Force (PSP), representing a 77% decrease compared to May. The marked decrease is said to be related to the implementation of the city's new taxi law, which came into effect on June 3.

In May, the number of violations related to overcharging, refusing to take passengers and other violations were 327, 121 and 45, respectively. In total, 493 taxi infractions were recorded in May.

Month-on-month decreases of 85.6% (47 cases) and 82.6% (21 cases) were recorded related to overcharging and refusal to transport passengers, respectively.

Forty-five cases involved other violations, including bargaining with passengers, dropping off passengers in improper places, not handing passengers' forgotten belongings over to the PSP, and speeding.

According to the new taxi law, if a taxi driver commits four violations described in the law within four years, the driver's license will be cancelled and the driver will not be

allowed to take a taxi driver's license exam for three years.

"It can be seen that the new taxi law has increased the compliance of taxi drivers and it has brought an effective deterrent," the PSP said in a statement.

"The police appeal to the taxi industry to comply with the requirements of the law [in] carrying the passengers, and to maintain the good image of Macau as an international tourist city and to protect the legitimate rights and interests of both the taxi drivers and the passengers," the PSP said.

Meanwhile, yesterday Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário said he has not yet received an application to hike taxi fares, but that the government is open to discussing the issue.

Recently, the city's taxi drivers asked for a 15% increase in taxi fares to be implemented starting from the Chinese Lunar New Year.

They are seeking to increase the starting price, meter price and waiting fare by 15%, and an additional MOP15 fee is being proposed for rides in the first three days of the Lunar New Year.

TRANSPORT AUTHORITY REORGANIZES TRAFFIC AT FAI CHI KEI

AFTER several roadwork projects at the crossroads between Rua Norte do Patane and Rua do Comandante João Belo in Fai Chi Kei area, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) will enforce traffic changes in the area, the bureau informed in a statement.

According to the statement, from today, traffic coming from the Rua do Comandante João Belo will be forced to turn left and will be forbidden from circulating in the direction of the Canidrome.

After the roadwork is completed, bus routes 26A, 32, N1A, N1B, and N4 will return to their original itineraries.

The DSAT noted that among the works performed, there was work on the relocation of zebra crossings and the construction of separators between lanes of traffic. The works forced 10 parking spots to be removed, as they aimed to widen the lanes in the area

to allow heavy-duty vehicles, such as trucks and buses, to come through.

The bureau said that the traffic changes and works were done following constant complaints from residents who reside and work in that area about traffic problems, as well as to increase the safety of pedestrians and drivers after a period of data collection.

The DSAT also adds that, although 10 parking spots were removed due to traffic changes, the public can make use of the parking lots in the area, such as in the Fai Tat and Fai Ieng buildings and on the Rua da Bacia Sul.

The bureau also said that it will continue to pay attention to road traffic conditions in the region and perform timely changes when necessary, encouraging residents to continue expressing their feedback on situations that they consider to be problematic. **RM**



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Macau Eco TrailHiker returns November 2 for its 10th anniversary



STAFF REPORTER

THIS year's MGM Macau Eco TrailHiker will be held on November 2 starting from MGM Cotai, it was announced yesterday. Online registration for the event opens 9 a.m. today.

Macau Eco TrailHiker was born out of a strong desire to organize a sports event involving teams instead of individual entrants. This year is the 10th anniversary of the annual event.

The event is committed to promoting wellness, teamwork, environmental awareness and contribution to the community.

The event includes 10 km, 20 km and 30 km race categories and will fundraise for two local charities.

The event first started in 2010 as "Macau TrailHiker" and attracted

560 participants. In 2018, the number of participants more than quadrupled to 2,700.

Over the last 10 years, Macau Eco TrailHiker has attracted a total 16,200 participants, according to organizers, who have hiked 270,000 kilometers in total. This is seven times the distance around the equator. In total, past events have generated MOP3 million for local charities.

This year's TrailHiker is themed "Hiking Together, Growing Stronger." There are 650 team slots available for public registration.

Officiating at the press conference was Robert Kirby, director of Macau TrailHiker Ltd., the organizing body of the event. When asked if 650 is the ceiling for team numbers, he explained, "there is a loading capacity for TrailHiker. We don't want to overcrowd the trails and then spoil the experience for the

teams, so I believe the 650 number of teams is really [the] right number, and the government thinks so as well."

In order to do more to preserve the environment, an eco-consultant has been invited to collaborate on the drafting of a list of 10 eco-friendly actions to be implemented at the event. This was proposed in order to reduce the event's carbon footprint. Expected measures include banning plastic bottles and cups, and the promotion of recycled materials.

Kirby further explained this eco-friendly initiative. "We needed to pay more attention to the eco side of the event," he said. "Each year, we hope that we've done a little bit more towards sustainability at TrailHiker."

Also officiating at the press conference was MGM China CEO

Grant Bowie. "We are proud that MGM Cotai has become the venue of the event since last year," he said.

Bowie added that MGM is offering its full support in order to guarantee the smooth staging of the locally-renowned sports event. "We are committed to enhancing the overall participation experience, continuing its long-standing position as the most community-spirited sports event in Macau," he noted.

This year, the proceeds will be donated to two charities with Christian backgrounds, the Cradle of Hope Association (COHA) and the Salvation Army.

COHA is a Macau charity that was launched in 1994 by Christian missionaries. COHA manages two residential homes for children and teenagers and has cared for over 300 children during this time.

COHA also delivers training for caregivers working with vulnerable children in Macau, China and other countries in Asia.

The Salvation Army is an integral part of the Christian church, although distinctive in government and practice. The Salvation Army commenced its services in Macau in 1999.

At present, it has a church and community service center, a family integrated service center and a learning center that serves the communities of the city's northern district.

On the future of the TrailHiker, Kirby said, "the possibility of adding in a children's mini TrailHiker midway through the year as a lead-in to the major event in November is a strong possibility."

Macau Daily Times is the official media partner of MGM Macau Eco TrailHiker.

Real estate agency calls on next government to rethink land supply

JULIE ZHU

THE real estate sector hopes that the new government will increase the land supply to the private real estate market in response to local residents' high demand for houses, Jacky Shek Po Tak, director of Centaline (Macau) Property Agency Limited, said yesterday.

On the sidelines of yesterday's press conference regarding Macau and Hengqin's real estate situation in the first half of 2019, Shek told the media about Centaline's expectations for the next government, adding that they were representative of the real estate sector.

"Macau residents hope the next government can solve the housing problem," said Shek. "In Macau, the SAR government has been making

an effort to improve the housing issue. Besides the supply of houses, we hope that the new government can make more land available in the private sector."

"Currently, in Hong Kong, some ongoing social issues are affecting Hong Kong's housing prices. Macau's housing condition is a lot better than Hong Kong's," Shek commented.

Shek explained that there is a large gap between Macau's housing supply and demand, with insufficient supply.

Speaking from a real estate agent's perspective, Shek remarked that the government has been constraining housing demand, which in turn makes life difficult for real estate agents.

"Agencies' business is really difficult because there are many regulations and taxes [on housing], which leads

to a big drop in the number of transactions," said Shek. "Many agents are suffering from difficult operations. We hope that there can be new policies to change the current situation."

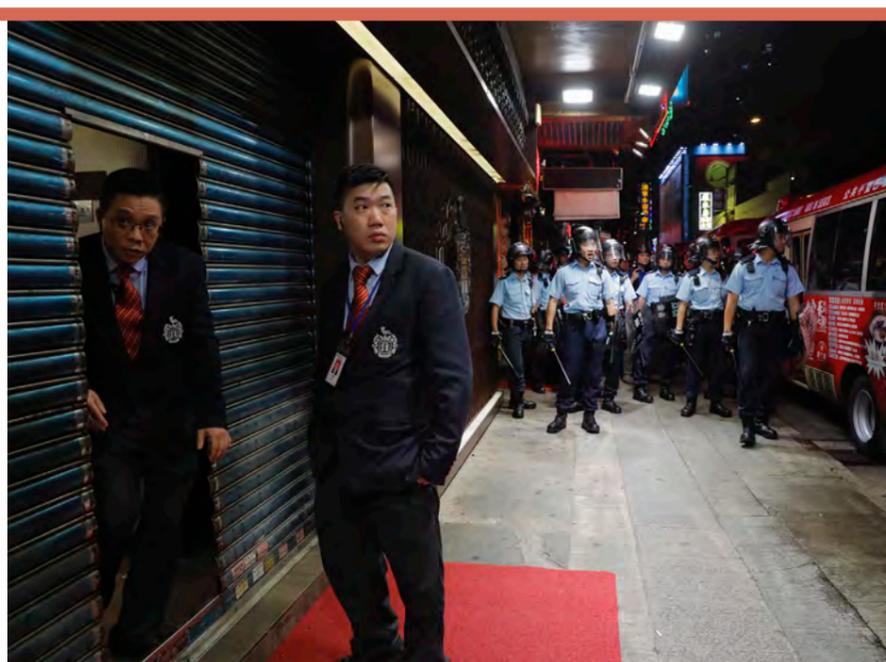
"The demand for houses is really strong. In the past, the Macau government slowed down the demand by [adopting new] policies, but the policies cannot act as long-term measures," said Shek.

