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THE THIRD STANDING COMMITTEE AGREES THAT MACAU'S IMMIGRATION LAWS NEED TO BE REWORKED TO STOP TOURISTS FROM BECOMING JOBSEEKERS P2

'WATCHDOG' JASON CHAO RENEWS CALL FOR RUMOR CRIME TO BE SCRAPPED P4

THE UN SAYS DRUG TRAFFICKING IS GROWING IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA FASTER THAN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES CAN TACKLE IT P6



Japan A fire official says nearly 30 people are now confirmed or presumed dead in a suspected arson at a popular animation production studio in Kyoto. The same source said 36 others have been injured, some of them critically. More on p13

South Korea Setting aside their usual bickering, South Korean liberal and conservative parties have vowed to cooperate to help the Seoul government prevail in an escalating trade row with Japan. After a meeting between the parties' leaders and President Moon, they announced plans to create a "pan-national" emergency body.

Philippines Thousands of police officers have received administrative punishments with more than 2,000 dismissed for wrongdoing during raids where drug suspects were killed under the president's crackdown, officials said yesterday. More on p12



Pakistan Authorities arrested a former prime minister yesterday over alleged irregularities related to the import of natural gas from Qatar. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi (pictured) served as prime minister for nearly a year after Nawaz Sharif was removed from office in July 2017 for failing to disclose foreign assets.



Iranians feeling the squeeze from U.S. sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic's ailing economy are increasingly turning to such digital currencies as Bitcoin to make money, prompting alarm in and out of the country. More on p15



MACAU TOURISM MIGHT BENEFIT FROM HK CHAOS

P7,8

20 TRAVEL AGENCIES FIGHT IMPERIAL PALACE PLAN P3

COMIC CON GO HOLLYWOOD

As the 50th Comic Convention kicks off, with a big Marvel Studios panel this weekend, and Spider-Man and the Marvel Cinematic Universe dominating the box office, their founders were proven right. But it took a while for Comic-Con to really "go Hollywood"

GOV'T TO CLOSE POTENTIAL LOOPHOLE FOR TOURIST-JOBSEEKERS

STAFF REPORTER

VONG Hin Fai, President of the Legislative Assembly's Third Standing Committee, disclosed that the government would amend immigration laws to stop tourists from becoming jobseekers.

His comment was made after the Committee Meeting yesterday, which focused on the amendment to the Foreign Labor Employment Law. The amendment was proposed out of the desire to forbid non-residents coming to Macau as tourists to look for jobs.

This amendment concerns only non-professional and household workers, and its objective will be achieved by the introduction of a new mechanism: the Arrival Certificate for Work Purpose.

The amendment will prevent tourists from coming into Macau to find employment.

However, an employment agency will not become a mandatory factor in the employment process. As such, an employer can directly hire a non-resident worker without a middle person. This is all set forth in Article 6 of the "Foreign Labor



RENATO MARQUES

President of the AL's Third Standing Committee, Vong Hin Fai

Employment Law", which will not be amended, thus possibly leaving the loophole open. As such, a tourist might be hired while in Macau, and then leave Macau to allow their employer to obtain the required documents.

However, Vong responded that the government had pledged to amend other laws, particularly those concerning immigration, to

close the loophole.

Vong also explained that the Committee had agreed to ask the government to introduce a timetable for the amendments to the other laws. The Committee wanted to know if these amendments would be conducted parallel to the "Foreign Labor Employment Law" amendment.

The Committee has also submit-

ted several questions for the government to clarify, including questions regarding how the Arrival Certificate for Work Purpose can be applied.

It was also unclear whether the law applies to the employer, the employment agency or the employee, but Vong said yesterday that "following the legal logic, it seems that it should be the employer or the employment agency applying for that."

The bill also does not set forth the documents needed to process the application for the Arrival Certificate, nor to which authority the application should be made.

The Committee additionally questioned the exact nature of the relationship between the Permit to Remain and the Arrival Certificate.

The issuance of the Permit to Remain relies on the possession of the Arrival Certificate. But pursuant to Decree-law 8/2010, there is a third possible option: Tentative Permit to Remain.

Therefore, Vong said, "now it comes to the relationship between the Tentative Permit to Remain

and the Arrival Certificate. The government should explain this to the Committee."

The Arrival Certificate for Work Purpose must be approved prior to a non-resident worker's arrival in Macau. As the government has revealed, upon a non-resident worker's arrival in Macau, the status of the Arrival Certificate will be "activated", but the government has not explained what legal effect this "activation" will have. There was also no explanation of whether this activation will allow the commencement of a labor relationship.

Vong explained that the law in action has a different definition: a labor relation commences once both the Permit to Remain and Employment Permit are issued. Therefore, the Committee requests an official explanation.

Clarification to this provision is crucial according to Vong, because it determines whether an employer is required to pay for the return transport of the employee.

The bill also has a provision that requires a non-resident worker arriving from outside of the Macau SAR to possess an Arrival Certificate for Work Purpose. Some lawmakers consider it necessary to specify whether the worker should be arriving from their home country.

DSAMA publishes new version of Macau's Sea Charts

THE Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) yesterday published a new and revised edition of the Macau Sea Chart. According to a DSAMA statement, the new version includes an electronic edition, the Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC).

The statement noted the new version of the Sea Chart comes after the entry into operation of several developments at sea, as well as changes enforced along the coastline of Macau. Additionally, new coastal buildings, canals, buoys, as well as information on forbidden entry zones and depth needed to be updated.

The DSAMA said that the purpose of the new map is to provide sailors with the latest and most accurate information to ensure safe navigation.

This is the fifth edition of the

Macau Sea Chart 1 and the ENC, published on the scales of 1:15000 and 1:12000, respectively. The main chart includes all information about sailing and navigation on all the maritime waters under Macau jurisdiction, as well as information on neighboring jurisdictions, while the ENC version has a more restricted scope, addressing only the waters under local jurisdiction.

The new charts come as the result of mapping done with the use of GPS equipment and other technologies to achieve the most accurate information possible, in work conducted over the past two years.

The last update of these charts was done back in 2016.

Both versions are now available to all interested people with the prices of the two versions at MOP100 and MOP80 respectively. **RM**

HO IAT SENG EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MEDIA

THERE should be an English-language newspaper in every premium hotel room, said Chief Executive frontrunner Ho Iat Seng when visiting the office of Macau Daily Times yesterday.

"Every hotel room should have an English-language newspaper, even though most visitors to Macau are from the mainland," said Ho. "That should be the case for five-star hotels with international guests; but not necessarily for three-star hotels."

Ho said that the provision of English-language newspapers in premium hotels was a standard practice in top tier mainland cities such as Beijing and Shanghai.

The former President



Ho Iat Seng and some of his aides visited the office of Macau Daily Times yesterday

of the Legislative Assembly threw his support behind English-language media during yesterday's visit, agreeing that it was an important component in the building of an international city.

Ho also said he recognizes the challenges

faced by small and medium-sized businesses in Macau, notwithstanding the competitive tax environment in place.

Ho is seen as the favorite to succeed incumbent Chief Executive Chui Sai On.

When obtaining his election nomination

form earlier this month, Ho told the media that he would reach out to all members of the 400-person Election Committee.

Apart from that, he will also meet local organizations to hear their comments and suggestions and use them to compile his manifesto. **DB**

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JULIE ZHU



Travel agencies oppose plan for Beijing Imperial Palace

JULIE ZHU

YESTERDAY, a group of representatives from 20 travel agencies handed a letter to the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) which opposes the bureau's plan for the land plot of the former Beijing Imperial Pa-

lace Hotel, specifically seeking the suspension of any current plans for the plot by the department.

Earlier this year the DSSOPT proposed that future buildings on the land be limited to a maximum height of 70 meters and 140 meters on the two respective parts of the former Beijing Imperial Palace Hotel's land plot.

According to the DSSOPT's plan, the construction of hotels on the land is still a possibility.

The letter contained opinions from about 200 people across the travel agencies, all complaining about the bureau's plan.

In 2017, after the government announced the closure of the hotel, the group filed a lawsuit against

the owner of the hotel. According to Wong Fai, the group's representative, the hotel owes them nearly MOP100 million for the preorder of approximately 70,000 guest room nights.

Wong said that since the closure of the hotel, the owner has not contacted the tour agencies to provide a solution for a refund. In

2017, the group filed two lawsuits against the relevant land plot and property.

The lawsuits are ongoing, with trials expected to start within the year. The group believes that until the lawsuits are settled, the government should not make any plans for the land.

In addition to the lawsuits from this specific group of victims, the land plot and its relevant property owners are involved in other litigation.

"The amount of debt is tremendous, which gives reason to the victims to worry about the owners' capability of paying it back. That causes instability over the land's future development," said Wong. "Thus, we believe it is unsuitable to make plans for the land plot."

The group suggests that "the government is about to change, and that there are many projects involving livelihood and public interests that need to be solved urgently."

"There is indeed no need for the government to conduct such urgent public consultation and make a plan for such a controversial land plot and property which involves many lawsuits."

Wu Keng Kuong, president of the Travel Industry Council of Macau, who also spoke at yesterday's press conference, said that if the government continues planning for the land plot, he will consult the lawyers advising on the two lawsuits before the group take further legal procedures.

The legal cases are being brought against Macau Hotel Developers Limited, as well as offshore company Victory Success Holdings Limited, which owns the hotel's titles.

The lawsuits have been funded by travel agencies and individuals.

The group expects a payout of nearly MOP100 million, which would cover compensation for payments the group had previously made to the hotel, as well as reparations for breach of contract.

Security services say no gambling websites found operating in Macau

JULIE ZHU

THE security authority has not found any gambling websites operating in Macau, according to Sit Chong Meng, Director of the Judiciary Police (PJ), who revealed this information yesterday.

Earlier this month, local junket operator Suncity Group was accused by the mainland's Economic Information Daily, an affiliate of Xinhua news agency, of operating online casinos and allowing proxy betting

services. Both are banned practices in Macau and the mainland.

Sit said that the PJ has not spotted operations in Macau run by the concerned website, and that since the website is not operating in the city, the PJ can only focus its attention on relevant situations which fall within its jurisdiction of Macau.

Currently, if the PJ finds overseas gambling websites operating in Macau, the bureau must open an investigation file, notify the concerned websites' operators,

and proceed to suspend the websites.

On Wednesday, SJM Holdings' Executive Director Angela Leong expressed her belief that all of Macau's junket promoters obey the city's law, according to a report by Jornal Cheng Pou.

Regarding the Suncity case, Leong declined to comment but expressed her trust in local junket operators.

