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# Times

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**LIGHT FLOODING WAS REPORTED IN THE INNER HARBOR AFTER TYPHOON WIPHA DEPARTED THE VICINITY OF MACAU YESTERDAY MORNING** P5

**HENGQIN OPENS WHAT MAY BE WORLD'S FIRST PG-13 THEME PARK** P7

**MACAU CUT ITS BENCHMARK INTEREST RATE FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 2008, IN LINE WITH SIMILAR DECISIONS IN HONG KONG AND THE US** P8

**US-China** U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said yesterday that Washington isn't asking any Asian nation to take sides as it engages with the region where China is battling for influence and aggressively expanding territorial claims in the South China Sea.

**Taiwan** The foreign minister has criticized China's suspension of trips by individual Chinese citizens to the island, saying Beijing appeared to be afraid of allowing its people to experience "a country where freedom, openness [and] tolerance are the order of the day." More on p12



**Indonesia** Forest fires burning throughout Indonesia have prompted six provinces to declare a state of emergency and deploy thousands of security forces, a disaster official said yesterday.

**India** A prominent politician, Kuldeep Singh Sengar, was expelled from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party yesterday amid waves of public outrage after a deadly car crash left a woman who accused him of rape in critical condition.



**North Korea** The government said yesterday leader Kim Jong Un supervised the first test firing of a new multiple rocket launcher system that could potentially enhance its ability to strike targets in South Korea and U.S. military bases there.

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## JULY REVENUE DROPS 3.5% IN SURPRISE POSTING

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**LAW TO RESTRICT FOREIGN WORKERS COULD BOOST BORDER CROSSINGS** P2

**MIGRANT APPINESS?**

Deliveries app Rappi has expanded into eight Latin American nations since it was founded four years ago, mostly due to Venezuelan migrants fleeing their battered country en masse

Extra times

## IAS ISSUES SUBSIDIES TO 4,724 VULNERABLE FAMILIES

The Social Affairs Bureau (IAS) will provide additional special assistance to three types of vulnerable families in August. This marks the second phase of this year's assistance program. The three types of families are single-parent families, families with disabled family members, and families with chronically ill members. In total, 4,724 families are eligible, with an estimated total expenditure of around MOP19.33 million. This year, the IAS also entrusted associations and other entities with the provision of services and activities to eligible applicants. Twice each year, the local government issues a subsistence allowance to these three types of families, who receive regular assistance and whose income is not higher than a certain multiple of the minimum living index (1.8 times this year).

## DSSOPT PLANS GAS FILLING STATION FOR NEW URBAN ZONE

The local government plans to build a compressed natural gas filling station in the northern part of the E2 district of the New Urban Zone, according to a land plan draft publicized by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOP). It is planned that a land area of 1,504 square meters in total will be used for the station, with the station limited to a height of seven meters. An environmental evaluation report is required to be submitted to and reviewed by the Environmental Protection Bureau. In addition, the DSSOPT has issued a land plan draft for a land plot of 4,182 square meters located in district A of the New Urban Zone, to be used as a social service building.

## LAWMAKERS WANT BETTER BUS SYSTEM FOR TYPHOONS

Lawmakers Lei Cheng I and Leong Sun lok have urged the local government to review transportation arrangements at the Macau Port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HKZMB), particularly during typhoons. On Wednesday, shuttle bus services at HKZMB were still operational while Macau's Signal No.8 was hoisted. However, bus routes 101X and 102X, which travel between Macau and HKZMB, were suspended shortly after Signal No.8 was hoisted. Many passengers arriving in Macau were stranded at the port. Lei and Leong hope that the government will study bus arrangements during typhoons and discuss with the taxi industry how to provide the conditions for taxi operation during typhoons.

BLOOMBERG



# LAW FOR NON-RESIDENT EMPLOYMENT MIGHT BOOST BORDER CROSSINGS

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Law for the Employment of Non-Resident Workers (TNR), which is currently before the Legislative Assembly's (AL) Third Standing Committee for discussion, seems to be on an unusual path toward meeting its stated objectives.

According to the government's initial proposal, the bill aims to amend the current law in force to ban visitors on tourist visas from seeking jobs in Macau.

In fact, and according to the information provided yesterday after the meeting of the Standing Committee chaired by lawmaker Vong Hin Fai, the new law would only require that the applicants, when entering Macau for work, are already in possession of a working permit that needs to be requested from the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) by their employers.

As Vong explained, the government did not opt for the requirement that non-resident workers should arrive in Macau from their original country, as "they might be working or

staying in a different country before coming to Macau," only requiring that when the application is made by the employer, they are not in the region and they will only arrive in Macau with the document already processed by their employer.

"At that time, they will get a red stamp on their passport that will work as a temporary working permit, having then 45 days to process the Blue Card at the immigration department," Vong explained, noting that this process would reduce the number of times TNR need to go to the Immigration Department to process their working permits from two to just one.

Questioned by the media as to how this method would, in fact, prevent people holding tourist visas from applying for jobs in Macau, Vong hinted that it would not, admitting that, in practical terms, people would "probably come to Macau for a work interview and after that [...] have to leave, only reentering when the work authorization had been approved and sent to them outside Macau."

If the measure is likely to pro-

duce little to no effect concerning the search for a job by holders of tourist visas, the same does not apply to border crossings, since the workers need to wait for the processing of their authorization outside of Macau.

Another of the changes of this proposed new system is that the TNR would not need to present a criminal record certificate when applying for jobs in Macau, as the preliminary authorization can be processed by the employer with only a copy of the worker's passport, instead of the original document.

Questioned on the topic, Vong explained that dropping the requirement of a criminal record certificate was related to the validity of the document. As he noted, to be effectively valid in light of international conventions, such documents needed to be certified by Chinese embassies or consulates, which could incur delays and many issues due to the great complexity of the process.

Another aspect noted by Vong is that the new law suggests that the entry stamp from the temporary working permit

effectively marks the start of the employment relationship between the employer and the employee, noting that in cases in which a TNR is then rejected by the employer for any reason, it is the employer who is responsible for the worker's repatriation cost. He did not explain what would happen in the event that the worker does not arrive in Macau from the country of which he or she is a national.

According to the president of the Third Standing Committee, and since there are several aspects still under consideration by the government, it "won't be possible to finish the discussion of the committee on time to go to plenary discussion until August 15 (the end of this legislative year), so we already asked for an extension of this discussion after the legislative holidays." Vong also reaffirmed that after the discussion by the committee and AL plenary's final approval, and upon publication within the government's Official Gazette, the law will enter into force only after 90 days. It is therefore not expected to be enforced this year.

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**G**ROSS gaming revenue unexpectedly fell 3.5% in July to 24.45 billion patacas (about \$3 billion), according to data released yesterday by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau. Falling far below analyst estimates for a 2% increase, the July result cut short a two-month rebound and leaves year-to-date revenues down by 0.9%.