In total, approximately 160 shop real estate transactions were estimated to have occurred in Macau in the first half of 2019 and 71 office unit transactions were estimated for the same period, according to Centaline (Macau).

During the first quarter, the number of transactions of residential units dropped by about two-thirds. Shek predicted a total of 4,000 transactions would occur in the first half of 2019.

Regarding Hengqin, the most popular area for property sales is the district's integrated service zone, from which 784 property transactions were registered, representing a 39% increase when compared with the same period in 2018.

Macau residents make up 27% of Hengqin property buyers and 14% are Hong Kong residents.



HONG KONG BROADCASTER ACCUSED OF PRO-BEIJING PROTESTS COVERAGE

JINSHAN HONG & LISA DU

TELEVISION Broadcasts Ltd., Hong Kong's dominant broadcaster, has come under attack on social media for its alleged pro-Beijing bias in the coverage of recent political protests in the city, with campaigners urging companies to pull their commercials.

Organizers of the drive have managed to score at least one win. Sports drink brand Pocari Sweat, owned by Japanese health care company Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., said it has withdrawn its advertisement from the channel,

making it an instant favorite of protesters.

A spokesman for Otsuka said a "periodic review of the advertising budget" and an assessment of the "sales impacts from use of different media outlets" weighed on its decision to pull commercials from TVB.

"Due to the recent economic situation and political incidents, a small number of advertisers have to defer their campaigns or reschedule their booking," a TVB spokesman said in an email. "This has no significant effect on our business," he wrote, adding that the broadcaster has "always maintained

neutrality, professionalism and objectivity in its news coverage."

TVB's shares fell 0.9% yesterday in Hong Kong. The stock has declined 45% in the past year compared with a 1.7% slide in the benchmark Hang Seng Index.

The campaign against TVB is the latest episode in an unprecedented wave of unrest in the city, as hundreds of thousands hit the streets in the past month demanding protection for personal freedoms in the former British colony now in the shadow of Communist China. The protests, triggered by a proposed bill that would for the

first time allow extraditions to the mainland, have turned violent at times - including last week's ransacking of the legislature.

Pocari Sweat's decision, while welcomed by the protesters, has drawn criticism from China state-run Global Times in a recent tweet.

"Mainland netizens are outraged at reports about #PocariSweat's decision of withdrawing ads from TVB, a local media in HK that supports local police amid the #AntiExtradition protest. Some called for the Japanese beverage brand to get out of #China if it supports

#HK Secessionists," the Global Times tweeted.

Bowing to the demonstrators, Chief Executive Carrie Lam came close to admitting defeat this week by calling the controversial legislation "dead." But, her refusal to formally withdraw the legislation has provided a new rallying point for the movement. The bill has also helped unify the city's once-fractured opposition.

When Britain handed over Hong Kong to China in 1997, the Asian giant promised the city a "high degree of autonomy" for 50 years, including guarantees of free speech, capitalist markets and English common law under a "one country, two systems" arrangement. Some residents say China has been slowly chipping away at its autonomy even before the full integration. **BLOOMBERG**

Chinese contract drugmaker Pharmaron plans HK listing

CRYSTAL TSE & MANUEL BAIGORRI

PHARMARON Beijing Co. is planning a Hong Kong share sale only six months after the contract drugmaker went public in China, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

The Shenzhen-listed company is working with financial advisers as it prepares to sell shares in Hong Kong as soon as this year, the people said, asking not to be identified because the information is private. The listing could raise around USD500 million based on Pharmaron's current market value, one of the people said.

Shares of Pharmaron climbed as much as 1.4%



in early trading yesterday in Shenzhen, giving it a market capitalization of about 23 billion yuan. The stock has more than quadrupled since the company's January IPO, which raised 503 million yuan (\$73 million).

The Shenzhen Stock Exchange Composite Index rose 18.2% over the period.

Pharmaron would follow rival WuXi AppTec Co., which also completed listings in Shanghai and Hong Kong within the same year.

Health-care firms have raised \$2.6 billion from Hong Kong first-time share sales in 2019, almost seven times the amount from a year earlier, after the city's stock exchange eased its listing rules to allow unprofitable biotech firms to go public.

Deliberations are at an early stage, and details of the offering could still change, the people said. An external representative for Beijing-based Pharmaron declined to comment.

Founded in 2004, Pharmaron offers research and development services to the life sciences industry, according to its website. It counts more than 6,000 employees with operations in China, the U.S. and the U.K. **BLOOMBERG**

HKD WEAKENS AS WORST OF CASH SQUEEZE SEEN ENDING

HONG Kong's dollar continued its slide into the weak half of its trading band yesterday as traders predicted the city's recent liquidity squeeze is nearing its end.

The Hong Kong dollar had strengthened as much as 0.9% from late May as the city's supply of cash shrank, lifting local borrowing costs and hurting a popular short trade. Analysts cited looming share sales locking up funds and firms preparing to pay for dividends as the reasons money market rates surged. The tighter liquidity also coincided with the large protests.

Eddie Cheung, an emerging markets strategist at Credit Agricole CIB, said

the Hong Kong dollar "has room to weaken further."

"The worst part of the liquidity squeeze is behind us, and the market had been overestimating the tightening effect of IPOs in the first place," he said. "There's no strong catalyst for inflows in the stocks market either, suggesting a lack of support for the Hong Kong dollar."

The Asia Pacific beer unit of Anheuser-Busch InBev NV aims to raise as much as \$9.8 billion in the city, and Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. is said to have plans for a listing as large as \$20 billion. Previous large share offerings have helped trigger jumps in local borrowing costs. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

Space tourism to be tested by investors with Virgin Galactic's listing

JUSTIN BACHMAN,
CHRISTOPHER JASPERV
& THOMAS SEAL

RICHARD Branson's Virgin Galactic snagged headlines with its announcement of the world's first publicly traded space-tourism operator. But it will need to focus on more worldly ventures to find the sales growth shareholders demand.

The company already has identified one market that's far larger than just taking wealthy folks on joyrides to weightlessness: Using its hypersonic spacecraft to give earthly travelers back more of their time by drastically shortening some of the planet's longest flights.

Virgin Galactic's merger with Social Capital Hedosophia will "definitely" accelerate the company's time frame for developing its aviation plans, George Whitesides, Virgin Galactic's chief executive officer, said Tuesday. The business, which he says is probably less than a decade away from startup, would reduce the 10-hour trip from Los Angeles to Tokyo to more like an hour by flying above the atmosphere at more than five times the speed of sound.

"They bring a whole lot beyond just money to this partnership," Whitesides said of Social Capital Hedosophia, a special-purpose company that raised USD600 million two years ago in a "blank check" IPO. He described the founders of SCH as "some of the world's best business people."

Elon Musk, who leads rival SpaceX, has also discussed point-to-point hypersonic travel as a potentially lucrative ancillary business for his space-tourism plans. Currently,



more modest supersonic travel - faster than Mach 1, the speed of sound - is the goal of other aviation startups.

The business of space could grow to \$805 billion by 2030 from \$244 billion in 2010, according to UBS AG analysts, with tourist trips like those planned by Branson eventually valued at more than \$3 billion. The use of sub-orbital flights to slash long-haul travel times could be worth much more, at \$20 billion a year, assuming the technology captures about 5% of the market, they estimate.

Social Capital Hedosophia will have a 49% stake in the combined business, according to a statement Tuesday. The transaction will raise about \$800 million for Virgin Galactic, with SCH's founder, Chamath Palihapitiya, contributing \$100 million and becoming chairman of the combined company.

The sale will help fund Virgin Galactic until its spaceships can operate and generate a profit, which Palihapitiya said is being targeted for August 2021. Commercial flights to space will start within a year from now while earthbound hypersonic trips are a five- to 10-year project, he said.

SCH was established by Palihapitiya, an early executive at Facebook Inc., and presented investors a unique proposition ahead of its September 2017 IPO: We'll scour the world for two years to find a promising late-stage company to take public. Its choice became Virgin Galactic.

"When I got to see the business I was pretty floored, quite honestly, about what they'd built and the quality of the business that it would become," Palihapitiya said of Virgin Galactic.

When he first created SCH, Pa-

lihapitiya said he was looking for a company that would benefit from his expertise in finding the right product fit in different markets. Now he can try applying that expertise to space travel.

Stock reaction to the merger plan was muted, with SCH, trading under the ticker IPOA, up 2.4% to \$10.69 at the close in New York. The shares have hovered around \$10 since they were listed, giving a market value of about \$900 million.