"I will not comment on the things everybody has read, or the things you [the media] have already reported,"

said Leong, adding that "our junkets have always been obeying the law."

Meanwhile, Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, issued a reminder that Macau's gaming concessionaires and sub-concessionaires – as well as the city's licensed junkets – must comply with local laws in order to carry out their businesses. Secretary Leong made his remarks on Wednesday, while on a visit to Jiangsu province with a delegation composed of local youth.

The Secretary further stated that other jurisdictions had their own particular laws and Macau's laws only applied for business pursued within the territory. He noted companies were advised to carry out activities in line with regulations in the relevant jurisdictions in which they had business.

The government had done a lot of work to promote responsible gaming and to remind the public not to get involved in illegal gaming activities, stated Leong.

That effort included sending SMS text messages to visitors not to take part in online gaming. Additionally, messages urging visitors to engage in legal gaming in a responsible manner were displayed on monitors at

cross-boundary checkpoints and on various news platforms.

Separately, to the gambling website information, the PJ director also reported that between June 2018 and May 2019, the PJ opened 14,516 investigation files, representing an 11% increase year on year.

A 10% increase (5,926 cases) has also been recorded in regard to criminal investigation cases. During that period, 4,170 people (9% increase) were forwarded to the prosecution authority.

The increase, according to Sit, has demonstrated that the security authority has deepened its policing policy and improved law enforcement efficiency, which has returned positive results.

PEARL HORIZON BUYERS' COMPENSATION REJECTED

The Administrative Court has rejected the compensation requests of 349 buyers (from 60 cases) of the former Pearl Horizon project. The group was seeking compensation from the government following its reclamation of the Pearl Horizon land plot. The court pointed out that the contract made with the developer does not extend to any third party. Therefore, even if the allegations against the government are true, the government will have only committed wrongdoing toward Polytec group, which is different from the government's obligation to compensate buyers. In 2019, the administrative court received 66 cases (370 people) asking the government for a compensation. Four of these cases were withdrawn.

41 UNLAWFUL CONSTRUCTIONS VOLUNTARILY DEMOLISHED

In the first half of this year, the Housing Bureau recorded 41 cases of local residents who voluntarily demolished their illegal self-built constructions, which were mostly on balconies. In addition to the statistics for the first six months, three new cases have been recently recorded involving three low buildings and six balconies. In order to encourage local residents to voluntarily demolish self-built illegal constructions, the local government has launched a subsidy program to help owners, covering part of the demolishing costs.

ILLEGAL WORKERS BELIEVED CONNECTED TO ORGANIZED CRIME

Lawmaker Lei Chan U believes that the illegal workers situation has already demonstrated a tendency to turn into organized crime. In his written inquiry to the government, Lei mentioned cases of large-scale sub-concessioners of construction projects forging documents to hire illegal workers. Because of this, Lei believes that illegal worker issues are gradually developing into questions of organized crime. Lei asked whether the local government will include in the management regulations for construction sites and projects, which are currently being drafted, measures to prevent these circumstances from happening. Moreover, Lei asked if the government will amend the regulations due to the occurrence of illegal construction worker cases.



CIVIL PROTECTION LAW

MACAU 'WATCHDOG' CALLS FOR RUMOR OFFENSE TO BE SCRAPPED

RENATO MARQUES

JASON Chao, local political activist and de-facto "Macau watchdog" on several matters that relate to the rights and freedoms of the people in Macau, expressed his opinion on the controversial Article 25 of the Civil Protection Basic Law, which is currently being discussed by the First Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL).

Article 25 establishes the creation of a crime for the "spreading of false rumors and tendentious news in times of crisis," and has generated disagreement between the proponent, the Office of the Secretary for Security, and the people of Macau, including many lawmakers of the Standing Committee.

This time Chao addressed his opinion on the petition started by the New Macau Association (ANM) on July 12, calling for the withdrawal of the article from the bill.

July 12 was also the day that the government announced that it would present a new version of the Article with a clearer description.

According to Chao, the revision proposed is more precise on the

description of the intentions covered by the offense, but still, "in my view, the ANM's petition for a withdrawal stands regardless of this revision."

According to Chao, the use of criminal laws to address the problem of misinformation or inaccurate information which may cause public panic "is not a general practice internationally."

Chao additionally noted that the concept of misinformation itself might cause a lot of confusion as, "there is no good equivalent of the word 'disinformation' in Chinese," which can create confusion between "disinformation" and "misinformation."

"Both disinformation and misinformation refer to false, inaccurate or misleading information, [but while] misinformation means the type of false information not intended or not understood to cause harm, disinformation [relates to] the type of false information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm for profit," Chao wrote in a statement sent to the Times.

In his opinion, the discussion on the control of the impact of false information should be situated "in the context of public policies concerning 'disinformation,' ra-

ther than the criminal laws of a [restricted number of] countries."

Chao also said that in the context of the so-called "fake news," popularized by the American president Donald Trump, "disinformation is a global issue. Macau is not the only place in the world affected by the problem of disinformation."

"Almost all countries in the world have experienced the proliferation of disinformation in a variety of settings."

Indeed, this is a problem that extends not only to governments but also to supranational organizations such as The United Nations (UN) who, in 2017, published a declaration on the topic of "Freedom of Expression and 'Fake News', Disinformation and Propaganda."

Although the declaration "has no direct legal force," as he noted, it "offers an impactful interpretation of the right to freedom of expression under international laws concerning disinformation," and more specifically with regard to what concerns the criminalization of such dissemination.

Furthermore, the declaration gives no encouragement for the use of criminal law to address the

problem of disinformation. Instead, the UN Special Rapporteur focuses on empowering journalists to critically expose disinformation and increasing the transparency of information sources.

These recommendations are echoed by other supranational organizations such as the European Commission, which published a similar document in which it stresses "improving the transparency of news sources and empowering internet users and journalists to seek true information and debunk disinformation." Both reports only refer to legal actions to be taken against information deemed to be, "illegal," "defamatory," containing "hateful speech," and "incitement to violence."

Chao finally noted that while the proposal of Article 25 was grounded in an "acceptable" example of where people spread "false information" - last year's severe typhoon - the main issue is that the government proposal is not limited to such cases but extends to any "sudden public incident," a dubious classification that together with the powers attributed to the Chief Executive and security chief, he fears could potentially be used too broadly.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

CORRUPTION AND POOR BORDER CONTROL A RECIPE FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING, SAYS UN

STAFF REPORTER

A United Nations report has found that drug trafficking is growing in East and Southeast Asia faster than law enforcement agencies can tackle it. The report made specific references to Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan, noting flaws in law enforcement, border controls and ineffective anti-corruption initiatives.

However, the local government says law enforcement remains tough in the war on drugs.

At a recent Legislative Assembly plenary session, Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak said that black market drug prices were on average threefold that in Hong Kong, crediting the difference to the crackdown on supply in Macau.

Wong said that the vigilance of local law enforcement agencies had constricted the supply.

Meanwhile, during his visit to Macau this week, deputy director of the National Drug Control Commission of China, Andy Tsang, said he was confident that his home city of Hong Kong was already tracking down the mastermind behind a network thought to



Some 459 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine on a table at the Narcotics Suppression Bureau Bangkok, in Thailand

be using teenagers to sell narcotics. "The drug market is flooded with supply. [...] Unless we're successful in reducing demand, the criminals will be there to exploit the situation and take advantage of it. Using teenage couriers is certainly something that they were trying," said Tsang.

The report also highlighted the influence of the casino sector, noting that such venues are hotspots for organized crime.

"Southeast Asia has an organized crime problem, and it is time

to coalesce around solutions to address the conditions that have allowed illicit businesses to grow, and to secure and cooperate along borders," said Jeremy Douglas, a regional representative of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, as cited by the Associated Press.

Douglas said the methamphetamine market is worth more than \$60 billion. Facilitated by organized crime, the market has expanded since a 2013 study found the its value was \$15 billion.

"You can buy methamphetamine in Bangkok for \$2 a pill. It's basically a price of a quart of milk," said Douglas.

Psychological counselor and coordinator of the Association of Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers of Macao (ARTM) Erick Cheung has previously told the Times that the theme of this year's UN anti-narcotics action is "Justice for Health, Health for Justice," which emphasizes that in combating the use of addictive narcotics, both health

and justice are of equal importance.

More studies have shown that treating narcotic addiction as a health problem is more effective than as a crime, as users are more willing to reach for help. In Portugal, narcotic use being decriminalized has been a topic of study. Narcotic users in Portugal are more willing to reach for medical support to combat narcotic use.

Indeed, treating narcotic addiction in a medical approach is agreed by the UN.

The same reports also noted that cartels in the region are also in trafficking of other things, including people.

The UN report wrote, "migrants are often subjected to debt bondage, physical violence, and other forms of exploitation" and it noted that there are "gaps in the official data."

Douglas said governments in Southeast Asia should implement more effective recruitment and migration management systems, adding that governments should also raise awareness of vulnerable populations at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

HK protests expected to slightly inflate Macau visitor arrivals

LYNZY VALLES

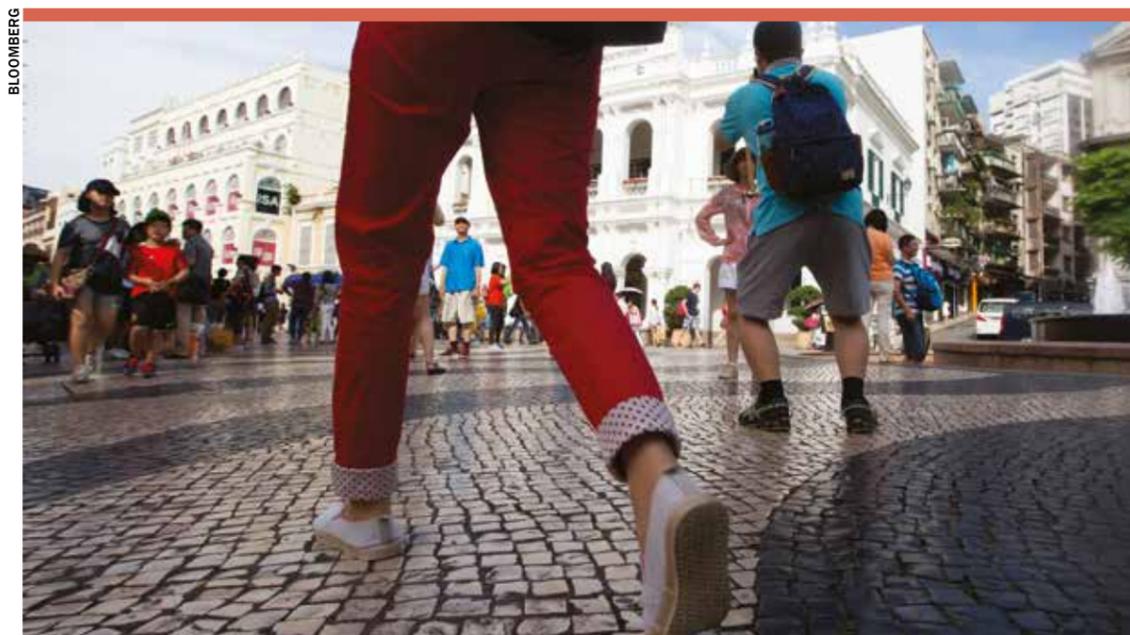
THE massive Hong Kong protests against the now-suspended extradition bill, are likely to have a minor inflationary effect on Macau's tourism arrivals, say analysts.