Macau casinos held up recently despite headwinds including trade war uncertainties and a weaker Chinese economy, with tourist arrivals at record levels helping to boost mass-market betting. But the high-roller segment has languished, and recent headlines about unrest in Hong Kong and a possible crackdown by China against junket operators may be scaring away more VIPs, say analysts.

"VIP demand deteriorated sharply toward the latter half of July with no obvious reason, in turn suggesting it could be a short-term blip amid heightened media attention on Hong Kong, given escalated protests, and junkets," JPMorgan analysts led by DS Kim wrote in note yesterday.

While the results were disappointing, the analysts said they didn't see the July miss as "thesis-changing" in the long term.

Investors showed little sign of alarm. A Bloomberg Intelligence index of Macau operators fell 1.1% yesterday, after dropping as much as 2.7% before the revenue data were released. Casino stocks have been volatile over the past few months, including a 20% drop in May. The index is still up 11% for the year, led by Melco Resorts & Entertainment Ltd. and SJM Holdings Ltd.

The picture for the industry was brightening recently amid strong tourism and signs that the retreat in the high-rollers segment may have touched bottom.

However, the July numbers raised

# Gaming revenue shows surprise 3.5% drop in July

AP PHOTO



more questions about Macau's ability to translate growing visitor numbers into gross gaming revenue.

The city welcomed almost 20.3 million visitors in the first half of 2019, 20% more than in the comparative period last year, as the local government set its sights on delivering mass market diversification.

But gross gaming revenue slipped 0.5% in the same period and per capita spending tumbled, attributed in part to the same-day visitor segment growing four ti-

mes as fast as overnight visitors. The result was a shortening of visitors' average length of stay by 0.1 days.

UOB-Kay Hian analyst Robin Yuen said yesterday that the protests may have hurt visits from the Hong Kong side, noting that Sunday's protest disrupted ferry service. That's despite official Macau data showing that package tour arrivals from Hong Kong were up almost 50% year-on-year during the month of June.

While Macau tourist data for June show record levels, numbers

for July aren't yet available. Concerns are growing that the latest month may show a falloff, especially in tours from the mainland that often bundle Hong Kong and Macau into a single package.

High-stakes gamblers may also be staying away amid reports in mid-July that China is increasing scrutiny on junket operators that offer online betting.

Analysts have a restrained outlook for the months ahead, due to the regulatory risks and disruptions from further Hong Kong protests.

There is also the matter of the difficult August 2018 comparison base, which will frame even a very strong result this month as a year-on-year decline in percentage terms. Gross gaming revenue grew 17.1% in August 2018 to reach almost MOP26.56 billion, a result higher than that seen in any one month so far this year.

But while Yuen says August may be challenging, the UOB analyst sees revenue growth strengthening in the second half, especially if the intensity of the trade war eases. **DB/BLOOMBERG**

## GAMING

# Crown Resorts probed after money laundering, visa claims

ANGUS WHITLEY  
& JASON SCOTT

**C**ROWN Resorts Ltd. and Australian officials will be investigated after allegations of money laundering at the firm's casinos and the fast-tracking of visas for wealthy overseas gamblers.

The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald newspapers, along with the 60 Minutes television program, said at the weekend that a lawmaker and two government ministers had lobbied

border-enforcement authorities to speed big-spending Crown gamblers through immigration.

Attorney-General Christian Porter said Tuesday he had referred allegations to the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, which will determine whether a further probe is needed. "There are sufficient concerns raised to at least warrant further investigations," Porter told parliament.

Crown shares fell after Porter's referral raised the

possibility of an extended investigation hanging over the company. It's another blow to Crown and its biggest shareholder, Australian billionaire James Packer, two years after a Chinese court convicted 19 current and former employees of illegally promoting gambling.

The gaming company said Tuesday it will assist with any investigation, but that it "absolutely rejects" allegations of illegality made in parliament and recent media reports.

"We believe these alle-

gations are ill-informed and an attempt to smear the company," Crown said in a statement.

The company has lost about AUD433 million (\$300 million) in market value this week.

The wide-ranging reports alleged Crown used junket operators linked to drug traffickers as it sought to attract wealthy Chinese gamblers to Australia. Together with Australian officials, Crown helped hundreds of high-rollers gain entry to Australia each year, and

at least one Asian crime syndicate was laundering money through the firm's casinos, according to the reports.

Crown said it has a "robust process" for vetting junket operators and undertakes regular reviews. It also denied "any allegation that it knowingly exposed its staff to the risk of detention or conviction in China," according to the statement.

The publication of the claims triggered separate calls by independent lawmakers on Monday for

an investigation by a parliamentary committee. The ACLEI, as the agency is known, has the power to apply for search warrants and seize evidence, making it a better-resourced body to investigate, Porter said on Tuesday.

The commission's main role is to investigate corruption within law enforcement bodies and it also has oversight of several agencies including the department of home affairs, the border force and federal police.

**BLOOMBERG**

# MONETARY AUTHORITY LAUNCHES CATASTROPHE INSURANCE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

JULIE ZHU

**T**HE Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) has launched its own catastrophe insurance for local SMEs, the AMCM announced in a press conference yesterday.

The insurance is available for local SMEs with fewer than 100 employees.