While hundreds have signed up for initial flights costing \$250,000 or more, the price will have to come down in order to attract the millions of people that Branson says would ultimately want to take trips to the edge of space. The sweet spot for mass consumer adoption would be \$50,000, according to Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

There are plenty of risks. The fatal crash of a Virgin Galactic space plane in 2014 put flights on hold for four years and almost led Branson to can the venture. Another calamity may result in its termination.

Investing in Virgin Galactic would also represent a gamble on Branson beating formidable rivals in the shape of Amazon.com Inc. founder Jeff Bezos and Tesla Inc.'s Musk in the race to send customers into space.

Currently, Virgin Galactic holds \$80 million in deposits from more than 600 customers ready to take a 90-minute journey to an altitude of more than 55 miles, allowing them to experience weightlessness and see the curvature of the Earth.

About 2,500 more have expressed an interest in becoming customers, who if they made bookings would take Virgin Galactic through about four years of flights, Palihapitiya said.

Branson, 68, founded Virgin Galactic in 2004. His spacecraft operate like planes rather than reusable rockets, conveying what he considers to be an advantage because they could also potentially access aviation markets.

"Virgin Galactic is very far ahead in terms of where their technology sits," said Northern Sky Research analyst Dallas Kasaboski. "But the market is still embryonic and faces the risks of logistical roadblocks and unexpected costs."

Branson plans to make his own first flight this year or next, depending on the pace of further flight testing in New Mexico, where Virgin Galactic is moving 100 staff from a California test center. The next flight should occur by year's end, Whitesides said. **BLOOMBERG**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China awards outstanding employees



Sands China Ltd. paid tribute to some of its most exemplary employees at its 11th Because We Care Team Members Awards at Sands Cotai Central.

At the awards ceremony, Sands China premiered a series of video featuring management members, pledging

that it would continue promoting the company's core culture.

Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd., said, "since its opening in 2004, our team members have established a strong tradition of excellence, and that has

been further reinforced by the cultural values of Because We Care."

For each year's awards, Sands China employees are invited to participate in a company-wide nomination process, with more than 300 individuals and teams nominated this year, comprising over 700 employees nominated in total. Top individual and team nominations - over 60 of them in total this year - are shortlisted by a judging panel of previous award winners, and all employees are then invited to vote for their favorite nominees. This year's awards drew a large response from employees, with more than 30,000 votes cast.

Melco organizes exhibition visit to boost national knowledge



As part of Melco Resorts & Entertainment's Splendors of China learning program dedicated to Chinese cultural heritage, history and

modernization, the company organized a visit to the Handover Gifts Museum of Macau.

The exhibition features

documents related to the national flag, national anthem and national emblem of China.

According to Melco, the purpose of the visit is for colleagues from various departments to boost their national knowledge through gaining a deeper understanding of the origin and history behind the national flag, anthem and emblem.

As cited in a press release, a colleague who visited the exhibition said, "it has been a meaningful experience; providing a greater understanding of China's history and information on the significance of the national flag, anthem and emblem."

Beijing's largesse in Tonga threatens

NICK PERRY, NUKU'ALOFA

THE days unfold at a leisurely pace in Tonga, a South Pacific archipelago with no traffic lights or fast-food chains. Snuffling pigs roam dusty roads that wind through villages dotted with churches.

Yet even in this far-flung island kingdom there are signs that a battle for power and influence is heating up among much larger nations — and Tonga may end up paying the price.

In the capital, Nuku'alofa, government officials work in a shiny new office block — an USD11 million gift from China that is rivaled in grandeur only by China's imposing new embassy complex.

Dozens of Tongan bureaucrats take all-expenses-paid training trips to Beijing each year, and China has laid out millions of dollars to bring 107 Tongan athletes and coaches to a training camp in China's Sichuan province ahead of this month's Pacific Games in Samoa.

"The best facilities. The gym, the track, and a lot of equipment we don't have here in Tonga," said Tevita Fauonuku, the country's head athletic coach. "The accommodation: lovely, beautiful. And the meals. Not only that, but China gave each and everyone some money. A per diem."

China also offered low-interest loans after pro-democracy rioters destroyed much of downtown Nuku'alofa in 2006, and analysts say those loans could prove Tonga's undoing. The country of 106,000 people owes some \$108 million to China's Export-Import bank, equivalent to about 25% of GDP.

The U.S. ambassador to Australia, Arthur Culvahouse Jr., calls China's lending in the Pacific "payday loan diplomacy."

"The money looks attractive and easy upfront, but you better read the fine print," he said.

China's ambassador to Tonga, Wang Baodong, said China was the only country willing to step up to help Tonga during its time of need.

Graeme Smith, a specialist in Chinese investment in the Pacific, is not convinced China tried to trap Tonga in debt, saying its own financial mismanagement is as much to blame.

Nonetheless, he said it's worrying that the nation of 171 islands, already vulnerable to costly natural disasters, has little ability to repay.

GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITION

Why is China pouring money into Tonga? Teisina Fuko, a 69-year-old former parliament member, suspects China finds his country's location useful.

"I think Tonga is maybe a window to the Western side," he said. "Be-

AP PHOTO



A development site for a Chinese Investment bank in Nuku'alofa

cause it's easy to get here and look into New Zealand, Australia."

"It's a steppingstone," he said.

For decades, the South Pacific was considered the somewhat sleepy backyard of Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Now, as China exerts increasing influence, Western allies are responding.

Experts say there hasn't been this level of geopolitical competition in the region since the U.S. and Japan were bombing each other's occupied atolls.

"We haven't seen anything like this since World War II," said Smith, a research fellow at Australian National University.

After Cyclone Gita destroyed Tonga's historic Parliament House last year, the government first suggested China might like to pay to rebuild it. Then Australia and New Zealand stepped in and are now considering jointly funding the project.

Elsewhere in the region, Australia is redeveloping a Papua New Guinea naval base while New Zealand has announced it will spend an extra \$500 million on overseas aid over four years, with most of it directed at South Pacific nations.

Rory Medcalf, the head of the National Security College at Australian National University, said the area

could provide a security bridgehead for China's navy, which currently must sail through the U.S.-friendly islands of Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines to get to the Pacific.

Other possible explanations, Medcalf said, include the region's fisheries, seabed minerals and other natural resources, as well as China's ongoing effort to lure away the few remaining countries that recognize Taiwan instead of China — several of them Pacific island nations.

"It's not entirely clear what China wants in the South Pacific," Medcalf said. "It's just clear that China is becoming very active and making its presence felt."

China has poured about \$1.5 billion in aid and low-interest loans into the South Pacific since 2011, putting it behind only Australia, according to an analysis by Australian think-tank the Lowy Institute. And that figure rises to over \$6 billion when future commitments are included.

China's use of loans and aid to gain influence in developing nations worldwide is nothing new, as illustrated by Chinese-financed projects

from Africa to Latin America and the Asian subcontinent.

Some worry that these can become debt traps when nations can't repay. In Sri Lanka, for example, the government was forced to hand over control of its Hambantota port as it struggles to repay loans it got

If China sees any strategic importance to Tonga, it was the country's recognition that Taiwan is part of China

from China to build the facility — a move that has given Beijing a strategic foothold within hundreds of miles of rival India.

Wang said China has only benevolent intentions in Tonga and no hidden agenda. "Some people in the West are being over-sensitive and too suspicious," he said. "No need."

PASSPORTS FOR SALE

It's not just money flowing in from China.

Chinese immigrants began arriving in the 1990s when Tonga started selling passports.

The passports, which went for about \$10,000 each, were aimed at attracting wealthy Hong Kong residents hedging their bets ahead of the former British colony's return to China in 1997. Instead, they were snapped up by rural Chinese looking for a better life — and who

now compete with native Tongans for scarce jobs.

Chinese immigrants already run most of the dozens of hole-in-the-wall groceries dotting the islands, selling cheap imports like potato chips and canned

meat. And Tongans worry they are now expanding into farming and construction.

Most Tongans live a subsistence existence in a nation where the king is revered and people take Christianity so seriously that working on Sundays is, with few exceptions, banned under the constitution. The economy relies on foreign aid and cash sent home by Tongans working abroad.

And the Chinese loans haven't changed that because the money went to Chinese-run projects, Fuko said.

"They brought the money, they

future of Pacific nation



brought the workers, they brought the building materials," he said. "Maybe a few Tongans pulled wheelbarrows."

Wang acknowledged the criticism that Chinese immigrants run many businesses but said Tonga's leaders recognize the contribution they make and have even called on Tongans to learn from their hard-work ethic.

Tonga never benefited from the passport money, either. A former financial adviser to the government, American Jesse Bogdonoff, helped place about \$26 million into speculative investments and almost all of it evaporated.

HEAVY DEBT

The real threat to Tonga's future may lie in its crippling loans from China.