This year's monthly arrivals for June have not yet been released, but visitors for the month amounted to over 2.6 million in 2018, while July arrivals reached 3 million.

Figures from the Macao Government Tourism Office showed that in June 2018, 67.3% (1.75 million) of the total arrivals came from mainland China.

According to political commentator Larry So, the demonstration in the neighboring region may have a positive impact on Macau's tourism arrivals.

He told the Times that many mainland tourists join organized trips to both special administrative regions, but might now choose to avoid some parts in central Hong Kong. Accordingly, they might choose to stay a little longer in Macau this time.



BLOOMBERG

The average length of stay of visitors in Macau is 1.3 days.

"I would say that quite a number of people would rather not go to Hong Kong. But the point is that many of the tourists' [itineraries] includes trips to both Hong Kong and Macau" anyway, said So.

"I think [with the current situa-

tion], they will still go to Hong Kong's Lantau Island but only in Tung Chung to shop in outlets," he continued. "They will definitely come back to Macau and spend a day or more and in that case, Macau would benefit from these protests."

The sociologist, who was recently

in the mainland, said that many of its residents, particularly in Guangdong, are not very aware of the situation in Hong Kong.

According to a report issued by HSBC earlier this week, the continuing protests in Hong Kong will put off some 350,000 visitors from the mainland, adding that althou-

gh tourist arrivals would continue to grow, they would do so at a slower rate.

HSBC has trimmed its prediction for mainland arrivals growth for the year to 9% from 9.7%.

According to reports, both Hong Kong tourism numbers and hotel occupancy rates have already slumped.

The Hong Kong Inbound Travel Association estimated that the number of organized tours to the city so far this month has dropped by 20% to 30% from the same period a year earlier.

Hong Kong businesses are also reporting that they expect sales volumes to be significantly down on account of disruptions caused by the protests.

Ahead of the official release, So expects that the number of tourists from Hong Kong has decreased significantly as they are focused on the political situation in the region. However, he did not know if this would necessarily translate into a greater number of mainlanders coming to Macau.

"We might have a little bit of increase in the tourists from China, if some of them would prefer not to go to Hong Kong [and] so will opt to visit Macau instead," he said.

"In terms of the VIP market, I would say that because of the political situation, the VIP market [will] in a way slow down a little bit," the sociologist added.

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AP PHOTO



Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam

CHINA DRAFTING URGENT PLAN TO RESOLVE HONG KONG CHAOS

KAREN LEIGH & DOMINIC LAU

CHINESE officials in charge of Hong Kong affairs are working on an urgent strategy to solve the city's political chaos and have ruled out the use of military force, the South China Morning Post reported, citing unidentified people familiar with the discussions.

They will soon present top leaders in Beijing with both an immediate plan to handle the mass protests and a longer-term strategy that could result in China overhauling its management of the former British colony, the newspaper said, without elaborating on a date.

Beijing maintains that the crisis is best left for Hong Kong authorities to resolve and doesn't want to get directly involved, according to the report. Beijing has expressed public support for Chief Executive Carrie Lam throughout weeks of unrest and political gridlock, saying this week that it "firmly supports" her leadership.

Yesterday, China condemned a joint motion for a resolution in the European Parliament that called on EU member states and other nations to investigate export controls "to deny China, and in particular Hong Kong, access to technologies" that could be used to violate human rights.

"China strongly opposes this,"

spokesman Lu Kang said. "China does value its relations with Europe, but maintaining a healthy relationship requires joint efforts."

Lam on Monday vowed she would remain in office, after a Financial Times report said she had offered to resign but that Beijing insisted she stay and clean up "the mess she created."

The Chinese officials also see Hong Kong's police force as key to maintaining stability, the newspaper said. Officers' tactics have come under fire after they used rounds of tear gas, rubber bullets, batons and pepper spray in dispersing the protests. Demonstrators have demanded an inde-

pendent investigation into what they deem a use of excessive force, while opposition lawmakers have called for the resignation of security chief John Lee.

Mainland officials want to avoid bloodshed and ensure the financial hub remains largely stable, the newspaper reported, citing the people familiar. China's approach will be to "lure the snake from its hole," according to one adviser cited by the SCMP, taking a defensive position until the opposition reveals its strategy.

They're also considering whether the current environment makes it too risky for President Xi Jinping to visit another former European colony, Macau,

later this year for 20th anniversary celebrations of its return to Chinese rule, the paper reported.

Crowds of Hong Kong protesters have turned out in unprecedented sizes every week since mid-June. In recent gatherings, their anger has focused on China. More protests are being planned in neighborhoods across the city by demonstrators vowing to spread the word until Lam responds to their demands, including the official withdrawal of legislation that would allow extraditions to the mainland and first sparked the rallies.

There are indications that Xi and his top officials are preparing for their annual summer conclave in the seaside city of Beidaihe, which this year will bear even closer watching than usual as China faces growing risks at home and abroad, including Hong Kong's unrest and an ongoing trade war with the U.S. **BLOOMBERG**

Macau, HK business leaders confident in esports opportunity

THREE business leaders from the Hong Kong and Macau esports industry said at a forum held in the HKSAR that they are ready to embrace opportunities generated by the Greater Bay Area.

"What opens up before us is a market with 70 million population, especially considering the fact that Hong Kong has only a tenth of the whole population in the Greater Bay Area," said Eric Yeung, president of the Esports Association Hong Kong, as cited by Chinese news agency Xinhua.

Yeung made the remarks at "GBA Opportunity: Hong

Kong's Esports, Ready to Fly", a session of the Digital Entertainment Leadership Forum 2019, which aims to review the status quo and explore collaboration among the esports industry across the Greater Bay Area.

Derek Cheung, chairman of the Hong Kong Esports group, agreed with Yeung. He said that esports is an emerging new sector for both Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland with high economic potential. "But the mainland grows faster than us, of course," said Cheung.

New technology is a special trait for the esports industry in the mainland, for example in

the areas of virtual reality and augmented reality, which enrich the setting of computer games. This is an area from which Hong Kong can learn, said Cheung.

Mario Ho, the president of the Macao E-sports Federation, said Macau shares similarities with Hong Kong in its esports industry. He pointed out that booming video game companies in the mainland have not found equivalents in the two SARs.

"Now we're working with Tencent and some live video streaming platforms to help our games and our players into the mainland market," said Ho. **DB/XINHUA**

CONSUMER COUNCILS CO-TEST HAND CREAMS FROM TWO REGIONS

THE Macau Consumer Council and its Zhuhai counterpart have tested and approved all 43 samples of hand creams from both regions, according to the results of an annual co-test report between the two entities.

The wide choice of hand cream brands on the market reflects the demand of consumers for this kind of product, noted the Macau Consumer Council in a statement yesterday.

As hand cream is used directly applied to the skin, any hazardous substances or bad hygienic condition may affect consumers' heal-

th and safety.

According to the national testing standard, the colony count of mold and yeast in the 43 samples passed the standard test for the hygiene quality of hand creams. No pathogenic bacteria, such as coliform bacteria, staphylococcus aureus nor pseudomonas aeruginosa were detected during the testing.

Meanwhile, the 43 samples were tested for hazardous substances including their content level of mercury, lead, arsenic, cadmium, methanol, and 1,4-Dioxane. Over-injection of hazardous substances into the human body

over a long period of time may affect the nervous system, respiratory system, as well as all external and internal organs. No sample was found to exceed the testing standard.

The Macao and Zhuhai Consumer Councils co-test these kinds of product to safeguard consumer rights.

According to product labels, the origins of the 20 hand cream samples bought in Macau include China, Japan, Korea, and countries in Europe and North America. Their prices ranged from MOP10 to over MOP200 per bottle. **DB**

Robots are scaling warehouse shelves to get stuff to you faster

SYDNEY PRICE

A logistics company partly owned by Related Cos., the developer behind Manhattan's Hudson Yards, is searching for locations across North America to build its multistory robotic warehouses.

Robots - and humans - started working this month at Quiet Logistics' new 440,000-square-foot (41,000-square-meter) fulfillment center in the Los Angeles area. It's the firm's first property on West Coast, and a model for as many as seven more the company aims to build near population centers by 2022, with the goal of getting goods to consumers faster.

"Some people assume these large facilities should be in rural areas with more open space, but they work better in cities that are close to more people and more labor," Chief Executive Officer Bruce Welty said in an interview.

Quiet Logistics - which fulfills orders for fashion and lifestyle brands such as Bonobos, M. Gemi and Outdoor Voices - is scouting locations in the U.S. Southwest, Midwest and Southeast and also exploring the possibility of building in Canada and Mexico. Multilevel construction uses less real estate than traditional sprawling, single-story warehouses, an advantage in urban areas where land is scarce and costly.

At the California center, in La Palma, robots designed by Quiet Logistics spinoff Locus Robotics will be able to travel long distances across the building and scale high shelves that

DIANA MACESANU



are out of reach of humans. With the rise of same-day and next-day delivery options made popular by Amazon.com Inc., the automation is necessary to meet the expectations of the company's fashion clients, who have large customer bases in the L.A. area, Welty said.

That doesn't mean robots are taking over. In fact, the demand for fast fulfillment will require more human labor than ever before, according to Welty. Quiet Logistics aims to hire about 500 full-time employees who will work in tandem with the robots at the two-story La Palma center, the company's fifth U.S. warehouse.

Related - known for its \$25 billion Hudson Yards project,

with office and residential skyscrapers and a \$2 billion mall - in March teamed up with Greenfield Partners to buy Quiet Logistics, extending the developer's reach into e-commerce. The soaring popularity

That doesn't mean robots are taking over. In fact, the demand for fast fulfillment will require more human labor than ever before

of online shopping has helped make warehouses the best-performing segment of the property market this year, according to a Bloomberg index of real estate investment trusts.