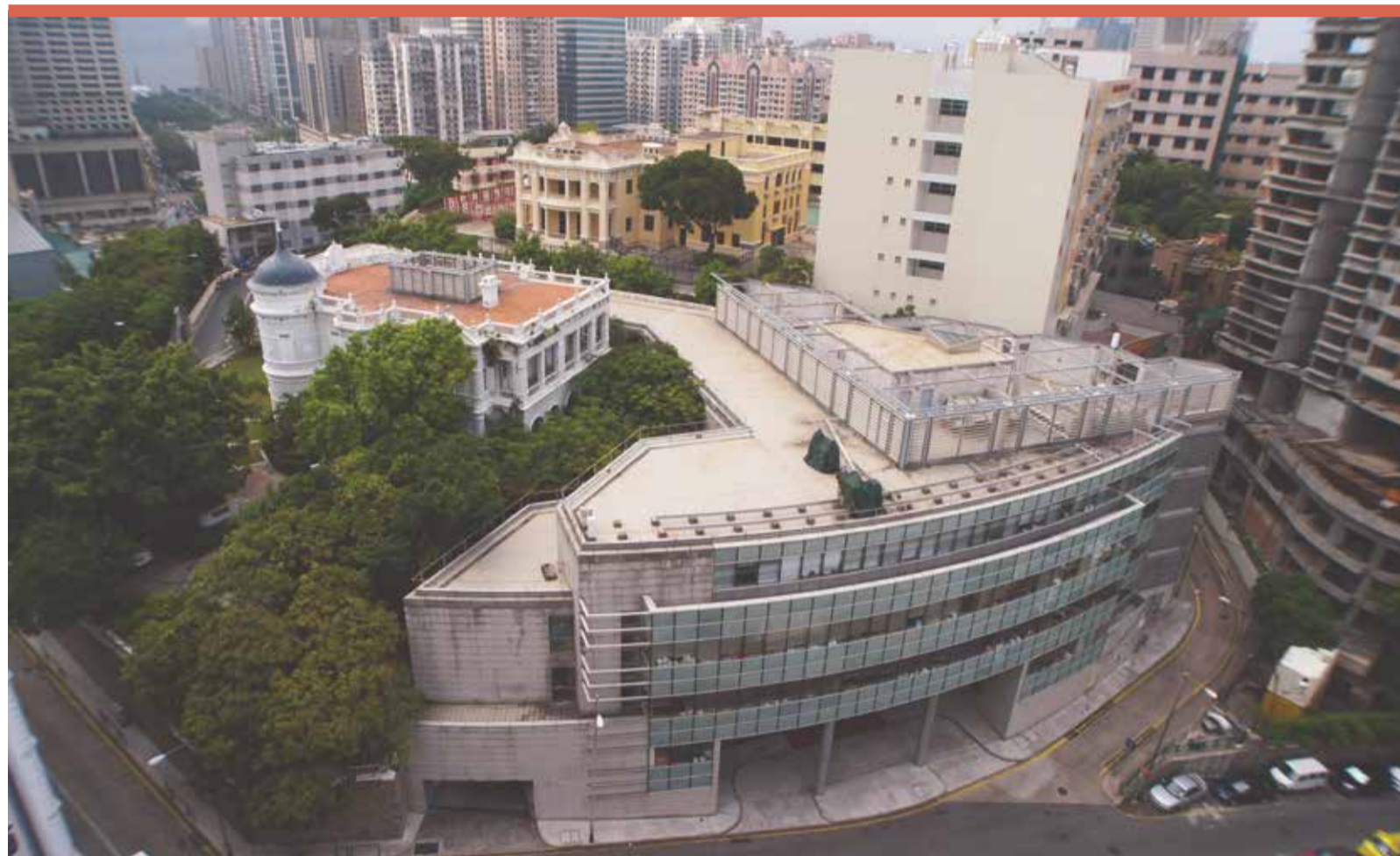
The program offers three insurance options, respectively insuring the SMEs for MOP100,000, MOP200,000, or MOP300,000, with corresponding insurance premiums of MOP25,000, MOP50,000 and MOP75,000.

In order to alleviate the financial burden and support the development of this insurance program, the AMCM is providing subsidies that cover either 50% of the premium or MOP30,000 (whichever is lower).

Subsidy applicants must be registered in Macau, have fewer than 100 employees, and have no debts to the Macau SAR government, nor improper economic, financial and organizational conditions.

According to the AMCM, in 2017, Typhoon Hato caused a total loss of MOP12.55 billion to Macau's economy. However, insurance repayments only amounted to approximately MOP3.4 billion, with the majority of enterprises covered by insurance being large-scale companies.

An AMCM representative explained that low insurance par-



The Monetary Authority of Macao building

ticipation rates have been recorded by SMEs. This is because SMEs were unwilling to participate in insurance, and insurance companies were unwilling to insure SMEs, which are at high risk of flooding.

The insurance program is not set up permanently. So far, it only consists of an experimental phase. Its continuation depends

on the operation and coverage achieved in the first year of its implementation.

The majority of Macau's insurers do not provide high-risk SMEs with ordinary property insurance.

When the Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau hoists Signal No.8 or above, or red storm surge warning or abo-

ve, policyholders can apply for coverage from insurers.

Currently, the AMCM has not set up a total maximum number of subsidies, meaning that the bureau is encouraging more SMEs to join the insurance scheme and apply for subsidies.

Jewelry, antiques, currency notes and documents, as well as certain other items are not cove-

red by the insurance policy.

Each policy is valid for one year. Each year, the AMCM will only approve one subsidy per entity.

Lei Cheok Kuan, president of the Industry and Commerce Federation of Macau Central and Southern District, thinks that "having the program is better than having nothing."

## Merchandise export value down 14% in June

**T**HE total merchandise export value for June 2019 amounted to MOP906 million, down by 14.3% year-on-year, according to data released by the Statistics and Census Service.

The value of re-exports (MOP793 million) decreased by 14.9%, with that of machines, apparatus and parts falling 44.6%. The value of domestic exports (MOP113 million) declined by 10.2%, with that of pharmaceutical products and organic chemicals decreasing by 41.4%.

Meanwhile, the to-

tal merchandise import fell by 7.3% year-on-year to MOP6.66 billion, of which imports of mobile phones, handbags and wallets, and fuels and lubricants dropped by 60.9%, 12.8% and 6.5% respectively.

In the second quarter of 2019, the total value of merchandise export (MOP2.77 billion) and merchandise import (MOP20.78 billion) dropped by 14.2% and 0.3% respectively year-on-year, resulting in a trade deficit of MOP18.02 billion.

Analyzed by destination, the value of

merchandise exports to mainland China decreased by 22.2% year-on-year to MOP783 million in the first half of 2019, of which exports to the nine provinces of the Pan-Pearl River Delta (MOP754 million) declined by 23.1%.

In the first half of 2019, the total value of merchandise exports increased by 3.3% year-on-year to MOP6.40 billion, of which the value of re-exports (MOP5.73 billion) grew by 6.2% but that of domestic exports (MOP674 million) declined by 16.1%. The total value of mer-

chandise imports fell by 1.7% year-on-year to MOP42.42 billion. The merchandise trade deficit widened to MOP36.02 billion for the first half of 2019.

Exports to Europe (MOP95 million) fell by 11.4% year-on-year, whereas exports to Hong Kong (MOP4.28 billion) and the U.S. (MOP91 million) increased by 9.3% and 40% respectively.

Exports to Portuguese-speaking countries (MOP0.97 million) and Belt and Road countries (MOP90 million) fell by 96.0% and 33.5% respectively. LV

## CONSTRUCTION SECTOR WAGES SHRINK IN Q2

**T**HE average daily wage of construction workers decreased by 2.6% quarter-to-quarter to 743 patacas in the second quarter of 2019, according to information released by the Statistics and Census Service.

The wage decrease was reportedly due to lower demand for construction workers following the near-completion of several large-scale entertainment facility projects.

The average daily wages of local (MOP987) and non-resident construction workers (MOP597) fell by 2.9% and 4.3%, respectively, quarter-to-quarter.

In terms of occupation, the average daily wages of air-conditioning mechanics (MOP783), aluminum and glass installers (MOP743),

electricians and electrical workers (MOP754) and painters (MOP700) decreased by 8.2%, 5.1%, 4.1% and 3.8% respectively.