In December 2017, the International Monetary Fund increased Tonga's debt distress rating from moderate to high risk, citing its vulnerability to natural disasters and noting that the large upcoming loan repayments to China would reduce Tonga's foreign exchange reserves, double its debt-servicing costs, and could force the country to borrow yet more money.

Repayments were due to start last

year, and panic crept in.

In August, Prime Minister 'Akilisi Pohiva called on other Pacific nations to join forces to demand debt relief, warning that China could snatch away buildings and other assets. But he reversed his position days later, saying Tonga was "exceedingly grateful" for China's help.

Within months Tonga announced it had been given a reprieve and didn't need to start repayments for another five years.

Tonga also said it was joining China's Belt and Road Initiative, the trillion-dollar global investment and lending program that is a signature policy of President Xi Jinping.

Tongan officials don't seem eager to discuss the relationship with China. The prime minister withdrew from an interview with The Associated Press because of an illness, while Finance Minister Pohiva Tu'i'one-toa cancelled at the last minute due to "something urgent." The chief secretary to the prime minister's office, Edgar Cocker, agreed to meet but then quickly asked a reporter to leave, saying he wasn't authorized to speak for the government.

Cocker said all questions about China's loans and aid should be directed to Chinese officials.

Wang said there was no link be-

tween Tonga getting a break on its loans and joining the Belt and Road Initiative. He said Tonga had raised concerns about the loan, and China was willing to help.

Tonga's immediate financial crisis has been averted, but Fuko thinks the loans have given China the upper hand.

"I don't know how we are going to pay that back," the former lawmaker said.

CHINESE LOAN REPAYMENTS

An unintended consequence of Tonga's China loans could be a reduction in foreign investment and withering of the revenues needed to pay them back.

Take the Scenic Hotel. One of the few large hotels on the main island of Tongatapu, it abruptly closed its doors in March in a setback to the key tourism industry.

Brendan Taylor, managing director of the New Zealand-based Scenic Hotel Group, said one problem was the new Foreign Exchange Control Act Tonga introduced last year.

Designed to keep money in the country and protect its currency during financial emergencies, it was enacted as Tonga prepared to

begin making the Chinese loan repayments.

"The issue you have got in Tonga is that no overseas companies are keen to go in," Taylor said. "They've cut out investors."

He said the hotel got a large insurance payout after it was hit by Cyclone Gita. But the new law created legal hurdles to move money out of Tonga to pay New Zealand suppliers for repairs and so the payout languished in a Tongan trust account, he said.

Tonga-based lawyer Ralph Stephenson said that while the law isn't being enforced, it's still spooking investors.

"The penalties for breaching the act are Draconian, in terms of fines that can be imposed, and also in so far as the act actually affords the courts the power to forfeit property," he said.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Wang said any suggestion that China might be engaged in a Pacific power struggle with the West or using Tonga to keep tabs or even spy on New Zealand and Australia is nonsense.

"Tonga is a small country. It's almost impossible to hide any secret," Wang said. "For some of our Wes-

tern friends, personally, I think they should be confident in their relations and influence in this region."

If China sees any strategic importance to Tonga, it was the country's recognition that Taiwan is part of China, he said. Tonga switched from recognizing Taiwan and established formal diplomatic relations with Beijing in 1998.

China's economic success has allowed it to build new embassies around the world and too much shouldn't be read into the size of its new embassy in Tonga, Wang said.

He said that over the past 20 years, diplomatic relations between China and Tonga have widened to include infrastructure, trade, education and sports. He doesn't see it as a case of larger countries jockeying for influence.

"I don't think so," he said. "Just whoever is able to provide assistance for the goodness of the Tongan people."

But for Ola Koloi, who runs a tourist lodge, China's footprint is too pervasive, influencing what she can buy since so many goods for sale come from China.

She said the China loans should worry every Tongan.

"I feel like I'll be Chinese soon," she said. AP

PHILIPPINES

DNA TESTS CONFIRM IDENTITY OF FIRST SUICIDE ATTACKER

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

DNA tests have confirmed the identity of the first known Filipino suicide bomber in the country's south, an alarming milestone that underscores the need for public vigilance and a modernized armed forces, officials said yesterday.

Two attackers carrying explosives killed three soldiers, two villagers and themselves and wounded 22 others in a June 28 attack on an army camp in Sulu province's Indanan town. The Islamic State group said the attackers were its fighters, but local police played down the claim.

Philippine police and military officials said at a news conference that tissues taken from the remains of one of the attackers, identified by his family as Norman Lasuca, matched those of his mother, Vilman Lasuca, and a brother in police DNA tests. Efforts to identify the second attacker were continuing.

"One of the biggest implications if we already have a suicide bombing case in the Philippines is that this should open a new mindset that we now have a different security environment in our country," said military spokesman Brig. Gen. Edgar Arevalo.

Arevalo called for greater public vigilance and stressed the need for a more modern and better-equipped armed forces to fight "a rising



Suicide bomber Norman Lasuca sits with his mother Vilman

level of terrorism."

Regional military commander Lt. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana said that the probability of more suicide attacks was high, and that the military has heightened surveillance

and was trying to check if the Abu Sayyaf militant group was training more local would-be suicide bombers.

Two other suicide bombings in the country's south last year and

in January have been blamed by Philippine authorities on foreign militants, who were reportedly harbored by Abu Sayyaf commander Hajan Sawadjaan in his jungle encampments in Sulu.

Sobejana has said Lasuca left his family in 2014 and joined the group of Sawadjaan, who is believed to have been recognized by the Islamic State group as its leader in the southern Philippines.

According to military officials, one of the attackers tried to enter the army camp in Indanan, where a large number of newly arrived combat troops was based, and set off his explosive when he was stopped at the gate. The second militant dashed into the camp and managed to detonate his bomb near a parking lot while yelling "Allahu akbar," or God is great, despite being shot by soldiers.

Military officials could not provide other details about Lasuca's background. An anti-terrorism officer told The Associated Press that he was one of several children of a poor welder who was recruited as a member of an urban-based militant unit under Sawadjaan. He dropped out of school early due to poverty, said the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss the matter publicly.

Battle setbacks have reduced the number of Abu Sayyaf fighters to less than 400 but they have remained a national security threat. They have largely thrived on ransom kidnappings and extortion, although defense officials say they may have received foreign funds, including from the Islamic State group, to finance attacks.

The brutal group has been blacklisted as a terrorist organization by the United States and the Philippines for bombings, ransom kidnappings and beheadings during decades of a Muslim separatist rebellion. **AP**

POLITICS

Thai PM revokes some junta orders before heading new gov't

THE leader of Thailand's military junta has revoked dozens of special executive orders and vowed to stop issuing more as he prepares to lead an elected civilian government.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha has kept a tight grip on power since leading a coup in 2014 and gave himself special legislative powers that allow him to issue orders that have the force of law.

Prayuth signed an order Tuesday revoking 66 of the more than 500 executive orders he has issued. Critics say it was an attempt to make it appear that the military is relinquishing power and transitioning to an elected government, although the new government will still be led by Prayuth and will include many junta members.

"The reason Prayuth re-



voked these orders is to help with image during the transition to the next government and to reduce pressure on him," said Yingcheep Atchanont, program manager of the legal monitoring group iLaw.

Yingcheep said the jun-

ta has deliberately kept in place orders that enable the military to influence politics, such as one that allows soldiers to search and arrest people they suspect of threatening national security for up to seven days without charges.

The junta has regularly detained critics at military camps as a method of intimidation.

Another order Prayuth did not revoke allows a committee to review and direct the removal of online content without a court order.

The junta also enacted election laws that gave Prayuth a significant advantage in elections in March that resulted in his nomination to continue as prime minister and lead the next government.

On June 6, Thailand's Parliament elected Prayuth to become prime minister by a vote of 500 to 244 for his opponent, anti-military candidate Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit. Prayuth's election was virtually assured because the prime minister is chosen in a joint vote of the 500-seat House of Representatives and the 250-seat Senate, whose members were appointed by the junta Prayuth leads. Every member of the Senate voted for Prayuth except for the Senate speaker, who abstained.

Prayuth said Tuesday he

would no longer use his special legislative power, known as Article 44, which will cease together with the junta once a new Cabinet is inaugurated in the coming weeks. Most Cabinet members, according to lists reported by Thai news outlets, will be members of the previous military government.

"Even though we still have some time before the new Cabinet is sworn in, it's not appropriate to be using it anymore," Prayuth said of his special legal authority.

Analysts have said the next government is likely to be short-lived because the coalition that supports Prayuth includes many political parties, each with its own agenda, and they will face strong opposition in the House, where they have only a slight majority. **AP**

MASSACRE

More than 20 killed in Papua New Guinea tribal violence

ROD MCGUIRK,
CANBERRA

POLICE and soldiers have been sent to Papua New Guinea's highlands to make arrests and provide security after more than 20 people, mostly women and children, were slain in recent tribal violence over a feud that has lasted for years, officials said yesterday.