But landlords should take caution before expanding aggressively into vertical fulfillment centers, according to David Egan, global head of industrial and logistics research at CBRE Group Inc. Because there are few such properties in existence, most of the savings and benefits are theoretical, he said.

"We don't know what the economics look like," Egan said. "We don't know what the rents are going to be, and we don't know what's going to happen when the users' lease runs out and the spaces have to be taken over by a second generation of renters." **BLOOMBERG**

users' lease runs out and the spaces have to be taken over by a second generation of renters." **BLOOMBERG**

CHINESE DRONES BANNED BY TECH SUPPLIER TO US POLICE

A supplier of drone technology to dozens of state and local law enforcement and public safety agencies, located in the U.S. and a handful of other countries, will stop working with Chinese drone manufacturers, citing security concerns.

Cape, a Redwood City, California-based startup, plans to inform customers that it will stop selling software compatible with Chinese drones to its clients, most of whom use the tools to remotely dispatch and operate the small aerial vehicles to surveil possible incidents or crime scenes. It's a blow to China's DJI, the world's top maker of drones that has spent years trying to calm fears that its products could be used for espionage.

The ban is the latest illustration of how technology companies are in the crossfire of the deteriorating relationship between the U.S. and China. American companies relying on global supply chains have seen their costs increase, while Chinese technology companies are increasingly viewed with suspicion in the U.S.

Michael Oldenburg, a spokesman for DJI, wrote in an email: "We are disappointed to learn about Cape's decision, which is based on false speculation, and remain committed to continuously working with all of our customers—including more than 520 public safety agencies who trust our products to conduct critical missions."

DJI's situation has echoes of Huawei Technologies Co., the Chinese telecommunications equipment company that the Trump administration has targeted as a national security threat for months, using these concerns to restrict its access to the U.S. market.

DJI's domination of U.S. drone sales has long raised its own suspicions. The U.S. Army expressed cybersecurity concerns with its drones in 2017, and Homeland Security issued an alert last month saying it was worried about sensitive video footage being sent to China. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

CORPORATE BITS

MGM holds culinary contest for employees



MGM recently hosted the first "Employee Culinary Contest" at Vista of MGM Cotai, bringing together a total of 120 non-culinary full-time employees from Macau, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Nepal and Taiwan. The employees competed in the Cantonese Cuisines

and International Cuisines categories.

The aim of the contest is to promote different food cultures through a set of competitions to encourage team members to learn from each other's cooking techniques, according to a statement issued by the gaming operator.

After rounds of the competitions, Xiaomei Huang from Rooms and Yan Chan from Cage stood out from the crowd with their cooking skills and won the titles for Champions of Cantonese and International Cuisines respectively.

Grant Bowie, CEO and executive director of MGM China Holdings Limited, said "the contest has provided a platform for members who are passionate about cooking to showcase their talent, where I could totally feel the joy of the contestants during the contest. It also enhanced communications and interactions between departments, making our team more united."

Sands China holds training session on Huaiyang cuisine



Sands China Ltd. recently held a professionalism training session on Huaiyang cuisine at Sands Cotai Central with nearly 200 participants in attendance.

In addition to Sands China employees, the company invited

educators from the Macau University of Science and Technology, and food and beverage professionals and practitioners.

According to the press release the gaming operator

issued, the participants learned about the background, innovations and development of Huaiyang cuisine from celebrity chef Zhou Xiaoyan, an award-winning master of Chinese cooking.

Zhou shared some of his knowledge gained over many decades of experience, focusing on the dietary culture of Huaiyang cuisine.

"Huaiyang cuisine has a time-honoured history," said Wen Hongyan, senior vice president of human resources for Sands China Ltd. "We are grateful to have had master chef Zhou Xiaoyan as our guest, whose lecture has enhanced our team members' professional knowledge."

JAPAN EXPORTS DIP AS CHINA-US TRADE WAR TAKES TOLL

JAPAN'S exports declined in June as shipments of goods were hit by trade disputes between China and the U.S., the Finance Ministry reported yesterday.

The data released by the Finance Ministry show exports fell 6.8% in June from a year earlier, the seventh straight month of decline, while imports fell 5.2%.

The trade surplus for the month dropped 20% to 589.5 billion yen (\$5.5 billion), the ministry said.

For the first six months of this year, Japanese exports slipped 4.7% while imports edged down 1.1%, with the nation logging a trade deficit of 888.8 billion yen (\$8.2 billion).

The Japanese economy, the world's third largest, is dependent on exports and the conflict between the U.S. and China has taken a sharp toll.

President Donald Trump has imposed 25% tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese imports. Beijing has countered by taxing \$110 billion of U.S. goods.

Koya Miyamae, senior economist at SMBC Nikko Securities Inc., said exports remain weak, especially to Asia.

"That brought the overall numbers down," he said in a report. "The outlook looks dim for July through September as far as export growth."

Japan is also embroiled in a row with South Korea over Tokyo's move to tighten controls on the exports of photoresists and two other chemicals to South Korean companies that use them to produce semiconductors and display screens for smartphones and TVs.



Japan has already been hit by increased U.S. steel and aluminum tariffs. Trump has repeatedly said Japan needs to buy more from the U.S., and bilateral trade negotiations are expected to continue through this year.

Exports to the U.S., Japan's largest overseas market, rose 5.2% to 7.8 trillion yen (\$72 billion) in January-June from a year earlier, while imports from the U.S. increased 1.7% to 4.4 trillion yen (\$40 billion). But exports to China sank 8.2%

in January-June while shipments to every other Asian country except India also declined. Japanese companies are key suppliers for many components, chemicals and other materials used in manufacturing products across the region, as well

as the machinery used to make them. Japanese exports of cars were nearly flat and exports of all vehicles declined in the first half of the year, as did shipments of most other categories of products. AP

Beijing launches STAR, tech stock market to boost industry

JOE McDONALD, BEIJING

TRADING starts Monday on a Chinese stock market for high-tech companies that play a key role in official development plans that are straining relations with Washington.

Regulators have approved 25 companies in information technology and other fields seen by communist leaders as a path to prosperity and global influence for the Shanghai Stock Exchange's STAR Market.

The market, modeled on the U.S.-based NASDAQ, reflects the ruling Communist Party's desire to channel private capital into its development plans. It gives small Chinese investors a chance to buy into tech industries that until now have turned to Wall Street to sell shares.

The STAR Market has no direct link to Beijing's tariff war with President Donald Trump over U.S. complain-



Yi Huiman, chairman of China Securities Regulatory Commission, Liu He, vice premier, Li Qiang, top party official of Shanghai, and Ying Yong, Shanghai's mayor, celebrate the launch of the SSE STAR Market

ts China steals or pressures companies to hand over technology. But it will raise money for industries some American officials see as a competitive threat to U.S. technology leadership.

"The new board's impor-

tant role is to provide a fundraising channel for China's scientific and technologic innovation," said economist Lu Zhengwei at Industrial Bank in Shanghai.

China's stock exchanges in Shanghai and the southern

city of Shenzhen were set up in the early 1990s to raise money for state industry. They have expanded to include private enterprises but still are dominated by government-owned companies such as PetroChina

Ltd. and China Mobile Ltd.

Companies such as e-commerce giants Alibaba and JD.com and search operator Baidu.com have raised billions of dollars on Wall Street. But foreign stock sales are inconvenient and expensive for smaller companies.

The STAR Market has more lenient standards for profitability and price volatility than the main exchanges. The Shenzhen Stock Exchange launched its own second board, dubbed ChiNext, in 2009 for small, faster-growing companies.

Companies that have yet to make a profit can trade on the Shanghai tech board if they spend at least 15% of revenue on research and development or have drugs or other technologies in advanced development. By contrast, the main board requires at least two years of profits before a company can join, a condition that has limited access for fled-

gling ventures.

Allowing companies to sell shares before they are profitable will encourage development of Chinese venture capital by allowing early investors to recover some of their money, said Lu of Industrial Bank.

Shares on the new market can swing by 30 percent in price before regulators will impose a 10-minute trading halt. The main exchanges halt trading for the day of any stock that rises or falls 10 percent in price.

In addition to companies due to start trading Monday, the Shanghai exchange said it was reviewing applications from 116 other ventures for initial public share offerings.

A state-owned maker of railway controls accounts for the bulk of the market's share value. China Railway Signal & Communication Co., Ltd. said it raised 10.5 billion yuan (\$1.5 billion) from investors. AP

MICHAEL TARM, PEORIA (ILL.)

COURTS

Jury deliberates death penalty in Chinese scholar's slaying

JURORS began deliberating but didn't reach a decision yesterday [Macau time] on whether a former University of Illinois doctoral student should be put to death for the brutal slaying of a scholar from China he abducted at a bus stop.

Brent Christensen's attorney, Elisabeth Pollock, teared up earlier in the day during closing arguments in the penalty phase in U.S. District Court in Peoria, at one point walking behind her 30-year-old client and putting her hands on his shoulders.

"He is a whole person," she said, looking across the room at jurors. "He is not just the worst thing he ever did."

Pollock sought to humanize Christensen, telling jurors how he once bought a stuffed toy his sister wanted using his allowance money.

Prosecutors reminded jurors of a secret FBI recording in which Christensen laughed as he described luring 26-year-old Yingying Zhang into his car as she was running late to sign an apartment lease in 2017. He raped, choked and stabbed her as she fought back, then beat her to death with a bat and cut off her head. Her body was never found.

"Evil does exist," prosecutor Eugene Miller told jurors. "What the defendant did was evil."

All 12 jurors must agree to impose the death penalty. If even one opposes execution, the 30-year-old would be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Pollock told jurors that Christensen did kill Zhang, something the defense admitted at the outset of his trial last month. She said Christensen — a native of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, whose undergraduate degree was in physics and math — would die in prison whether by natural causes or lethal injection.

"He is leaving prison in a casket. The only question is when," she said.

The same jurors took less than 90 minutes to convict Christensen at the trial last month.

Deliberations during the current penalty stage have already lasted longer and could potentially take days, with a complicated series of difficult questions jurors must answer, including whether Christensen displayed unique cruelty in how he killed Zhang or whether he exhibited redeeming qualities in his life.

Jurors began deliberating in the afternoon and within just a few hours sent a note to the judge asking about the order they should consider those factors. Judge James Shadid sent a note back saying they should consult the written instructions. After three hours, the judge excused jurors for the day. They'll return Thursday morning.