Meanwhile, the average daily wages of bricklayers and plasterers (MOP758) and carpenters (MOP869) saw respective increases of 3.8% and 1.5%.

After accounting for the effect of inflation, the wage index of construction workers (95.0) for the second quarter of 2019 dropped by 1.8% quarter-to-quarter in real terms.

Regarding construction materials, the average prices of spiral and round reinforcing steel bars and concrete in the second quarter of 2019 edged down by 0.5% and 0.2%, respectively, quarter-to-quarter. LV

TYPHOON WIPHA

# Minor flooding reported in the Inner Harbor

**T**YPHOON Wipha brought minor flooding to the Inner Harbor district yesterday, just hours after typhoon Signal No.8 was lifted and replaced with the less serious Signal No.3. Late last night, a blue storm surge warning was still in force, according to the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau.

An image taken by lawmaker Sulu Sou's office, which is located blocks away from the coast of the Inner Harbor, shows flooding at ankle-height. It caused inconvenience to both traffic and pedestrians.

The minor flooding was due to a mismatch between strong winds and high tides, which prevented some of the water from retreating back to the shore.

Twenty-nine incidents were reported to the civil protection authorities while the Signal No.8 warning was in place. These accidents involved damages to buildings, falling concrete

COURTESY NEW MACAU



pieces, billboards and other objects, marine incidents and fire. A total of six injuries due to the typhoon were confirmed.

The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge remained in full operation yesterday, with the shuttle bus service uninterrupted. Long queues for public transport were seen at the Macau Checkpoint in the early hours of the No. 8 warning. The Transport Bureau had to resume three bus routes to handle

the incoming traffic. In previous years, once a Signal No. 8 is hoisted, all bus services are suspended.

During the last two hours of Signal No. 3 on Wednesday, bus stops and buses were packed with people. The condition also caused congestion on several main roads across the city.

Yesterday, Chief Executive Chui Sai On expressed his appreciation for the improvement of the civil protection di-

saster response mechanism in recent years. He said that the government was committed to deploying the utmost effort to keep the public and their property safe.

Chui also asked the authorities to prioritize maintaining a stable supply of water, electricity and telecommunication services to the public. These services remained stable and uninterrupted during the entire typhoon period. **AL**

## CONSUMER COUNCIL WARNS VENDORS OVER PRICE GOUGING

**T**HE Consumer Council put its price-monitoring mechanism into effect yesterday as Typhoon Wipha's presence was felt in Macau.

As typhoon Signal No. 8 was issued yesterday, the council immediately activated its monitoring mechanism.

The mechanism relied very much on the consumers themselves, as the council only opened channels for the public to report suspected price gouging activities.

Consumers were instructed to send information in the form of text, pictures or voice message by WhatsApp. The council did not mention whether the anti-price gouging channel would still operate on non-typhoon days.

Upon receiving the information, the council looks into the materials provided by customers. If necessary, it refers the material to the relevant law enforcement authorities.

The council reminds businesses to expressly list the prices of products and services, and calls on merchants not to engage in price-gouging during typhoon periods to safeguard consumer rights.

Price gouging was reportedly a problem during Typhoon Hato in 2017, when the city faced a brief food and water shortage. **AL**

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# QANTAS FREIGHT PLAN FOR MACAU FLOPS AFTER SIX FLIGHTS

**A**USTRALIAN airline Qantas has reportedly failed in its business plan for the region after operating only six flights between Sydney and the MSAR in 2018.

Qantas Freight made an announcement last year that it would operate a freight plane to bring fresh Australian produce into Macau for the city's integrated resorts.

According to a report by independent Australian journalist Michael West, the business plan collapsed, with claims that that JetFast chief executive Reuben Milne has been hiding from his creditors, including local backers.

JetFast is a locally-based company that signed a deal with Qantas Freight.

The report said that Milne, whose whereabouts are unknown, owes some AUD5.6 million to his partners in Hong Kong.

The report also claimed that he owed money to people with connections to triad syndicates in Hong Kong and Macau.

Milne used to be the head



of air operations for the former Melco Crown and was employed to pilot private jets and helicopters that flew in high-rollers to Macau. Prior to that, he was said to be the personal helicopter pilot for Stanley Ho.

People familiar with the matter said that Qantas Freight only undertook six flights to and from Macau last year between February to April, and then ran out of capital

and had to terminate the deal.

Under the contract, which the independent media outlet had access to, the minimum number of flights between Sydney and Macau was 52 per year with a total value AUD14.7 million each year.

"It is understood Qantas banked \$2.3 million, after which the deal fell [through]. This included a forfeited USD500,000 bank guarantee that Qantas gave to JetFast,

which was collected by Qantas in August 2018," the report stated.

In a press statement Qantas issued, yet never published, the airline said that "the service will meet growing demand to move a wide range of fresh produce from Australia into the Pearl River Delta region through Macau, allowing Asian-made electronics and general goods to flow into Australia." LV

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BY-ELECTION BUDGET SET AT MOP3.28 MILLION

**O**N Wednesday, the Electoral Affairs Committee for the Legislative Assembly By-election held a meeting to decide on the budget for the election.

The election will decide the replacement seat for Chief Executive candidate Ho Iat Seng, who formerly represented the commerce sector.

Committee president Tong Hio Fong spoke at a post-meeting press conference, saying that the budget had been set at MOP3.28 million, which amounts to about 6% of the last legislative election.

As introduced by Tong, who cited information from the committee's secretariat, the budget will be used for printing posters, broadcasting promotional videos on various news channels, training workers, partitioning voting stations, as well as printing ballots and manifestos. Tong stressed that his committee will abide by the principle of frugality.

Meanwhile, Tong also noted that in the previous legislative election, some candidates had surpluses in their election spending. He pointed out that after discussion, the committee would try to request in the form of election guidelines that candidates donate any surplus to charities. Currently, there is no legal provision as to how the surpluses should be treated.

Interested parties should submit their nominations by August 28. AL

AD

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# Movie-themed entertainment park opens in neighboring Hengqin

ON Wednesday, U.S. entertainment company Lions Gate Entertainment Corp. and Hong Kong-based developer Lai Sun Group officially opened Lionsgate Entertainment World, a movie-themed multi-sensory interactive center in Hengqin, Zhuhai.

The project may be the world's first PG-13 theme park. It's aimed at 16- to 30-year-old Chinese consumers, who often go out in groups, even when courting.

The park is developed by the Hong Kong real estate giant, which obtained the licensing rights from Lions Gate Entertainment Corp. Managed by Australia's Village Roadshow Ltd., the park has opened on Hengqin Island, an area that Chinese officials have targeted as a theme-park destination.