In the latest attack, 16 women and children were killed this week by assailants armed with rifles in the village of Karida in Hela province, said Papua New Guinea Acting Police Commissioner Francis Tokura.

Because two of the victims were pregnant, police put the death toll at 18. Officials differ on whether the attack happened on Sunday or Monday.

Authorities say the slaughter was probably retaliation for



AP PHOTO

an ambush near Peta village on Saturday that left six or seven people dead.

Tokura said 20 police officers and 10 soldiers were sent to Hela to "stop any further violence and capture the killers."

"This is a tragedy. It is an unbelievable, unthinkable and atrocious criminal act that must be dealt with swiftly and severely," Tokura said in a statement.

"We will use all available resources to bring the killers to

justice," he added.

Prime Minister James Marape said many of the victims lived in his electorate. "Today is one of the saddest days of my life," he said on social media.

Marape blamed a police shortage in Hela for the lawlessness.

"How can a province of 400,000 people function with policing law and order with under 60 policemen?" he wrote.

"To all who have guns and

kill and hide behind the mask of community, learn from what I will do to criminals who killed innocent people, I am not afraid to use strongest measures in law on you," he said, referring to the death penalty.

Tribal violence is common in Papua New Guinea's interior, where villagers avenge relatives in retaliation known as payback.

Hela official Rex Humbi said the latest violence was part of a tribal war that had been waged for more than 15 years.

"The people that got killed were innocent women and children," he said. "The police do go and investigate. They have the authority, of course, but don't have the firepower" to bring the killers to justice.

The killers were possessed by Satan and "feed on the soul, or the spirits, of the innocents that have been lost," Humbi said. AP

JAPAN

ENTERTAINMENT TYCOON JOHNNY KITAGAWA DIES AT 87

JOHNNY Kitagawa, a kingpin of Japan's entertainment industry for more than half a century who produced famous boybands including Arashi, Tokio and SMAP, has died. He was 87.

Kitagawa, better known as Johnny-san, died from a subarachnoid hemorrhage Tuesday at a Tokyo hospital, where he had been treated after falling unconscious June 18, according to his office, Johnny & Associates.

Kitagawa established his office in 1962, producing a four-man group called the Johnny's and spearheading Japan's entertainment scene. He sent many artists to fame, not only in Japan but in recent years across Asia.

Creating boybands was a challenge to cultural norms in Japan back then, but his talent agency grew to dominate the country's entertainment market.

The artists he produced set the standards for Japanese male idols, and "Johnny's" became a word for attractive men. AP



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H. Ross Perot rose from poverty to self-made

DAVID KOENIG, DALLAS

H. ROSS Perot rose from a childhood of Depression-era poverty to become a self-made billionaire who twice ran for president with a mixture of folksy sayings and simple solutions to America's problems. His 19% of the vote in 1992 stands among the best showings by an independent candidate in the last century.

Perot died of leukemia Tuesday at his home in Dallas surrounded by his family, family spokesman James Fuller said. He was 89.

As a boy in Texarkana, Texas, Perot delivered newspapers from the back of a pony. He earned his billions in a more modern way, however. After attending the U.S. Naval Academy and becoming a salesman for IBM, he set out on his own — creating and building Electronic Data Systems Corp., which helped other companies manage their computer networks.

The most famous event in his storied business career didn't involve sales or earnings. In 1979, Perot financed a private commando raid to free two EDS employees who were

being held in a prison in Iran. The tale was turned into a book and a movie.

"I always thought of him as stepping out of a Norman Rockwell painting and living the American dream," said Tom Luce, who was a young lawyer when Perot hired him to handle his business and personal legal work. "A newspaper boy, a midshipman, shaking Dwight Eisenhower's hand at his graduation, and he really built the computer-services industry at EDS."

"He had the vision and the tenacity to make it happen," Luce said. "He was a great communicator. He never employed a speechwriter — he wrote all his own speeches. He was a great storyteller."

Perot first attracted attention beyond business circles by claiming that the U.S. government left behind hundreds of American soldiers who were missing or imprisoned at the end of the Vietnam War.

Perot fanned the issue at home and discussed it privately with Vietnamese officials in the 1980s, angering the Reagan administration, which was

formally negotiating with Vietnam's government. Looking out for the health care needs of veterans became a long-time concern of Perot.

Perot's wealth, fame and confident prescription for the nation's economic ills propelled his 1992 campaign against President George H.W. Bush and Democratic challenger Bill Clinton. In June of that year, a Gallup poll showed Perot leading his major-party rivals.

Perot dropped out in July, however,

Perot's wealth, fame and confident prescription for the nation's economic ills propelled his 1992 campaign

saying later that he did so to prevent Republicans from sabotaging his daughter's wedding. He rejoined the race less than five weeks before the election, but his popularity had fallen. Critics said he had a penchant for embracing conspiracy

theories. He finished third in the popular vote and was shut out in the Electoral College.

Still, Perot recorded the highest percentage for an independent or third-party candidate since President Theodore Roosevelt's second-place showing in 1912. Some Republicans blamed Perot for causing Bush's defeat by splitting the anti-Clinton vote, although exit polls were inconclusive.

During the campaign, Perot spent \$63.5 million of his own money. He bought 30-minute television spots during which he used charts and graphs to make his points, summarizing them with a line that became a national catch phrase: "It's just that simple."

Perot's second campaign four years later was far less successful. He was shut out of presidential debates when organizers said he lacked sufficient support. He got just 8% of the vote, and the Reform Party that he founded and hoped to build into a national political force began to fall apart.

However, Perot's ideas on trade

and deficit reduction remained part of the political landscape. He blamed both major parties for running up a huge federal budget deficit and supporting trade deals that allowed American jobs to be sent to other countries. The movement of U.S. jobs to Mexico, he said, created a "giant sucking sound."

Perot continued to speak out about federal spending for many years. Perot's themes — that Washington is corrupt, wastes taxpayer money and ignores the working class — have been repeated by other candidates since and helped Donald Trump win the presidency in 2016.

In Dallas, Perot left his mark by creating the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, helping finance the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, and being a major benefactor of The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. He also provided help to families dealing with medical expenses or other challenges, according to those who knew him.

"He gave a lot to other people in public ways, but he also did it in private ways that nobody saw. There were thousands of stories just like that," said Meyerson, a longtime

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billionaire



senior executive in Perot's longtime companies.

Henry Ross Perot was born in Texarkana on June 27, 1930. His father was a cotton broker; his mother a secretary. Perot said his family survived the Depression relatively

well through hard work and by managing their money carefully.

Young Perot's first job was delivering newspapers in a poor, mostly black part of town from his pony, Miss Bee. He said when the newspaper tried to cut his commission, he

complained to the publisher — and won. He said he learned to take problems straight to the top.

From Texarkana, Perot went to the U.S. Naval Academy even though he had never been on a ship or seen the ocean. After the Navy, Perot joined

International Business Machines in 1955 and quickly became a top salesman. In his last year at IBM, he filled his sales quota for the year in January.

In 1962, with \$1,000 from his wife, Margot, Perot founded Electronic Data Systems. Hardware accounted for about 80% of the computer business, Perot said, and IBM wasn't interested in the other 20%, including services.

Many of the early hires at EDS were former military men, and they had to abide by Perot's strict dress code — white shirts, ties, no beards or mustaches — and long workdays. Many wore crewcuts like Perot.

The company's big break came in the mid-1960s when the federal government created Medicare and Medicaid, the health programs for seniors, the disabled and the poor. States needed help in running the programs, and EDS won contracts — starting in Texas — to handle the millions of claims.

EDS first sold stock to the public in 1968, and overnight, Perot was worth \$350 million. His fortune doubled and tripled as the stock price rose steadily.

In 1984, he sold control of the company to General Motors Corp. for \$2.5 billion and received \$700 million in a buyout. In 2008, EDS was sold to Hewlett-Packard Co.

Perot went on to establish another

computer-services company, Perot Systems Corp. He retired as CEO in 2000 and was succeeded by his son, Ross Perot Jr. In 2009, Dell Inc. bought Perot Systems.

Forbes magazine this year estimated Perot's wealth at \$4.1 billion.

It was during the Nixon administration that Perot became involved in the issue of U.S. prisoners of war in Southeast Asia. Perot said Secretary of State Henry Kissinger asked him to lead a campaign to improve treatment of POWs held in North Vietnam. Perot chartered two jets to fly medical supplies and the wives of POWs to Southeast Asia. They were not allowed into North Vietnam, but the trip attracted enormous media attention.

After their release in 1973, some prisoners said conditions in the camps had improved after the failed missions.

Perot received a special award from the VA for his support of veterans and the military in 2009.

Clinton and former President George W. Bush praised Perot's patriotism and support for veterans.