In his closing, prosecutor James Nelson at one point held up the bat Christensen used to kill Zhang. He told jurors the slaying of Zhang, who Christensen didn't know, was part of the fulfillment of Christensen's fantasy to become infamous as a killer.

"The defendant killed Yingying for sport," he said, adding that death was the only just punishment for a crime so "horrific."

Prosecutors said Christensen likely forced the 5-foot-4 Zhang into a 6-foot-long duffel bag to carry her up to his apartment in Urbana, Champaign's sister city 140 miles (225 kilometers) southwest of Chicago.

Nelson reminded jurors of testimony about how Christensen was in awe at how Zhang resisted. He thought she was dead at one point and stabbed her in the neck, only for her to grab the knife, Nelson said. "She just wouldn't die," Christensen was recorded saying. He decapitated Zhang to ensure she was dead.

Raising his voice and pointing at

Christensen at the defense table, Nelson said: "She didn't want that man to be the last man she saw on earth. ... He erased her from this earth."

Jurors shouldn't be swayed by defense photographs and videos showing Christensen as an outwardly sweet, kind child, Nelson added. "Sometimes innocent children grow up to be cruel," he said.

Christensen never publicly revealed what he did with Zhang's remains. He declined to testify during the penalty phase, when he could have explained how he disposed of the body.

But his lawyer, Pollock, did apologize on his behalf, at one point saying "I'm sorry" to Zhang's father on a front bench.

Christensen's father and mother were also in court, several times shedding tears as lawyers spoke of their son.

The defense listed 49 mitigating factors they say should weigh in favor of a life prison sentence, including that he had no prior criminal record, sought treatment for homicidal fantasies before killing Zhang and that his parents would suffer if he's put to death.

Prosecutors say the aggravating factors include that Christensen killed Zhang in a "heinous, cruel and depraved" manner; that he took advantage of her small stature to kill her and that the killing devastated her family.

Illinois abolished the death penalty in 2011, but Christensen was prosecuted under federal law, which allows for it. If he is sentenced to death, a long appeals process is expected before he would be executed by lethal injection in Indiana. AP



The victim: Yingying Zhang

YANG HENGJUN

Lawyer says Beijing has charged Chinese-Australian writer

A Chinese Australian writer detained in Beijing since January was charged yesterday and moved to a different detention center in the Chinese capital, his lawyer said.

Australian lawyer Rob Stary said he had been told by Yang Hengjun's family and friends of the charge and was seeking confirmation from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Stary said he did not know what the 53-year-old visiting scholar at Columbia

University in New York had been charged with.

"It's an offense under their state security laws. We expect it will be some form of espionage or something of that nature," Stary said.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade later said its Beijing Embassy was seeking confirmation from China authorities that Yang had been transferred to a Beijing detention center. The embassy had been notified of the transfer by Yang's family.

"Australia continues to

have consular access and have again asked that he be granted immediate access to his lawyers," the department said in a statement.

The Australian government reported in January that Yang was being held in a type of home detention, although the accommodation was not his. China said at time that Yang's case was being handled by the Beijing city branch of the national intelligence bureau.

Stary said he was transferred to a national security department facility when he

was charged.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has confirmed the national security department was handling Yang's case.

Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said on Thursday: "At present, the case is under investigation."

"The Chinese national security department handles the case in strict accordance with law and fully protects Yang Jun's lawful rights," Lu said, referring to Yang by a name he is also known by.

"I have nothing else to of-

fer at the moment," Lu added.

He has been detained since Jan. 19, when he arrived from New York at China's Guangzhou Airport with his wife, Xiaoliang Yuan, and his 14-year-old stepdaughter.

China in January said Yang had been detained for allegedly endangering national security, a vague charge frequently leveled at critics of the ruling Communist Party.

Foreign Minister Marise Payne did not immediate-

ly respond to a request for comment on Thursday.

Payne said last week that her government had raised Yang's case "regularly with China at senior levels."

"We have requested his case be treated fairly, transparently, and expeditiously," Payne said in a statement.

"Australia has asked for clarification regarding the reasons for his detention and we have said that if he is being detained purely for his political views, then he should be released," she added. AP

AP PHOTO

“There are certain flaws in what happened during operations but these are actually being addressed.”

SEVERO CATURA



Undersecretary Severo Catura, executive director of the Presidential Human Rights Committee secretariat

gs officer in an extortion attempt prompted Duterte to briefly suspended the drug crackdown amid outcries.

“There are certain flaws probably in what happened during operations but these are actually being addressed,” Undersecretary Severo Catura, an official dealing with human rights issues, said in the news conference.

“That’s why we are saying here that however we’re concerned with regard to apprehending criminals, we’re also that concerned with regard to ensuring that the rule of law is followed,” Catura said.

He added that more than 200 policemen have been killed and 700 others wounded in drug raids — statistics that Duterte himself has often cited to counter allegations by human rights activists that police have killed suspects beyond the law because they violently resisted.

Banaag said it was the first time authorities disclosed the full extent of police who have been disciplined for lapses in the anti-drug crackdown.

Former Commission on Human Rights chairwoman Loretta Ann Rosales, however, said the high number of erring enforcers involved in raids where lives were lost in alarming levels should prompt the government to immediately suspend and review the crackdown.

“It’s terrible, it’s alarming, it’s unconscionable,” Rosales said.

Duterte had rejected those calls and warned drug suspects that his campaign would be more dangerous in the final three years of his six-year presidency. **AP**

PHILIPPINES

7,800 POLICE PUNISHED FOR DEADLY DRUG RAIDS

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

THOUSANDS of Philippine police officers have received administrative punishments with more than 2,000 dismissed for wrongdoings during raids where drug suspects were killed under the president’s crackdown, officials said yesterday.

Communications Assistant Secretary Marie Rafael Banaag told a news conference that 14,724 police were investigated for their

involvement in police drug operations that led to deaths from July 2016 until last April. She said 7,867 of them received administrative punishments for unspecified lapses.

A tally presented by Banaag showed that 2,367 police officers have been fired, 4,100 suspended while the rest were reprimanded, demoted, had their salaries forfeited or deprived of certain privileges.

Banaag did not say how many

officers have been criminally charged for serious lapses or outright crimes committed while enforcing the crackdown, which was launched by President Rodrigo Duterte as his centerpiece program when he took office in mid-2016.

Philippine police officials say about 6,600 drug suspects have been killed in raids carried out by the police mostly in gunbattles that ensued after the suspects fought back and endangered the lives of law enforcers. Banaag and other

officials reported a lower death toll, more than 5,500, saying authorities were still verifying other drug-related deaths.

Last year, a Philippine court found three police officers guilty of killing a student they alleged was a drug dealer in the first known such conviction under the crackdown.

The court ruled the officers murdered Kian Loyd delos Santos during a raid in Caloocan city’s slums in the Manila metropolis and rejected the policemen’s claim that the 17-year-old fired back while resisting arrest. Delos Santos’s family and witnesses testified in official investigations that he was shot in a dark alley near a creek as he pleaded for his life.

Delos Santos’s killing and that of a South Korean was allegedly strangled to death by an anti-drug

UN envoy says US sanctions on Myanmar generals inadequate

THE U.N. special rapporteur for Myanmar said yesterday the U.S. didn’t “go far enough” in sanctions against four top Myanmar generals over the mass killings of minority Rohingya Muslims.

Myanmar’s commander in chief and his deputy, two other generals, and their immediate families have been banned from traveling to the U.S. Earlier this week, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the four were responsible for “gross human rights violations” involving extrajudicial killings in an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Rohingya minority in Myanmar’s northern Rakhine state.

U.N. envoy Yanghee Lee said the U.S. move was “better late than never” but was inadequate. She said a U.N. fact-finding mission had earlier identified six Myanmar generals, including the four men, who should be sanc-

AP PHOTO



U.N. Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Myanmar, Lee Yanghee

tioned. The U.S. should also ban the other two and their assets should be seized, she said.

“It doesn’t go far enough.

It should go further and the perimeters of the sanctions should go further,” she said. “Freeze all their assets and the assets of their families

too.”

The four men are: Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing, his deputy Soe Win, and two subordi-

nates deemed responsible for the abuses.

Myanmar’s military has been accused of widespread rights violations leading about 700,000 Rohingya to flee the country since August 2017. Critics have urged that its actions be judged by the International Criminal Court.

Lee, who has been barred from entering Myanmar, said Yangon appeared to be increasing pressure on regional governments to prevent her from carrying out her duties and avoid international scrutiny. She said she had to abort part of her trip to Thailand “due to interference” but declined to give details. Her office earlier said she was visiting Thailand and Malaysia from July 8-18.

Lee also slammed Singapore for deporting six Myanmar nationals who were allegedly supporters of the Arakan Army. She

said the six were arrested upon their return and were now being held incommunicado.

She said Myanmar’s move last month to shut-down mobile internet in nine townships has made it challenging to get information on the ground. She said she has been told that three villages in Rakhine have been burnt down by the military in the past two weeks.

The internet blackout also meant that people in several townships couldn’t receive warnings of impending floods in the current monsoon season, resulting in displacement and houses being destroyed, she said.

Lee urged the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations to make the crisis in Myanmar a top priority as there are nearly 1.5 million Myanmar refugees in the region, and rampant human trafficking. **AP**

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

JAPAN

Man screaming 'You die!' kills nearly 30 at anime studio

A man screaming "You die!" burst into an animation production studio in Kyoto, Japan, and set it on fire early yesterday, authorities said, killing nearly 30 people.

The blaze injured another 36 people, some of them critically, Japanese authorities said. Most were workers at Kyoto Animation, known for mega-hit stories featuring high school girls, with places featured in the stories even becoming "pilgrimage sites" for their fans.

The fire started in the three-story building in Japan's ancient capital after the suspect sprayed an unidentified liquid accelerant, Kyoto prefectural police and fire department officials said.

Thirteen were confirmed dead on the first and second floors, Kyoto fire department official Kazuhiro Hayashi said. On the third floor, more than 10 people were found unresponsive, he said. Some of them were found on the stairs, where they apparently collapsed while gasping for air and trying to go out to the roof.

Hayashi says firefighters were still searching inside the building in case anyone else was left behind.

Kyoto police said the suspect was injured and taken to a hospital for

AP PHOTO



treatment. They are investigating the man, who is 41 and not a company employee, on suspicion of arson, police said.

A witness who saw the suspect being approached by police told Japanese networks that the man admitted spreading gasoline and setting a fire with a lighter. She told NHK public television that the man had burns on his arms and legs and that he was angrily

complaining that something of his had been "stolen," possibly by the company. NHK footage also showed sharp knives police had collected from the scene, though it was not clear if they belonged to the suspect.