The entertainment facility features six blockbuster franchises by Lionsgate, including "The Hunger Games," "The Twilight Saga," "The Divergent Series," "Now You See Me," "Escape Plan" and "Gods of Egypt," which act as the background story for the attractions.

The Twilight Saga - Bella's Journey takes guests into the woods, with special effects designed by Oscar-winning company Franchise.

Patented for its technology, The Twilight Saga - Midnight Ride claims to offer the world's first multiplayer interactive hyper-reality virtual reality (VR) simulator experience. The ride will transport guests to the town of Forks, where they will join the werewolf pack in a daring chase after the vampires through the woods. Every motorcycle is real and has been modified to allow guests to experience a realistic journey in which they are in control.

Upon stepping into The Hunger Games - Mockingjay Flight Rebel Escape, guests will race through the underground world beneath the Capitol, evading dangers as they finally escape the city. Equipped with a multimedia motion-based system, the simulator offers six directions of movement and vibrations on a platform 4.5 meters above the ground.

Gods of Egypt - Battle for Eternity features a high-speed VR roller coaster adventure.

In addition, Lionsgate Entertainment World features live performances at the Atrium and throughout the park. Guests can watch a "The Hunger Games"-inspired Capitol Fashion Show at the Atrium, enjoy Egyptian performances at the Egyptian Marketplace and wander through the "Macau Night Markets."

The park also offers Fear Challenges. Covering an area of 570 square meters, the Chasm Challenge Course is an indoor climbing course with 48 checkpoints.

At the Fear Simulator, the gues-



ts can put on VR equipment and go for a walk.

Located in the Dauntless Pit Combat Arena is a massive motion detection game that allows guests to practice unarmed combat whilst following the beat.

"Lionsgate Entertainment World is a multifaceted destination that engages guests through story-telling and cutting edge technology, enabling them to fully immerse themselves in an interactive environment and experience based on the movies," said Selena Magill, General Manager

of Lionsgate Entertainment World. "Our leadership team are also committed to providing a fun, supportive and growing career platform for talents in the region, and making our utmost contribution to the tourism infrastructure development of Hengqin and Zhuhai."

Lionsgate Entertainment World is situated in Novotown, an integrated tourism and entertainment project in Hengqin developed by Hong Kong's Lai Sun Group.

Spanning 22,000 square meters

of premium indoor space, Lionsgate Entertainment World offers over 30 attractions.

"Following the remarkable launch of Lionsgate Entertainment World, an exciting array of entertainment and lifestyle offerings will soon go live in Novotown. We look forward to bringing a more diversified entertainment experience to guests in Hengqin, and are committed to creating a boom in the entertainment and tourism industries here on this international leisure tourism island," said Larry Leung, Managing Director

of Novotown.

"The launch of Lionsgate Entertainment World not only plays a key role in strengthening Hengqin's leisure and tourism industry, but it also enhances the development of tourism within Zhuhai and the Greater Bay Area," said Chuan Yang, Director of Hengqin New District Administration.

A standard one-day ticket on weekdays during the off-peak season will cost RMB250 (MOP294), and will cost RMB280 (MOP330) on specific days during peak season. JZ



## TAX HAVEN CRACKDOWN CATCHES HK HEDGE FUNDS IN ITS CROSSHAIRS

BEI HU & MELISSA KARSH

**H**ONG Kong hedge funds have found themselves in the crosshairs of a global crackdown on multinational companies that use subsidiaries in tax havens to lower liabilities.

A new rule introduced by the Cayman Islands that took effect in January requires companies within its purview to maintain an “economic substance” in the territory. Firms involved in nine activities are covered, including funds management, banking, finance and leasing. Economic substance will be assessed on a case-by-case basis but covers things such as “adequate and appropriate” office premises, personnel and expenditure.

The Cayman Economic Sub-

stance rule wasn't designed to target hedge funds. But funds' Cayman investment managers are caught by it, and will have to comply by January. Failure to do so could result in a fine of around \$12,000 for first offenders. That could increase 10-fold in subsequent years, according to Alice Molan, a Hong Kong-based partner with Cayman law firm Walkers.

At least one of Walkers' clients has already taken the leap and is setting up a Cayman Islands office; others have expressed an interest in doing so. Another alternative is to outsource income-generating activities covered by the rules to service providers in Cayman, rather than move entire teams.

The rule sprung from an OECD-led campaign to target large

tech and pharmaceutical companies that develop technology, get an expense deduction for it in the U.S. or Europe, and then shift the intellectual property to low- or no-tax locations where the royalties will be paid.

It captures Hong Kong firms more than elsewhere “because offshore management companies have been used less by European managers in recent years,” according to Paul Hale, the global head of tax affairs at London-based Alternative Investment Management Association.

Many Hong Kong hedge funds use Cayman investment managers (while the Hong Kong firms are designated ‘investment advisers’) because it's easier to get regulatory approval to set up in the offshore center. Using a Cayman

investment manager as an umbrella, they can also more easily add offices elsewhere, and it has tax advantages for certain investors.

The ultimate impact will depend upon the firm's size, the number of funds and strategies it has, and the amount of income the Cayman manager receives.

“A \$5 million hedge fund that is long only, has 10 positions and makes one trade every six months isn't going to have to have as much substance as a high-frequency trader that has \$5 billion under management executing hundreds of trades an hour,” said James Gaden, another Walkers partner. “Obviously how much substance dictates how much you're going to spend” complying, he said.

And the rule probably won't see hedge funds abandon Cayman Islands completely. Managers will continue to incorporate their funds and management entities there because of the regulatory ease of setting up, low startup and maintenance costs, as well as the abundance of service providers from law firms to auditors who are familiar with the industry, said Ira Kustin, a New York-based partner at Paul Hastings LLP.

Howel Thomas, the Hong Kong-based chief executive officer of Wykeham Capital Ltd., is one executive who's been impacted. But instead of a physical move, he opted to revise Wykeham Capital's fund documents to drop the Cayman investment manager and instead appoint a Hong Kong investment adviser to the role.

“Tempted though I am to relocate to the Caribbean, a more sensible move seems to be to remove the Cayman investment manager from our operational structure,” he wrote to the fund's investors last month. **BLOOMBERG**

**T**HE Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) cut its benchmark interest rate in line with the U.S. Federal Reserve, an automatic response that's unlikely to lend much support to the city's sagging economy.

The HKMA yesterday lowered its base rate to 2.5% from 2.75%, in step with the Fed's quarter point move according to a “pre-set formula”, the monetary authority said in a statement. As the Hong Kong dollar is pegged to the greenback, the city essentially imports U.S. monetary policy, though local banks aren't obliged to follow with lower retail costs.

### ECONOMY

## Macau, HK cut base rate for first time since 2008

An identical decision from the Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM) followed, lowering the base rate 25 basis points to 2.5%.