Clinton said Perot wanted to tackle budget deficits and rising national debt that kept interest rates too high for middle-class Americans. Bush said he "epitomized the entrepreneurial spirit" and "gave selflessly of his time and resources to help others in our community." AP

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what's ON



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TIME: 10am-10pm

UNTIL: October 6, 2019

VENUE: Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 6882 2839

MASTERPIECES FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF CHINA

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

UNTIL: July 28, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6866

SANDS PRESENTS: ALL THAT'S GOLD DOES GLITTER – AN EXHIBITION OF GLAMOROUS CERAMICS

TIME: 24 hours

UNTIL: October 9, 2019

VENUE: The Venetian Macao, The Parisian Macao, Sands Macao & Four Seasons Hotel Macao

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 8888

BEAUTY IN THE NEW ERA: MASTERPIECES FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF CHINA

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

UNTIL: July 28, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

MGM PRESENTS: HUA YUAN EXHIBITION

TIME: 24 hours

UNTIL: September 3, 2019

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Offbeat

SEA RESCUE: OLYMPIC SWIMMER MAGNINI SAVES TOURIST IN ITALY

A swimmer struggling in the sea off Sardinia soon discovered it was his lucky day.

Italian news agency ANSA says the male tourist got in trouble Sunday afternoon after his inflatable swan was carried away by the wind. According to a witness, the swimmer's friends alerted a life guard—but someone else was closer by.

Former world champion swimmer Filippo Magnini, who won bronze at the 2004 Athens Olympics, had no problem in reaching the man in a few quick strokes.

Magnini told La Gazzetta dello Sport that "the swimmer was in trouble. At a certain point, he got scared, couldn't move and swallowed a bit of water. When I reached him, he couldn't even speak."

Magnini kept the man afloat until the lifeguard arrived.

"I did what I felt I should do," Magnini said. "Swim as fast as I could to save him. The important thing is the swimmer is safe."

The 37-year-old Magnini was swimming nearby with his girlfriend, Italian model and TV personality Giorgia Palmas.

Magnini, who won the 100-meter freestyle at the 2005 and 2007 world championships and a relay bronze at the 2004 Olympics, received a four-year ban for doping in 2018 after he had retired. He never tested positive and denied any wrongdoing.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Agua de Mar
15:45	Zig Zag
16:10	Sim Chef! Sr.1
16:45	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
18:15	Amor Maior (Repetição)
19:00	Volta ao Mundo
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Banco Asiático De Investimento em Infra-Estruturas
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
22:20	Amor Maior
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Educação em Macau - Actividades Juvenis - Fim
00:20	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:05	RTPi Directo

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11 - 15 Jul



TOY STORY 4

ROOM 1

2:30, 4:30, 7:30, 9:15pm

Director: Josh Cooley

Starring: Will Smith, Mena Massoud, Naomi Scott

Language: Chinese

Duration: 109min



SPIDER-MAN: FAR FROM HOME

ROOM 2

2:15, 4:45, 7:15, 9:45pm

Director: Jon Watts

Starring: Zendaya, Angourie Rice, Tom Holland

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 129min



THE SECRET LIFE OF PETS 2

ROOM 3

2:30, 7:30pm

Director: Chris Renaud, Jonathan del Val

Starring: Patton Oswalt, Kevin Hart, Harrison Ford

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 86min

ALADDIN

ROOM 3

9:30pm

Director: Guy Ritchie

Starring: Will Smith, Mena Massoud, Naomi Scott

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 109min

this day in history



2000 BRITAIN PIONEERS HIV VACCINE

The World Aids Conference in South Africa has announced trials for a new HIV vaccine will begin in Britain. Liberal Democrat MP Evan Harris will be one of 18 healthy volunteers who will take part in the first toxicity tests.

The MP for Oxford West, Dr Harris, 35, said: "I hope to be a small part of a process that will deliver something that will save Africa from further devastation."

The vaccine has been developed by researchers at Oxford and Nairobi Universities who studied prostitutes in Kenya and found a group who resisted the disease in spite of daily exposure to it.

"Our chances of developing a vaccine are better than 50-50"

Andrew McMichael, Oxford University

If the tests in Oxford are successful, trials will go to Nairobi in October under the supervision of Professor Job Bwayo and his team.

Professor of immunology at Oxford University Andrew McMichael said: "Our chances of developing a vaccine are better than 50-50. But the earliest we could expect a vaccine to be ready would be in seven to 10 years."

There are currently 34 million people in the world suffering from HIV and 70% of them are in Africa.

This is the first time a vaccine has been based on the HIV strain in Africa. It uses DNA and a wild animal virus similar to that used to combat smallpox.

The Oxford-Nairobi project is one of 11 similar groups around the world funded by the International Aids Vaccine Initiative (Iavi). It has received £14m from the British Government.

Iavi estimates that three times more than the £200m currently spent on research programmes is needed to find a vaccine within ten years.

Vaccination should provide a much cheaper and more effective means of tackling the pandemic, especially for the Third World which cannot afford HIV drugs and is barred from developing generic variations.

According to Iavi only 2% of the \$20m spent annually on Aids around the world is for vaccine development.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The trials began in Oxford in August 2000.

In April 2002 the Oxford-Nairobi project trials were extended to a further 120 volunteers in Oxford and London. In July 2002 US pharmaceutical company VaxGen announced that it might develop a vaccine within five years and began the final phase of human testing.

By 2001, 15,000 people were being infected with HIV every day around the World.

By 2005 1.3 million people had access to Anti-Retroviral Treatment or ART - although still short of the 3 million target set for 2005, the figure has increased rapidly in recent years.

In 2006 an estimated 38.6 million people around the world are living with Aids.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

When you first learned to ride a bike, there came a moment when your mom or dad had to let go of the bike and let you go forward on your own. It was a moment of fear, exhilaration and independence.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

It is never too late to get started on a different path in life. If you have something that interests you - a new hobby, a new career, or the like - you should pursue it.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Spending all your time looking for answers to the things that confuse you isn't going to allow you any time for new knowledge to sink in! Today you should just download whatever information you learn.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Wanting something to be a certain way is fine - but until you commit yourself to putting forth all the effort required to make it that way, you mustn't feel desperation.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You are all about getting stuff done right now, with a huge supply of energy backing you up. This is a great time to start working on your taxes, reorganizing the garage or tackling a major household repair job.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Human relationships are always unpredictable and complicated, but today you will gain a new insight into one of your friendships that will make it simple for you to deconstruct what this person really wants.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

If you put more energy toward researching a purchase, finding alternative ways to get the same thing at a lower price or waiting for a sale, you will get a good lesson in patience.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Today is the perfect time for you to transition away from an emotionally driven viewpoint to a more analytical one. Distance yourself from the relationships you are in right now.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

There are still quite a few unknowns involved, and you have to wait until you understand the whole story before making a big commitment. The universe stresses caution and conservative action today.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

This big move ahead might make you feel a bit funny about proceeding, but make no mistake - you have put in all the work you needed to put in, and you're not getting any preferential treatment.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

So wait things out today, and don't make any rash decisions - you've got to give yourself time to settle into the way things are and fully realize that you are finally, undeniably done!



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Wrap up any unfinished projects as soon as you can today - there are some exciting distractions coming later in the afternoon, and you will want as much free time in your schedule as possible.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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	2		1		5			
4	8					1		

EASY+

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				1	6	5		
7					8			3

MEDIUM

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HARD

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4			7					
								6

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- One more time; 5- Overfill; 9- One circuit; 12- Jacob's first wife; 13- Ruth's mother-in-law; 15- Scotch partner; 16- Shipping deduction; 17- Consumed; 18- Concludes; 19- Richly decorated; 21- Person who plays the cathedral pipes?; 23- Drive-___; 25- Hindu discipline; 26- Bruins great Bobby; 29- Glimpse; 31- Spuds; 35- Green shade; 36- Soothes; 38- Related to the kidneys; 39- Proceedings; 41- Quizzes, trials; 43- Like some losers; 44- Singer Cleo; 46- Govt. security; 48- Blazed a trail; 49- Mars; 51- Evangelist Roberts; 52- Horace's "___ Poetica"; 53- Gym equipment; 55- "The Dukes of Hazzard" deputy; 57- Seaport near Barcelona; 61- Baby's napkin; 65- I smell ___; 66- The brainy bunch; 68- Writer Janowitz; 69- Finished; 70- Tire (out); 71- Stepped down; 72- Ethyl ending; 73- Marsh plant; 74- Nick Charles's wife;

DOWN: 1- Chorus voice; 2- Become closer to; 3- Deserve; 4- Cereal grain; 5- Derides; 6- Highest bond rating; 7- Baum barker; 8- Board for nails; 9- Burt's ex; 10- Contributes; 11- Gone by; 14- Gold bar; 15- Legislative bodies; 20- Old-fashioned pronoun; 22- Petri dish gel; 24- Sports shocker; 26- October birthstones; 27- Postgame show; 28- Rate; 30- Kind of question; 32- Name on a bomber; 33- Less common or less cooked; 34- Snow conveyances; 37- Grocery, e.g.; 40- Give life to; 42- Norm; 45- Airline since 1948; 47- "The Time Machine" people; 50- Trample; 54- Villainous look; 56- Beelzebub; 57- Commanded; 58- "East of Eden" brother; 59- Hamlet, e.g.; 60- Poker stake; 62- ___ Alto; 63- Chieftain, usually in Africa; 64- Pro follower; 67- Visualize;



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[Coloane] *Cheoc Van House* 3 2 2
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[Macau] *San Malo* 3 2 4
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

MAN SENTENCED FOR STEALING MARILYN MONROE STATUE IN LA



AP PHOTO

Prosecutors say a man who stole a statue of Marilyn Monroe from atop a Hollywood public art installation has been sentenced to a year in jail and ordered to pay more than \$14,000 in restitution.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office says 25-year-old Austin Mikel Clay on Tuesday entered an open plea of no contest to felony grand theft and vandalism.