Survivors who saw the attacker said he was not their colleague and that he was screaming "(You) die!" when he dumped the liquid and started the fire, according to

Japanese media reports. They said some of the survivors got splashed with the liquid.

Kyoto Animation, better known as KyoAni, was founded in 1981 as an animation and comic book production studio, and its hits include "Lucky Star," "K-On!" and "Haruhi Suzumiya." The company does not have a major presence outside Japan, though it was hired to provide secondary animation work

on a 1998 "Pokemon" feature that appeared in U.S. theaters and a "Winnie the Pooh" video.

Footage on Japan's NHK television showed gray smoke billowing from the charred building. Other footage showed windows blown off.

"There was an explosion, then I heard people shouting, some asking for help," a female witness told TBS TV. "Black smoke was rising from windows on upper floors, then there was a man struggling to crawl out of the window."

Witnesses in the neighborhood said they heard bangs coming from the building, others said they saw people coming out blackened, bleeding, walking barefoot, Kyodo News reported.

Rescue officials set up an orange tent outside the studio building to provide first aid and sort out the injured.

Fire department officials said more than 70 people were in the building at the time of the fire and many of them ran outside. AP

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AP PHOTO



Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif prepares to address the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at the United Nations headquarters

US sets tight travel limitations for Iran's UN diplomats

JENNIFER PELTZ,
UNITED NATIONS

THE U.S. is tightly limiting travel by Iranian officials visiting or assigned to the United Nations, sparking concern from the world body.

Representatives to the U.N. from Iran and some other countries have long had some limitations on their movements. But the new rules for Iranians — imposed as its foreign minister was preparing to arrive for U.N. meetings this week — are particularly strict.

Visiting officials, Iranian diplomats posted at the country's U.N. mission and their families now can travel only among Kennedy airport and three places in Manhattan: the mission, the Iranian ambassador's residence and a six-block radius that includes the U.N. headquarters, according to a diplomatic note sent Saturday to Iranian officials and seen by The Associated Press.

The diplomats can seek waivers for housing or hotels, but it is not known whether waivers would be granted or whether they could apply to doctors' appointments,

children's schooling or other activities.

The new rules come amid rising tensions between two longtime adversaries. It's not immediately clear whether the limitations are the tightest the U.S. has ever imposed, but they are far more restrictive than a previous policy that let Iranian representatives to the U.N. travel within a 25-mile radius of Columbus Circle in midtown Manhattan.

"It is certainly not a friendly action," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told reporters at the U.N.

He said that while he personally

didn't need to go beyond the permitted places, the restrictions created "basically inhuman conditions" for the mission's diplomats and their families.

U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said the organization had raised concerns about the limitations with the U.S. and Iranian missions. "We'll continue to take up the matter as needed," he said.

The U.S. State Department said the restrictions are "fully consistent with our obligations" as the U.N.'s host country. "The U.S. intends to stick to its obligations," the department said yesterday [Macau time].

Tehran and Washington severed diplomatic ties after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the hostage crisis that ensued when militant students stormed the U.S. Embassy.

Friction has flared anew after U.S. President Donald Trump last year pulled the U.S. out of Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers — a pact he called one-sided — and reimposed sanctions on Tehran's oil exports. The sanctions have exacerbated an economic crisis that has sent Iran's currency plummeting.

Iran recently began surpassing limits on the amount and purity of uranium it is allowed to stockpile under the nuclear agreement. Tehran has said the moves can be reversed if the deal's other participants come up with economic incentives that effectively offset the American sanctions.

The U.S. has sent thousands of troops, an aircraft carrier, nuclear-capable B-52 bombers and advanced fighter jets to the Middle East, and fears are growing of a wider conflict after mysterious attacks on oil tankers near the Strait of Hormuz blamed on Iran, attacks by Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen on Saudi Arabia and Iran's downing of a U.S. military drone.

The U.S. also imposes various travel restrictions on U.N. diplomats from China, Cuba, North Korea, Russia and Syria. The list has varied over the years, and countries have periodically chafed at the limitations.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told The Washington Post on Sunday that it is "absolutely appropriate" that Iran's foreign minister have the travel rights due under a longstanding U.S. agreement with the United Nations, but "nothing more than that."

"U.S. diplomats don't roam around Tehran, so we don't see any reason for Iranian diplomats to roam freely around New York City, either," he said. **AP**

Taliban to talk to Swedish NGO after Afghan clinic closures

THE Taliban said they would hold talks today [Macau time] with representatives of a Swedish non-profit group after threats by the insurgents forced the organization to close 42 clinics it runs in eastern Afghanistan.

The closures of the facilities run by the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan in Taliban-controlled areas of Maidan Wardak province are expected to affect almost 6,000 people. The clinics in government controlled parts of the province remain open.

The closures came after Afghan forces last week raided a clinic run by the NGO, in pursuit of the Taliban. Two staffers died in the raid.

Earlier, Sonny Mansson, the group's director, told The Associated Press that the Taliban threatened the NGO's staff by saying that if they do not close the facilities, "it would have consequences for themselves and their families."

The talks are meant "to resolve the situation" in Maidan Wardak province, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, though he offered no details on where and how the meeting would take place.

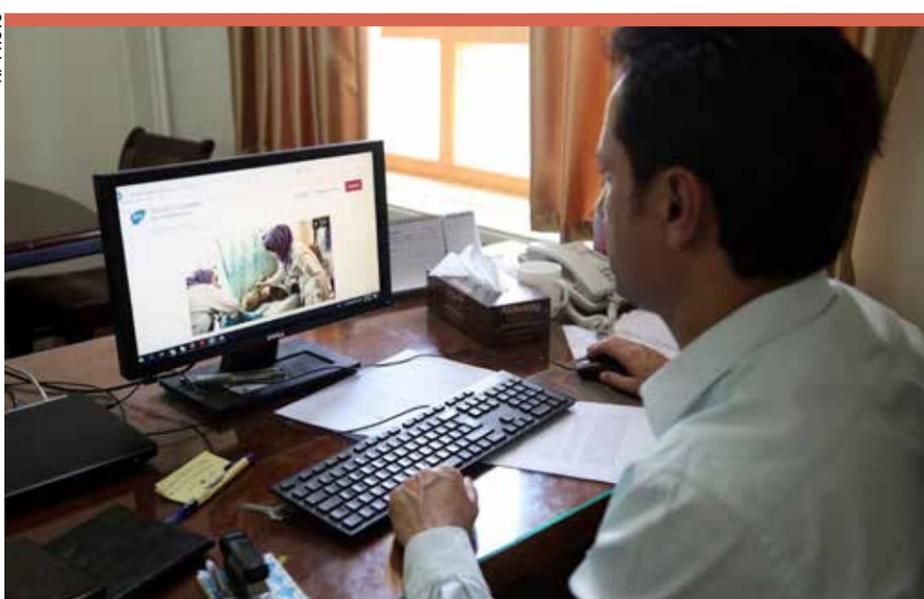
Yesterday, the Swedish committee was organizing a meeting of aid groups working in the country to take a united stand and de-

mand protection of civilians from all sides in Afghanistan's nearly 18-year-long war.

"We would like to send a clear message that protection of civilians and aid workers should be prioritized by all parties to the conflict," the NGO said in a statement, expressing concerns over violations in international humanitarian law and the "increase in attacks on citizens, health care and education facilities."

The Taliban currently control nearly half of Afghanistan and are more powerful than at any time since the October 2001 U.S.-led invasion. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Ahmad Khalid Fahim, program director for the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, shows the group's website

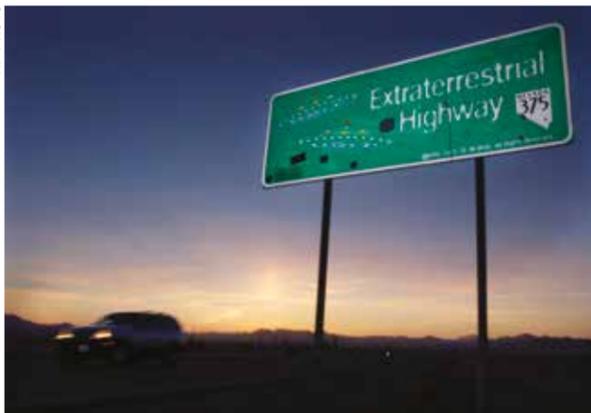
TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Agua de Mar
15:45	Zig Zag
16:20	OndEstá o Tesouro
16:45	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
18:05	Amor Maior (Repetição)
18:50	TDM Talk Show (Repetição)
19:25	Livros com João Guedes (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Viagens em Série
21:45	Vote in the U.S.A
22:15	Amor Maior
23:15	TDM News
23:50	A Canção de Lisboa
01:10	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:55	RTPi Directo

Offbeat

US AIR FORCE WARNS AGAINST JOKE EVENT TO 'STORM AREA 51'

AP PHOTO



The U.S. Air Force has warned people against participating in an internet joke suggesting a large crowd of people "storm Area 51," the top-secret Cold War test site in the Nevada desert.

A prank event on Facebook that's attracted more than 1 million interested people suggests that a mass of people attempt to run into the mysterious site at 3 a.m. on Sept. 20.

The site is part of the vast Nevada Test and Training Range and has become the center of UFO conspiracy theories.

The Facebook event jokes "they can't stop all of us" and "Let's see them aliens."

Nellis Air Force Base said in a statement that the Air Force is aware of the Facebook posting and says "any attempt to illegally access the area is highly discouraged."

The Air Force says it does not discuss its security measures and that the test and training range provides "flexible, realistic and multidimensional battlespace" for testing and "advanced training in support of U.S. national interests."

After decades of government officials refusing to acknowledge Area 51, the CIA released declassified documents in 2013 referring to the 8,000-square mile installation by name and locating it on a map near the dry Groom Lake bed.

The base has been a testing ground for a host of top-secret aircraft, including the U-2 in the 1950s and later the B-2 stealth bomber.