As the pataca is linked to the Hong Kong dollar, the movements of policy rates in Hong Kong and Macau should be consistent in order to maintain the effective operation of the linked exchange rate system, the AMCM noted in a statement published yesterday.

The pataca is fixed to

the Hong Kong dollar at an exchange rate of 1.03 to the HKD. In turn, the HKD is pegged to the U.S. dollar in a band that ranges between 7.75 and 7.85 to the USD.

The first base rate reduction in more than a decade comes as Hong Kong is facing the economic downdraft from slowing global trade, China's weakening expansion and political turmoil at home. Gross domestic product contracted 0.3% from the previous quarter,

while growth on a year-a-go basis remained at 0.6%, according to data released on Wednesday.

“It should help boost growth and financial sector activities after second-quarter's weak print,” said Jeff Ng, Asia chief economist for Continuum Economics in Singapore. “However a small cut is unlikely to move the economy much. Hong Kong will have to rely on more Fed cuts for stronger support on the economy.”

The cut in isolation

probably won't push banks to lower prime rates, but if the U.S. Fed cuts more, there is a stronger chance local banks will do so, he said.

The HKMA is now in a transitional period, with chief executive Norman Chan set to be replaced in October by his long-time deputy Eddie Yue, who will have to face risks ranging from a resurgent property market to intermittent sniping against the city's currency peg.

The base rate reduction

also doesn't help Hong Kong in dealing with its inflated property market, among the world's most expensive.

“The base rate has no effect on banks' liquidity, which remains very abundant,” said Stephen Chiu, a strategist at Bloomberg Intelligence in Hong Kong. “It's very unlikely for Hong Kong banks to cut their prime rates given the city's high property prices and strong housing demand.”

**DB/BLOOMBERG**



**H**ONG Kong's decision to charge dozens of protesters with a colonial-era rioting charge that carries a 10-year prison term suggested that the government was heeding calls for a tougher response to the unrest.

The arrests of 49 people - including 44 on the rioting charge - drew outrage from pro-democracy groups and spurred hundreds of demonstrators to surround a police station Tuesday night calling for the suspects' release. The chaotic scene raised fears of escalating violence after demonstrators scuffled with riot police and six protesters were injured outside another police station by fireworks fired from a passing car.

A similar crowd gathered to support the protesters during their arraignment at Eastern Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, despite the howling winds and driving rain from an approaching typhoon. All were released on bail, save one who didn't show up. The proceedings will resume Sept. 25.

"Liberate Hong Kong! Revolution of our time!" supporters shouted. The defendants ranged between 16 and 41 years old, including a pilot, a teacher, a nurse, clerks, cooks and 14 students.

The charges represent a shift for the Hong Kong government, which has refrained from employing the powerful rioting statute since Chief Executive Carrie Lam's extradition legislation prompted mass protests

# Hong Kong rioting charges signal harsher line against protesters



AP PHOTO

A protester reacts emotionally as she and others gather outside the Eastern Court in Hong Kong ahead of a court appearance by more than 40 fellow protesters who have been charged with rioting

in June. Rioting prosecutions in wake of a violent clash between police and anti-China radicals in 2016 prompted calls for the law's repeal and led two suspects to recently secure refugee status in Germany.

"Young people will not be frightened by this thing," opposition lawmaker Kwok Ka-ki said Wednesday. "Using this kind of unreasonable prosecution

and police force will only make Hong Kong worse."

The protesters were arrested during tear-gas-clouded clashes Sunday after an authorized march toward China's local government headquarters. A demonstration outside the Liaison Office one week earlier, in which the national emblem was vandalized, drew condemnation and calls for a tougher police response by Chinese state media.

The rioting statute was passed by the U.K.-appointed government in 1967, when the city was in the depths of unrest driven by leftists sympathetic to China's ruling Communist Party. The law holds anyone who commits a "breach of the peace" while participating in a unlawful assembly liability for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison.

"The government's strategy to prosecute them on riot charges is understandable, as they want

to stop these anti-government protests as quickly as possible," said Luke Yeung, 26, who works in IT and was outside the court Wednesday. "They want to deter the protesters and instill fear in them."

Protesters argued the decision was particularly unfair because the 12 men so far arrested in connection with mob attacks on activists earlier this month were charged with the lesser offense of unlawful assembly. Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption has launched an investigation into the police's response to the July 21 attacks in the Yuen Long area, the South China Morning Post newspaper reported, citing unidentified people familiar with the matter.

Hundreds of thousands of people first took to the street in opposition to controversial legislation easing extraditions to China, and have since widened

their demands to include Lam's resignation and an inquiry into what they call an excessive use of force by police. China's state media has called for greater action by Hong Kong police.

Protesters blocked roads in Sai Ying Pun on Sunday as clashes flared with officers who fired rounds of tear gas over crowds. Demonstrators erected roadblocks, removed pavement bricks, demolished road fences and damaged street signs, police alleged. They also attacked officers with "lethal weapons such as bricks and sharpened iron rods," according to a police statement.

"Although Police have repeatedly warned the protesters who charged the police cordon lines to leave immediately and that they were participating in an illegal assembly, the protesters refused to leave and continue to perform various peace-breaching acts and attacked police officers," the police said.

The Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, China's top agency overseeing Hong Kong, said in an unprecedented briefing Monday that the unrest in the financial hub had gone "far beyond" peaceful protest. Office spokesman Yang Guang said the government continued to have faith in the police, who "have been fearlessly sticking to their posts and fulfilling their duties against all odds."

An edition of the Communist Party's flagship People's Daily newspaper said Hong Kong police should take stern action to restore order and "not hesitate or have any unnecessary 'psychological worries' about taking necessary steps," in a commentary published in an overseas edition. **BLOOMBERG**

## CHINESE ARMY RELEASES PROMO VIDEO

**THE** Chinese army has released a promotional video for its Hong Kong-based troops at a time of uncertainty over whether the military will intervene in the city's summer of protest. The Hong Kong Garrison of China's People's Liberation Army posted the video Wednesday evening on its official social media account ahead of the anniversary of the army's founding

yesterday. One section shows footage labeled "anti-riot drill," in which armed soldiers in riot gear fire tear gas and water cannon at a crowd dressed as civilians, some of whom wore helmets and masks similar to those worn by pro-democracy demonstrators who have taken to Hong Kong's streets in the hundreds of thousands over the past two months.



## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

The Greater Bay project is coming and it will bring both opportunities and challenges to our little-big town. Macau Daily Times wants to hear your voice. We invite our readers to write in with Letters to the Editor on the topic of the Greater Bay Area.