The Monroe statue depicts the actress in an iconic pose from the 1955 film "The Seven Year Itch" and went missing June 16.

Last year Clay pleaded no contest to a felony vandalism charge for smashing President Trump's Walk of Fame star with a pickaxe.

He was sentenced to three years' probation and ordered to pay damages to the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce in that case.

AP PHOTO



LADY GAGA HERALDS THE COMING OF HER MAKEUP LINE ON AMAZON

The last thing the world needs, Lady Gaga says, is another beauty brand. But that's too bad.

The pop star made all her Little Monsters happy Tuesday when she released a video with that message on social media. It heralds the coming of her new beauty line, Haus Laboratories, reportedly to be sold on Amazon come September.

Gaga dropped the news in an interview

with the Business of Fashion, coinciding with the video that encourages all to embrace their own ideas about beauty. Business of Fashion says the three initial products are multiuse color for cheeks, eyes and lips in six shade families. A kit with all three will sell for \$49. Pre-orders begin July 15.

Gaga says in the video: "Beauty is how you see yourself." She adds, "We want you to love yourself."

JAY-Z PARTNERS WITH CANNABIS COMPANY AS BRAND STRATEGIST

Jay-Z is heading into the legal marijuana industry as a chief brand strategist in partnership with a California cannabis product company.

The rapper said in a statement Tuesday that he entered a multiyear deal with San Jose, California-based Caliva. His role will consist of driving creative direction, outreach efforts and strategy for the brand.

Jay-Z says he also wants to increase the economic participation of people re-

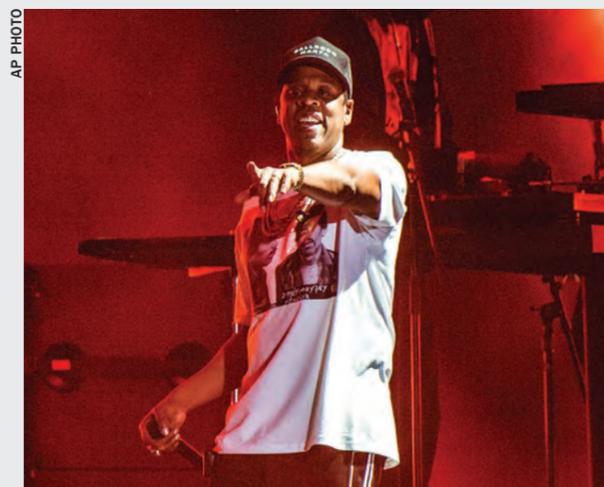
turning from incarceration through job training and workforce development.

The rapper called Caliva "the best partners for this endeavor."

Caliva operates a farm and two stores in Northern California. It also distributes its branded products in roughly two dozen other retail outlets in the state.

NFL legend Joe Montana's venture capital firm took part in a \$75 million investment in Caliva earlier this year.

AP PHOTO



AD

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AP PHOTO



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates defeating Belgium's David Goffin

TENNIS

Djokovic's 10-game run tops Goffin in Wimbledon quarterfinal

HOWARD FENDRICH,
WIMBLEDON

NOVAK Djokovic took what was shaping up as an entertaining, well-played matchup in the Wimbledon quarterfinals and quickly turned it into a lopsided romp with a 10-game run.

Down an early break, the defending champion grabbed control midway through the opening set yesterday and never let go, overwhelming the 21st-seeded David Goffin 6-4, 6-0, 6-2 to reach his ninth semifinal at the All England Club.

"Obviously things could have gone a different way," Djokovic said. "Who knows what the match would look like if I lost the first set?"

The No. 1-seeded Djokovic will face No. 23 Roberto Bautista Agut of Spain or No. 26 Guido Pella of Argentina to-

morrow.

Djokovic is seeking his fifth Wimbledon championship and 17th Grand Slam trophy overall.

The quarterfinals on the other side of the draw were scheduled for today: No. 2 seed Roger Federer vs. No. 8 Kei Nishikori, and No. 3 Rafael Nadal vs. unseeded Sam Querrey.

If Federer and Nadal both won, their semifinal meeting would be the first match between them at Wimbledon since the 2008 final.

The 21st-seeded Goffin started well enough against Djokovic at Centre Court on an afternoon that was humid and sunny but not too hot, with the temperature in the mid-20s C.

Hoping to reach his first major semifinal, Goffin claimed three of the first four points that lasted at least 10 strokes. He won the pair's most recent encounter, on clay in 2017, and

this looked a bit like it was being contested on that slower surface, too.

Goffin was able to hang in there at the baseline and his on-the-run passing shots were dialed in. He nosed ahead after 33 minutes by breaking to go up 4-3, then jogged to the sideline with a raised fist.

Until then, Goffin was playing crisply and cleanly. He hadn't faced so much as one break point against Djokovic, generally considered the top returner in the game.

"He was dictating the play from the baseline," Djokovic said afterward. "Most of the rallies went his way."

But that's when everything changed.

Djokovic did to Goffin exactly what he does to so many opponents on so many surfaces and at so many tournaments: He takes their best shot, deals with it and then wears them down.

Serving at 30-love in the very next game, Goffin double-faulted. Then he flubbed a forehand. After limiting himself to three unforced errors through the match's initial 49 points, the Belgian made two in a row. The next point was an odd one involving a late line call and a challenge by Goffin, who lost it and faced his first break point.

Djokovic couldn't convert that one, but moments later, Goffin sent a forehand wide to set up a second. This time, Djokovic ended a 20-stroke exchange with a drop volley winner. And soon enough, he was on his way, sliding or doing the splits along the baseline to get to balls few others would, bending his body this way and that to repeatedly force Goffin to hit an extra shot.

It's a dispiriting brand of tennis, and it was too much for Goffin. He would wind up going about 50 minutes until he managed to win another game. **AP**

MOTORSPORT

NEW 5-YEAR DEAL FOR BRITISH GRAND PRIX AT SILVERSTONE AGREED

Silverstone will continue to host the British Grand Prix until at least 2024 following the announcement of a new five-year deal yesterday. Formula 1 chairman Chase Carey says: "We are thrilled to have this in place. Silverstone is a signature race on the calendar and a special event." The agreement between F1, the British Racing Drivers' Club and Silverstone Circuit was signed earlier this week in London, ahead of this weekend's racing on the prestigious Northamptonshire circuit. Carey adds: "We have always said that, if it is to have a long-term future, our sport must preserve its historic venues and Silverstone and Great Britain represent the cradle of this sport, its starting point back in 1950."

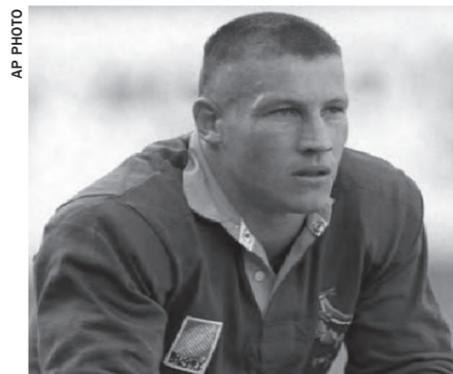
FOOTBALL

MILAN SOCCER CLUBS SUBMIT \$1.3BN, 60,000-SEAT STADIUM PLAN

AC Milan and Inter Milan are jointly asking city officials for permission to build a 60,000-seat stadium replacing the iconic San Siro. The clubs say they plan a privately funded 1.2 billion euros (USD1.35 billion) project to become a "sports, entertainment, and shopping" hub creating 3,500 jobs. They say building a new arena next to the city-owned Giuseppe Meazza stadium is a better option than the uncertainty of renovation. The technical and economic study submitted yesterday "aims at obtaining the declaration of public interest from the Municipality of Milan." A detailed architecture plan would follow later that "honors Milan's reputation for innovation and internationalization." The clubs describe a "shared journey together (toward) a modern, sustainable and accessible urban district in the San Siro area, built around a new world-class stadium."