But secrecy surrounding the site has fueled conspiracy theories among UFO enthusiasts and sprouted a small, alien-themed tourist industry in surrounding desert communities, including alien-themed cafes, an alien-themed motel and an alien-themed brothel.

cinema

CINETEATRO

18 - 24 Jul



TOY STORY 4

ROOM 1

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

Director: Josh Cooley

Starring: Will Smith, Mena Massoud, Naomi Scott

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 109min



THE WHITE STORM 2 DRUG LORDS

ROOM 2

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

Director: Herman Yau

Starring: Andy Lau, Louis Koo, Michael Miu

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 86min



CRAYON SHINCHAN 2019

ROOM 3

2:30, 7:15pm

Director: Masakazu Hashimoto

Starring: Yumiko Kobayashi, Toshiyuki Morikawa, Miki Narahashi

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 100min



SPIDER-MAN: FAR FROM HOME

ROOM 3

4:30, 9:15pm

Director: Jon Watts

Starring: Zendaya, Angourie Rice, Tom Holland

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 129min

this day in history



1997 IRA DECLARES CEASEFIRE

The IRA has announced its second ceasefire in three years starting at noon tomorrow.

It follows a statement by republican political party Sinn Fein last night urging the IRA to call a truce, but the speed of response has surprised politicians.

Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam MP will monitor IRA activity over the next six weeks to decide whether Sinn Fein will be admitted to the all-party peace talks scheduled for 15 September.

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams said he supported a ceasefire because of a "commitment by the two governments (UK and Republic of Ireland) to inclusive peace talks".

British Prime Minister Tony Blair had underlined this resolve by making his first big speech as head of the new government from Belfast on 16 May.

In June he set out the conditions for Sinn Fein's inclusion in the all-party talks in a speech to the Commons.

He offered a clear timetable for talks - to be completed by May 1998 - within six weeks of a ceasefire.

Mr Blair also suggested weapons' decommissioning was not a pre-condition for negotiation.

Many unionists in Northern Ireland believe IRA disarmament is essential to any peace process and are angered by British concessions on the issue.

Security spokesman for the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) Ken Maginnis said: "I don't expect anyone to take a ceasefire declaration at face value."

"There will have to be a definite commitment to a permanent, complete and universal ceasefire with an indication that disarmament and the disbandment of the terrorist organisation can take place," he added.

The Irish peace process reached a stalemate under the last British Government which made concessions to unionists over decommissioning, in return for their support in Parliament.

Mr Blair is to meet UUP leader David Trimble in the next couple of days to ensure unionists' participation in September's multi-party talks.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The ceasefire came into force on 20 July in an atmosphere of muted determination rather than celebration.

A new round of peace talks, including Sinn Fein, resumed on 15 September at Stormont, near Belfast.

None of the five unionist or loyalist parties attended and attempted to get Sinn Fein excluded.

Talks continued at Stormont as David Trimble and the UUP began to participate.

In October 1997 Tony Blair shook Gerry Adams' hand and became the first British PM for 70 years to meet a Sinn Fein delegation.

Negotiations and sporadic violence by loyalist and republican splinter groups continued until the Good Friday Agreement was signed in May 1998.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Are you a person of action? Maybe you think you are, but don't be surprised if you feel like mulling things over before jumping into a new situation today.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

It's important to trust your friends and loved ones when they give you advice about your heart and your feelings, but right now you should not listen to any of their financial advice.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Eat up the limelight and savor all the adulation you're getting. You know darn well that you're an asset to any situation, so do not be bashful, and, whatever you do, don't you dare hide your light.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Every once in a while, you have to put it first and give yourself the attention you need. If any part of you dreads mingling with a roomful of people, do yourself a favor and politely opt out.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Give yourself time to get used to them being around, and do not make any attempt to spend more time with them in a planned way. If you see them again, you see them again.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

This is a wonderful quality, and it is part of what makes you an exceptional friend. You won't miss out on the fun too much, and you'll move a relationship to the next level.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

This won't keep you from making choices, but it will definitely keep you from making enemies! Enjoy your objectivity, and try to encourage other people to follow in your footsteps.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You can be forgiven for getting caught up in the moment today if good news sends you into a silly rant of excitement! Let loose when the good news hits your ears.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You are coming to realize that friendships come in all shapes, sizes, and power dynamics. You cannot be the leader all the time, and you most certainly cannot be a follower all the time.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Just one little breeze of effort will take this idea and send it soaring to greater heights than you could have ever imagined. Take one step; momentum will take care of the rest.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

The best kind of wisdom comes from people who know you well, so if you are feeling the urge to start a new relationship with one of your old relatives, then you shouldn't wait to get started.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Do they encourage you to be the best you can be or make you doubt your actions? Do they celebrate your successes or try to one-up you all the time? Answer these questions, and you'll know what to do.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

8	6		5					
4			5				2	
	7		1	4	3			
1		7	6					
			9	2			4	
7	9		3		1			
3		5					6	
	2		1		4			

EASY+

2	7	6	3					
5		9			1			
	8	3			9			
5	7	6						
2							8	
			7	9			5	
8		1	2					
9		6			3			
	5	9	2		4			

MEDIUM

2			9	6				
		5	6				3	
7	4						1	
		9	4	1				
6		8	2				7	
	2		5	3				
4				2			1	
1		7	5					
9	1						3	

HARD

			8	1	4			
3	6						7	
5								
		2					6	
9			4					
1								
2		3						
		7	6					
							8	

WEATHER

CHINA

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
Beijing	26	33	thundershower
Harbin	18	31	cloudy
Tianjin	28	34	thundershower
Urumqi	17	24	moderate rain
Xi'an	19	36	clear
Lhasa	12	22	drizzle
Chengdu	19	31	clear
Chongqing	21	30	cloudy
Kunming	17	25	moderate rain
Nanjing	23	31	cloudy
Shanghai	23	28	drizzle
Wuhan	24	31	shower
Hangzhou	22	27	drizzle
Taipei	26	30	overcast
Guangzhou	26	33	thundershower
Hong Kong	27	32	cloudy

WORLD

Moscow	13	18	moderate rain
Frankfurt	16	26	drizzle
Paris	14	21	cloudy
London	12	21	drizzle
New York	21	28	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Golden Rule word; 5- Biol. or chem.; 8- Predictive sign; 12- Handle; 14- Noble gas; 15- Broad valley; 16- ___ the side of caution; 17- Addition column; 18- Fashion mag; 19- A bit; 21- Tried out; 23- Shade of blond; 24- Devour; 25- At least one; 26- Categorize; 30- Huffs and puffs; 32- Landed proprietor of Scotland; 33- Seaport in NE Spain; 37- ___ mater; 38- Beau ___; 39- Adjoin; 40- Fill again; 42- Sarcastic; 43- Phase; 44- Small sofa; 45- Hill insect; 48- Bolted down; 49- Pasture used for grazing; 50- Gentle heat; 52- Mall-goer, often; 57- Pronto!; 58- Eye part; 60- Task; 61- ___ Nui (Easter Island); 62- Low digits; 63- Causing goose bumps; 64- Adamson's lioness; 65- Begley and Bradley; 66- Set right;

DOWN: 1- Plays for a fool; 2- Roman tyrant; 3- Division of a school year; 4- Plains native; 5- Dispatched; 6- Runner Sebastian; 7- Example; 8- Praiseful poems; 9- Island near Sicily; 10- Comic DeGeneres; 11- Poor; 13- Forth; 14- Ark builder; 20- DDE's predecessor; 22- Kitchen addition; 24- Between Venus and Mars; 26- Apple application, once; 27- Tent event; 28- Fool; 29- Some exams; 30- Old hat; 31- Bias; 33- Light grayish brown; 34- Passing notice; 35- Au naturel; 36- To ___ (perfectly); 38- Mouthpart of arthropods; 41- Division politique; 42- Medium setting; 44- Capeesh?; 45- Cognizant; 46- Twangy; 47- Snares; 49- Take away; 51- Movie-rating org.; 52- Fastens a knot; 53- Excuse me...; 54- Clotted blood; 55- 2000 role for Julia; 56- Marsh plant; 59- Slender bar;



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- [Taipa] Hellene Gardens 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,663 ft² **\$7,950,000** (ref: 19055006SC)
- [Taipa] Hellene Gardens 4 1/2 2 1/2 2,530 ft² **\$20,000,000** (ref: 18035546)
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APPLE, GOOGLE CONTINUE INCLUSIVE PUSH WITH NEW EMOJI

APPL and Google are rolling out dozens of new emoji that include cute critters, of course, but also expand the number of images of human diversity.

Apple Inc. is releasing new variants of its holding hands emoji that allow people to pick any combination of skin tone and gender, 75 possible combinations in all. There are also wheelchairs, prosthetic arms and legs, as well as a new guide dog and an ear with a hearing aid.

And then there's the sloth, the flamingo, the skunk, the orangutan, as well as a new yawning emoji.

Google, meanwhile, will offer 71 versions of couples with diffe-

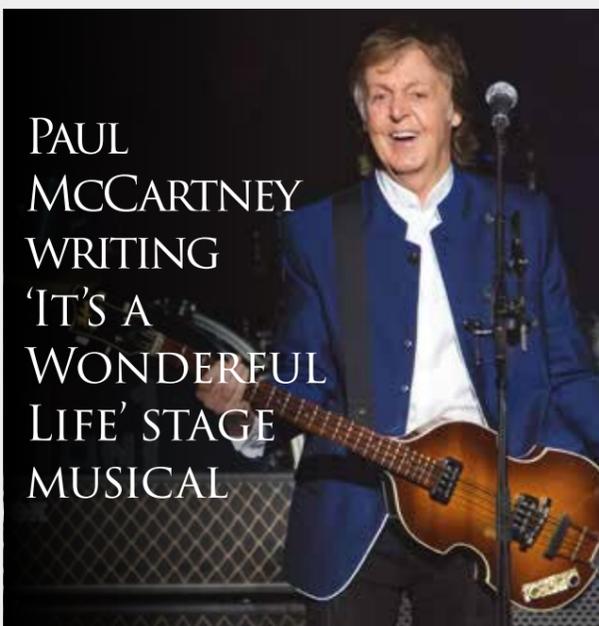


rent skin tones once the additions are completed. Google is also adding an emoji for the Diya lamp so that Diwali can be celebrated alongside Christmas and Thanksgiving.

Earlier this year the Unicode Consortium approved 71 new variations of emoji for couples of color. Apple and Google unveiled their designs Wednesday to coincide with World Emoji Day.

Anyone can propose an emoji.

AP PHOTO



PAUL MCCARTNEY WRITING 'IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE' STAGE MUSICAL

PAUL McCartney is writing his first stage musical, an adaptation of the classic movie "It's a Wonderful Life."

The ex-Beatle is collaborating with "Billy Elliot" playwright Lee Hall and West End producer Bill Kenwright.

McCartney said he'd never considered writing a musical, but after meeting Kenwright and Hall three years ago, "found myself thinking this could be interesting and fun."

Hall said McCartney's "wit, emotional honesty and melodic brilliance brings a whole new depth and breadth to the classic tale."