Please email your letters to [gba@macaudailytimes.com](mailto:gba@macaudailytimes.com)

BLOOMBERG



## SINGAPORE'S HISTORIC RAFFLES HOTEL REOPENS AFTER RESTORATION

JOANNA OSSINGER

**A**N icon of Singapore's history has been restored and is now open again.

The Raffles Hotel, which first opened in 1887 and was declared a National Monument by the government a century later, reopened today after an extensive renovation that started two and a half years ago, according to a statement from the hotel.

The Raffles, known for its Long Bar where the Singapore Sling cocktail was invented and peanut shells tossed on the floor, now offers 115 suites in nine categories including Grand Hotel Suites and Presidential Suites. The Long Bar has been refreshed and will still sling its reddish-pink gin-based drink.

"The newly restored Raffles will provide an experience like no other," said Christian Westbeld, the hotel's general manager. "There are few hotels in the world whose names have become virtually synonymous with the cities in which they are located - and none more so than the Raffles Hotel in Singapore."

A search on the hotel's website for an upcoming Saturday night showed prices starting at SGD869 (\$632) a night for one guest in the hotel's cheapest suite option. At the higher end, a two-bed President Suite for one night in October was going for SGD11,899 (\$8,650).

The newly restored hotel also features restaurant collaborations with Chef Anne-Sophie Pic, of the three-Michelin star Maison Pic in Valence, France; French Master Chef Alain Ducasse; and Chef Jereme Leung, who is known for his innovative Chinese cooking.

The restoration, led by acclaimed interior designer Alexandra Champalimaud, was also supported by Aedas, a leading global architecture and design firm. Raffles Hotel Singapore is the flagship property of Raffles Hotels & Resorts, a part of French hospitality firm Accor SA. The hotel itself is owned by Qatar-based Katara Hospitality, a global hotel owner, developer and operator based in Qatar. **BLOOMBERG**

## TURKISH AIRLINES IS SAID TO EYE HNA'S VIRGIN AUSTRALIA STAKE

ERCAN ERSOY, MANUEL BAIGORRI & HAZE FAN

**T**urkish Airlines is interested in HNA Group Co.'s minority stake in Virgin Australia Holdings Ltd. as it seeks growth in the Asia-Pacific region, according to people familiar with the matter.

Turkey's national flag-carrier is among companies looking at HNA's 20% stake in the Australian airline, said the people, asking not to be named because the discussions are private. Deliberations are preliminary and may not result in a deal, the people said.

Reports that it will acquire HNA's 20% stake in Virgin Australia "do not reflect the truth," Turkish Airlines said in a statement yesterday. "We share our objectives of developing our business partnerships in the

Asia-Pacific region with our stakeholders." A representative for HNA Group declined to comment.

The troubled Chinese conglomerate was open to offers for its stake in Virgin Australia as part of efforts to cut debt, Bloomberg reported in August last year. Singapore Airlines Ltd. and Nanshan Capital, which each control about a fifth of Virgin's shares, were among the companies weighing a bid, people familiar with the matter said at the time.

Virgin Australia closed 3% lower at 16 Australian cents in Sydney, valuing the airline at AUD1.35 billion (\$925 million). Turkish Airlines fell as much as 2% and traded 0.9% lower at 12.35 liras as of 11:58 a.m. in Istanbul.

HNA has about dozen airlines in its portfolio including

Hainan Airlines Holding Co. Ltd., Hong Kong Airlines Ltd., Lucky Air Co. Ltd. and Tianjin Airlines.

The Chinese firm is selling assets after racking up one of the nation's biggest corporate debt loads in a global acquisition spree. It also considered selling its majority stake in oil-storage and logistics business HG Storage International Ltd. as well as container-leasing unit Seaco, tech-outsourcing arm Pactera Technology International Ltd. and aircraft-maintenance firm SR Technics, Bloomberg News has reported.

Turkish Airlines has been evaluating investments in other carriers in a departure from concentrating on growth at its huge Istanbul hub as it looks to safeguard expansion as Mideast and European eco-

nomies falter and a rise in protectionism weighs on global cargo flows. The company has a longstanding holiday venture, SunExpress, with Deutsche Lufthansa AG, and set up a joint venture in Albania last year.

The airline plans to boost its fleet to 474 planes by 2023 including 25 Boeing 787-9s, according to its website. It took delivery of the first Dreamliner in June as part of a deal for 40 of the jets.

In another development, Turkish Air on Thursday announced a so-called code-share partnership with Bangkok Airways PCL. The deal will allow Turkish to sell tickets on Bangkok Air flights as if they were its own, opening up more destinations in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia. **BLOOMBERG**

## CORPORATE BITS

### Melco presents Japanese anime exhibition



Melco is renewing its contribution to Art Macao by bringing a vast array of pieces depicting Japanese anime and culture to the region. They will be shown from now until the end of November.

"Journey" is a diverse selection of works inspired by the

highly varied culture of anime. Forming part of Melco's contribution to Art Macao: International Art Exhibition, this unique exhibition is a visual adventure that explores the evolution of contemporary Japanese anime from its beginnings rooted in ukiyo-e,

the traditional art of Japanese woodblock print and painting.

This first-of-its-kind exhibition for Studio City includes highlights such as Amanami Animated by MAP Office, Mr Waterloo by Rainbo, Waves in Time by Southbend, Blingee by Han Yanjuan, and the Modern Art of Floating World Collection by Horihiro Mitomo and Ukiyoemon.

Lawrence Ho, chairman and CEO of Melco Resorts & Entertainment, commented, "Japanese arts and culture have been an inspiration of mine from a very young age, and it is an honor to celebrate the heritage, culture and arts of Japan with our guests in Macau."

### Sands China wraps up 'Plastic Free July Challenge'



Sands China employees have just completed the Plastic Free July Challenge, with around 3,000 employees participating.

By promoting participation in the Plastic Free July challenge, Sands China aimed to motivate employees to refuse single-

-use plastic, drive behavioral change and influence others in a positive way.

As part of the Sands ECO360 global sustainability strategy, Plastic Free July is an annual global movement challenging people to refuse single-use plastic for the

month of July.

"As Sands China continues to explore more ways of running a sustainable operation, the company feels it is vitally important for all of us as individuals to adopt an eco-conscious approach to our daily lives," said Mark McWhinnie, senior vice president of Resort Operations and Development for Sands China Ltd.

Sands China Ltd. recently encouraged its employees to continue bolstering their personal efforts towards living sustainable lifestyles, including using reusable water bottles, coffee cups and bags; using soap bars instead of liquid soap; and switching to bamboo-handled toothbrushes.



# Shanghai tries to reduce its trash, 1 chicken bone at a time

FU TING, SHANGHAI

**C**HINA'S biggest city has dived headfirst into a trash sorting program that marks the country's first serious attempt at cutting the amount of garbage headed for landfills.

But despite a sweeping education campaign by the ruling Communist Party and the threat of fines, Shanghai residents still have a ways to go in changing their lifestyles and getting with the program — one properly disposed chicken bone at a time.