RUGBY

SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY WING JAMES SMALL DIES AT 50



James Small, a rugby wing who won the World Cup with South Africa in 1995, has died. He was 50. The South African Rugby Union said Small suffered a suspected heart attack yesterday [Macau time] in Johannesburg. Small played 47 Tests for South Africa between 1992 and 1997, scoring 27 tries, and was a key part of the team which won the World Cup on home soil in 1995. The 15-12 victory over New Zealand in the final by South Africa's integrated team was a symbolic moment for the country, coming shortly after the end of apartheid. In the final, Small lined up opposite New Zealand's star player Jonah Lomu and successfully prevented him from scoring.

OPINION

World Views

Lionel Laurent, Bloomberg

AMAZON'S ALEXA WANTS TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR MIGRAINE

The idea of turning to Amazon.com Inc.'s gaffe-prone Alexa in a medical emergency has always seemed to be a bit of a sick joke. YouTube is packed with examples of amusing ways in which the "black, always-on cylinder the size of a Pringles can" – that's CEO Jeff Bezos's own description of the smart speaker – fails the Turing Test. "Alexa, I need medical assistance immediately," says one user, before getting the soothing yet robotic answer: "I added 'medical assistance immediately' to your shopping list."

That hasn't dissuaded Britain's National Health Service from trying out the technology for everyday health questions about common illnesses. Yesterday it announced a partnership with Amazon to help patients get information from the NHS website via voice commands. Ideally, you should be able to ask Alexa things like "how do I treat a migraine?" and get a response sourced from the website in seconds. (Incidentally, the NHS website's answer to that question is: "There's currently no cure for migraines, although a number of treatments are available to help ease the symptoms.")

The appeal to the NHS of experimenting with such tech, however superficial or unsophisticated it might seem, is a more serious matter. Britain's free-at-point-of-use public healthcare system is under-resourced, expensive, and is set to be an even bigger strain on spending as people live longer.

The U.K.'s Institute for Fiscal Studies predicts that the British state's healthcare bill will rise from about 154 billion pounds (USD192 billion) a year to 186 billion pounds by 2023-24, and that's in a "steady-state" scenario. This explains why the service's managers will jump at any promise of tech-assisted efficiency gains. If people get more advice at home through automation, the theory goes, that will reduce pressure on overbooked doctors.

Yet past efforts at using automated symptom checkers haven't found a magic fix that keeps the "worried well" from bothering the professionals. A Forbes report found that early software from London's Babylon Health, an artificial intelligence startup that provides "health information" based on symptoms entered by users, advised people to go to the emergency room in about 30% of cases. For people dialing the NHS advice line (staffed by humans), it was 20%.

There's also the problem of accuracy. So-called "computerized diagnostic decision support" programs aren't up to par yet with their homo sapiens equivalents in areas like melanoma image recognition, according to a 2018 study in medical journal *The Lancet*.

In fairness, the new NHS-Alexa partnership seems to steer clear of direct diagnosis: It wants to be an information tool and nothing more. One public benefit would be to get more people to access official professional advice rather than make do with the rumors and misinformation that swamp social media, according to Eleonora Harwich, director of research at Reform, a public sector think tank.

Still, Amazon looks like the more obvious beneficiary of this project right now. The data might not be as rich as NHS patient records – the subject of a much more controversial partnership between the NHS and Google's DeepMind – but they could still be lucrative in the long run.

Getting more Alexas into people's homes, listening in to their self-volunteered symptoms, and perhaps suggesting over-the-counter treatments delivered via Amazon Prime wouldn't be bad for Bezos's bottom line.

One demonstration of Babylon at an Amazon Web Services summit featured more than a minute of back-and-forth between human and robot before the latter recommended both speaking to a doctor and getting a prescription delivered direct to the patient's door. Online healthcare will be serious money one day. In the meantime, the NHS might find more savings through humdrum initiatives such as going paperless by 2020. Not as sexy as asking Alexa, but probably more useful.

The Bitcoin bulls are back in control, with the largest cryptocurrency approaching its highest price of the year after breaching USD13,000 for the first time in two weeks.

The digital asset gained for a third day to as high as \$13,154, continuing its recovery from the drop that almost pushed it below \$10,000 last week. It reached a more than 18-month high of \$13,880 on June 26.

Yesterday's advance outpaced rival tokens including Ether

and Litecoin. The Bloomberg Galaxy Crypto Index rose 1.5%.

An upswing in mainstream institutional interest in the blockchain and cryptocurrency industry has been cited by many proponents as having helped fuel the rebound in prices for Bitcoin and other digital assets after a 2018 slump and months of inactivity to start the year.

Others say that individual investors remain a key driver in the rally.

AS BEETLE ENDS, ICONIC ORIGINAL THRIVES IN MEXICO CITY HILLS



Taxi drivers gather around their Volkswagen Beetles in a neighborhood of Mexico City

MICHAEL KRUMHOLTZ, MEXICO CITY

THE Beetle is dead. Long live the Beetle.

The modern edition of the iconic Volkswagen model is set to cease production yesterday, but people in Cuauhtemoc on the outskirts of Mexico City still rely on the original no-frills version, praising it for its affordability, reparability and, most of all, its dexterity at handling the district's steep streets.

High above the capital, where the notorious smog turns the surrounding hills into hazy silhouettes, the old-model compacts are popularly used as informal taxis for a place that lacks public transportation. The sputtering, bulbous, back-engine cars popularly known as "vochos" are ever-present in Cuauhtemoc, an obsession for some after production of the Type 1's stopped in 2003 and the New Beetle failed to impress most locals.

"The new ones don't get uphill, and the old ones can climb any incline without problem," said taxi driver Adrián Martínez.

An exception is businessman David Álvarez, a resident of neighboring Mexico State who drives a 2008 New Beetle with a roll-down top. Though he has owned older Beetles and admits his newer version isn't as ideal for hilly terrain, he likes the atten-

tion it draws.

"It's an attractive car with a lot of personality," Álvarez said. "It turns a lot of heads in the streets."

For Mexico, the halt to Beetle production marks an end of an era. The VW factory in Puebla, southeast of the capital, had long been the only plant in the world still manufacturing classic Beetles and more recently became the only one left making modern ones.

Green-and-white painted Type 1's used to be the norm for taxis in Mexico City, but authorities ended

"The new ones don't get uphill, and the old ones can climb any incline without problem."

TAXI DRIVER

cab licenses for the last of the "vochos" in 2012.

Taxi driver Francisco Trujillo said this technically means he and others who operate the older model in Cuauhtemoc are doing so illegally. But local police rarely bother the drivers, he said, and the cars stay in high demand for residents who grew up when VW taxis were everywhere.

"This service still exists because the locals always know how to find us," Trujillo said.

There are plenty of people in other parts of Mexi-

co City who said good riddance when the "vocho" taxis disappeared.

The two-door vehicles, nearly always with the front passenger seat removed, earned notoriety as robbery traps. Muggers, sometimes in cahoots with cab drivers, would appear suddenly to demand the belongings of clients trapped in back seats with no way out.

Among aficionados in Cuauhtemoc, there is some concern that Beetle-mania may come to an end as parts become increasingly hard to come by.

Mechanic Juan José Fragoso's shop in the nearby Progreso Nacional neighborhood has become known locally for its ability to fix older Beetles. He said he gets parts from a business partner who buys and strips broken or abandoned Type 1's.

"Right now they're very scarce because they discontinued a lot of parts," Fragoso said.

Some mechanics prefer to collect the cars for their own use.

Bernardo García, another mechanic in Progreso Nacional, got his first Beetle when he was 13 and hasn't stopped buying them since. García said the now-relic will always be his favorite for its combination of value and efficiency.

His latest purchase: A fixer-upper 1975 "vocho" that is older than him.

"I think the car has even more documents than I do," he quipped. **AP**

UAE A press freedom group says it has taken an unprecedented mission to Saudi Arabia to advocate for the release of 30 jailed journalists in the aftermath of the killing of Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi.

Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel's body shook visibly at a public event for the third time in less than a month yesterday, but the longtime leader insisted that there's nothing to worry about.



UK Britain's ambassador to the United States resigned yesterday, just days after diplomatic cables criticizing President Donald Trump caused embarrassment to two countries that often celebrate having a "special relationship."

Romania President Klaus Iohannis says the country's government is ignoring the will of its own citizens by not adopting anti-corruption recommendations made by a European anti-graft body.



France Police and customs officials have carried out the most widespread anti-wildlife-trafficking operation ever in a joint global operation that's led to the seizure of tens of thousands of endangered animals and the arrest of nearly 600 suspects.



USA Hundreds of people including a presidential candidate spoke out on Twitter this week after a 17-year-old black youth was killed at suburban convenience store, allegedly by a white man charged yesterday [local time] with first-degree murder who has said he felt threatened by the boy's rap music.