Frank Capra's 1946 film tells the story of George Bailey, a small-town banker wracked with regret who is shown the value of his life by a guardian angel.

Producers said yesterday they are aiming for a late 2020 launch for the show. Its dates and venue have not been released.

SPACEY CASE SANK BY ACCUSER'S REFUSAL TO TESTIFY

PROSECUTORS said they were forced to drop the indecent assault and battery charge against Kevin Spacey because of the accuser's decision to invoke his right not to testify.

The Cape and Islands District Attorney's Office said in an emailed statement yesterday [Macau time] that prosecutors met with the accuser on Sunday, days after a hearing during which the man refused to testify about text messages the defense says were deleted.

Prosecutors say they told the accuser that if he continued to refuse to testify, they couldn't move forward with the case. They say he "elected not to waive his right under the Fifth Amendment."

Spacey denies the allegations.

Mitchell Garabedian, a lawyer for the man, said in an email that he and his family "have shown an enormous amount of courage under difficult circumstances."

Garabedian said he had no further comment.

AP PHOTO



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SWIMMING

Germany wins world open-water relay, Italy 2nd and US 3rd

GERMANY won the mixed 5-kilometer open water team relay at the world swimming championships in a close finish over Italy and the United States yesterday.

The German quartet of Lea Boy, Sarah Kohler, Soeren Meissner and Rob Muffels finished in a time of 53 minutes, 58.70 seconds.

Italy, with Rachele Bruni, Giulia Gabbrielleschi, Domenico Acerenza and Gregorio Paltrinieri, was two-tenths of a second behind in a time of 53:58.90.

Haley Anderson, Jordan Wilimovsky, Ashley Twichell and Michael Brinegar made up the American team which finished just three-tenths of a second behind Germany to take bronze in 53:59.00.

There are two males and two females on each team who swim 1.25 kilometers each, but the order in which they swim is up to the



AP PHOTO

individual country.

The German team, anchored by Muffels, was disadvantaged by a yellow card issued to Boy in the leadoff leg. A second yellow card would have resulted in disqualification, so each of the German swimmers needed to be careful of their tactics for the rest of the race.

Muffels was a member of the German team that won the same

event in Kazan, Russia four years ago.

"I think each of us did a really good job, it was a perfect strategy," Muffels said of the decision to lead off with two female swimmers. "The conditions were quite good with some little waves, and they were not too big or challenging."

Twichell swam third for the Americans. **AP**



AP PHOTO

DIVING GOLD AND PERFECT MARKS FOR CHEN YUXI AT AGE 13

THIRTEEN-year-old Chinese diver Chen Yuxi won the women's 10-meter platform final at the world swimming championships, and received two perfect marks for her third drive.

Chen finished on 439 points to clinch the gold medal at her first worlds.

"Everybody told me to relax before the final, but I still could hear my heart beat," Chen said.

"I was shaky in the first two dives and then I felt better and better. I thought about challenging myself and reaching above 440."

It was the ninth diving gold medal in nine events at Gwang-

ju, with three events remaining, all Olympic disciplines. The men's 3-meter springboard is set for Thursday, the women's 3-meter on Friday and the men's 10-meter platform on Saturday.

Another 13-year-old Chinese diver, Lu Wei, provided competition for Chen before winning silver Wednesday with 377.80 points.

"Although I had a gold medal from the synchro, I was still nervous about competing in the individual event," Lu said. "I made a mistake in the second dive but overall was OK."

American Delaney Schnell was third with 364.20 points. **AP**

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OPINION

Kapok
 Eric Sautédé



THE GREAT DELUSION

Looking at the Macao news these days, a careless reader might conclude that the upcoming Chief Executive election set for August 25 appears to be significantly more competitive than on previous occasions. Enthusiastic comments about the fact that nine courageous citizens had made their intention known that they would be running for the SAR's top job have been proliferating. But in the Monaco of the East, politics is never left to chance, and any serious commentator will confirm that Ho Iat Seng's victory is pre-ordained and has been so since at least last year, if not longer. So why the hype? And who benefits from this great delusion?

Fernando Chui's own elections had shown the an absolute predictability in terms of advance notice, but for these the need to pay lip service to some kind of competition was neither pressing nor needed — quite the contrary, actually.

In 2009, the Macao government was still highly discredited by the Ao Man Long corruption scandal: the condemnation of the former secretary for transport and public works of multiple bribe-takings and abuse of power had been pronounced in January 2008 and Mr Ao, quite ironically, had been dubbed "Mr ten percent" at one point as he had been considered a minor possible contender for the top job. A show of unflinching unity had thus become paramount.

In 2014, at the time of his re-election, Mr Chui's legitimacy and capacity had been seriously tested by "the people" during the May protests against the so-called perks' bill and in the unofficial civic referendum organized in August by young democrats almost 90% of the 8,700 participants in the exercise had indicated that they had no "confidence in the sole candidate." Once again, time was not propitious for challenge, even orchestrated, and a strict united front was called for.

This time around, it is quite the opposite, as if the remarks made in August 2014 by Li Fei, the deputy secretary general of the National People's Congress's standing committee, had stuck: for him, "only one person [candidate] does not make an election, but too many is not proper either," hence, in the case of Hong Kong, the necessity to have two to three candidates.

Is there however even a remote possibility that, in the case of Macao and for the first time since 1999, we could have a second candidate, in order to make good of Li Fei's admonition?

The insistence by news reports that intentions are almost as good as actual candidacies are rather misleading. The sheer number of potential candidates is in itself newsworthy — granted! Yet the idea that this could be interpreted as a challenge — "a form of public protest" — is disingenuous: will at least one other candidate beside Mr Ho make the cut? Or at least, will issues be debated among potential candidates? In both instances, the answer is no.

First because the "campaign" is strictly confined to August 10 to 23, and nothing that resembles a political program or platform can appear before these dates. Mr Ho is thus the only one being seen visiting all kinds of associations and interests groups, as if that was not campaigning... to get the number of required signatures and later on be elected!

Then, Mr Ho is himself toying with the idea of an effective completion. A few weeks ago, he remarked: "There are some new faces in the Electoral Committee, and they are not my friends. I am confident in gaining 66 votes. I am happy that there are more runners; it is a good thing for the Chief Executive's work. Macao is a free, democratic, and fair place."

I made the count and there are actually only 82 "new" members out of 400! In theory, enough to support an alternative candidate, as 66 only are needed. But most of these new members — 49 of them in the very pro-establishment business, labor and social sectors — are however meant to support Mr Ho, and if an alternative candidate is allowed, it will have to be engineered.

So, we either stop being delusional or we start looking for vote instructions given to these "new" people. The former is for me the way to go.

France's Louvre Museum in Paris has become the first major institution to remove the Sackler family name after protests erupted against the family that is blamed for the deadly opioid crisis in the United States.

At the Louvre's Oriental Antiquities gallery, an Associated Press photographer saw tape covering multiple placards bearing the name that has long been associated with arts patronage around the world.

A sign listing family members by name had been removed from its place on the wall, with only the holes and outline remaining.

The Sackler family owns Purdue Pharma, which is facing some 2,000 lawsuits in the U.S. over its role in the opioid crisis that has claimed 400,000 lives in two decades.

Institutions that benefited from the family's largesse have been targeted by activists, led by the artist Nan Goldin.

MYTHS AND RISKS IN APP THAT GIVES YOU PEEK INTO OLDER SELF

Is a peek into the future worth your privacy in the present? That concern was pushed to the spotlight this week with the resurgence of a smartphone app that uses artificial intelligence to transform your current face into your younger and older selves.

People raised fears on Twitter and other social media sites that on iPhones, FaceApp would be able to see and upload all your photos, including screenshots with sensitive financial or health information or photos of kids with the names of their schools in the background.

That's not actually true, but the scuttle serves as a good reminder to think twice before downloading new apps.

Even large, mainstream apps routinely collect user data. But many trendy-at-the-moment apps are guilty of mining user data as a primary purpose. Some personality quizzes on Facebook and similar services collect user information as a business, opening people up to breaches such as in the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

Yesterday [Macao time], the ranking Senate Democrat, Chuck Schumer, wrote in a letter to the FBI and Federal Trade Commission that he's concerned FaceApp could pose "national se-



curity and privacy risks for millions of U.S. citizens." The New York Democrat is asking the two agencies to assess the situation.

As for FaceApp, the app grabs a photo only if you specifically select it to see your face change, security researcher and Guardian Firewall CEO Will Strafach said.

The confusion comes from an iPhone feature that shows your photo library within the app. It is an Apple feature that lets you select a specific photo, but doesn't give the app full access to the library, even though it may appear that way.

You have the option of granting access to your entire photo library, but even

then, there is no evidence the app is uploading anything other than the photo selected.

There's a version of FaceApp for Android, but those phones don't tap photo libraries the same way.

That's not to say the app isn't free of problems, Strafach said.

Among other things, photos get sent to the cloud for processing in both the iPhone and Android versions, exposing them to hacking and other problems.

FaceApp, which is developed in Russia by Wireless Lab, has had surges of viral popularity before. The app also allows people to swap their genders or add facial hair or makeup. AP



UK The brother of the suicide bomber who killed almost two dozen people at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester two years ago appeared in court yesterday to face 22 charges of murder. The 22-year-old Hashem Abedi's lawyer, Zafar Ali, said his client denied the charges.

UK The U.K. will plunge into recession if it leaves the European Union without a divorce deal, with the pound plunging in value and the economy shrinking by 2% in a year. The Office for Budget Responsibility made its assessment as chances of an economically disruptive no-deal Brexit appear to be rising.

G-7 Top finance officials from the Group of Seven rich democracies are warning that cryptocurrencies like Facebook's Libra should not come into use before "serious regulatory and systemic concerns" are addressed. The officials agreed that so-called stablecoins will have to meet "the highest standards" of financial regulation.



Football South Korea and North Korea will meet on the qualifying path to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, but it's unclear whether a rare match between them in Pyongyang will materialize considering their political tension. Drawn in the same Asian qualifying group, the Koreans are scheduled to meet in the North on Oct. 15 and in the South on June 4 next year.



USA The heat wave that has been roasting much of the U.S. in recent days is just getting warmed up, with temperatures expected to soar to dangerous levels through the weekend. Communities are preparing by offering buildings as cooling centers and asking residents to check in on relatives and neighbors.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/John Locher



Pacquiao-Thurman. Manny Pacquiao (left) and Keith Thurman pose during a news conference yesterday in Las Vegas, for their welterweight championship boxing match scheduled for Sunday [5am, Macau time] in Sin City.