Months ahead of the campaign's launch in July, the government began its push to explain to Shanghai's young and old how garbage will need to be sorted into four categories: wet, dry, recyclable and hazardous.

From choreographed dances with trash bins to fliers sent to 6.8 million families and a scorecard for participating neighborhoods, efforts to roll out the system en masse have reflected the Communist Party's all-encompassing approach to rules enforcement.

There's lot of garbage to get through. About 9 million tons of household trash to be exact, according to 2017 data from Shanghai's Statistics Bureau. The go-

vernment hopes the new sorting measures will reduce the amount of waste headed for landfills by making it easier to recycle or compost some of the trash.

"It is going to take a generation to really accomplish it," said Du Huanzheng, a self-described "trash professor."

"It is a change of habits," said Du, a professor at Tongji University in Shanghai who has served as an adviser for the new program. Quoting a Chinese proverb, he said: "It's easier to change the rivers and mountains than a person's nature."

On a recent day in downtown Shanghai, 67-year-old Zhang Guihua stood in front of an apartment complex's trash disposal area with bins for the four new trash categories.

Zhang, who works as a caregiver in the complex, said the rules have no doubt made taking out the trash more time-consuming. For instance, while the elderly woman she works for generally only has one bag of garbage to throw out at a time, Zhang now has to pick out the trash by hand before sorting it into the different bins.

"It is troublesome," Zhang said. "My hands get dirty after dealing

with it and there's no place for me to wash my hands."

Online commentators have pointed out that distinguishing one type of waste from another is no easy task. While chicken bones are officially classified as wet, pork bones are considered dry. Dry mushrooms are in fact wet, and wet tissues are actually dry.

One strategy for identification that has been spreading online is

## The gov't hopes the new sorting measures will reduce the amount of waste headed for landfills

to think of the trash in terms of pigs: Trash is wet if pigs can eat it, and dry if not; trash is hazardous if it can kill pigs, but recyclable if it can be sold to earn cash to buy more pigs.

To help children remember the rules — and pass them on to their families — Chinese e-commerce platforms are selling "trash classification toys" with miniature garbage bins and flash cards, and teachers have assigned trash-related homework.

As President Xi Jinping said during a visit to Shanghai last November, according to the Xinhua state news agency, trash classification is the "new fashion."

The sorting campaign has dominated headlines on Shanghai media, and fliers have been sent to every family. In a performance held by district-level authorities, eight jean shorts-clad girls danced energetically on a stage beside four large trash bins, to a song which declared "I have no rival in trash sorting!"

"The Chinese government has a strong ability to act," Du said of the program's strong enforcement. "Its ability to concentrate on doing big things is stronger than in Western countries."

Neighborhoods and districts in the city are also now being graded for their trash sorting ability on a scale from "excellent" to "bad." Individuals who have excelled in trash sorting are rewarded with points that can be redeemed for household items like detergent and umbrellas.

There are sticks together with the carrots. The Shanghai Urban Management and Law Enforcement Bureau said Wednesday

that 872 fines had been issued in the first 30 days of the program. Most were to commercial properties such as shopping malls and office buildings, while 74 individuals were fined from 50 to 200 yuan (\$7 to \$29).

Even when residents have got it all figured out, however, the proper equipment is not always fully in place.

Tang Guiqin, a 70-year-old retiree, said it was both natural and convenient for her and her family to learn the new rules. But when she went to throw a glass bottle, she discovered that her neighborhood was lacking bins for both hazardous and recyclable materials.

"There's no trash can for it here," Tang said with a laugh. "I have no choice but to throw it into the dry trash can."

Putting the new measures into force has required the whole community to adapt. Neighborhood volunteers — everyone from housewives to retirees to independent waste pickers — have donned green vests to stand watch beside trash cans and make sure residents are getting with the program.

Zhu Xiaohua, a retiree, said she volunteers three days a week, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. In the beginning, it took some getting used to, Zhu said, but most of her neighbors now follow the rules.

"I personally think there won't be any need to monitor after a while," said Zhu, who wore a green vest with the words "Trash Sorting Volunteer."

Despite these efforts, not everyone does exactly as they're told.

In a neighborhood in Shanghai's Pudong New Area, workers from the apartment complex's management office must go through the trash every day to rearrange the items that residents did not care to sort. The employees open up the bags and pull the dregs out with their bare hands, separating the bubble tea, watermelon slices and expired tofu.

With the first month of the program just ending, no official figures are available yet on how it is doing.

In some cases, residents are being encouraged to apply the classification system to other parts of their lives.

Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba has launched a smartphone app to help users identify the right categories for specific items. Users can type or take photos of items they're throwing out, and the program will tell them which of the four categories it belongs to — even for nonmaterial forms of "trash."

If you search the term "ex-boyfriend," for instance, the app will give you the following suggestion: "This may be hazardous. Recycling is not recommended if he is truly scum." AP

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# TAIWAN SAYS CHINA IS LIMITING TOURISM TO ISLAND OUT OF FEAR

**T**AIWAN'S foreign minister has criticized China's suspension on trips by individual Chinese citizens to the island, saying Beijing appeared to be afraid of allowing its people to experience "a country where freedom, openness and tolerance are the order of the day."

AP PHOTO



China announced the ban Wednesday in an apparent move ahead of Taiwan's elections in January to intensify its pressure on Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen to endorse Beijing's position that Taiwan is Chinese territory.

The one-sentence notice from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism said such trips would be suspended from yesterday "in light of the current relations between the two sides." It did not mention tour groups, which were already declining after previous restrictions.

In a tweet Wednesday night about Beijing's tourism restrictions, Taiwanese Foreign Minister Joseph Wu wrote "How very sad?"

"They should be allowed to join more & more travelers from

around the world in experiencing a country where freedom, openness & tolerance are the order of the day," Wu wrote. "What's to fear?"

Taiwan's Presidential Office also criticized China's move, with spokeswoman Kolas Yotaka saying it will "not only restrict mutual understanding between the people of China and Taiwan but also deprive Chinese of the opportunity to know Taiwan."

Both the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party ruling and the China-

friendly opposition Nationalist Party issued statements critical of the ban.

China's foreign ministry referred questions on the ban to the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office, which did not immediately respond.

However, the official newspaper China Daily made it clear the move aimed to damage Taiwan's economy and steer voters away from reelecting Tsai.

The decline in tourism revenues "in turn will send ripples across the island's 'presidential

election' that is scheduled for January, as it may prompt the Taiwan people to think about whether it is worthwhile to continue to be bound with a secessionist 'leader' on the same ghost ship for another four years," the paper said.

In a related development, Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je is setting up a new political party ahead of January's elections, making him a potential contender with Tsai and her biggest challenger, Han Kuo-yu of the opposition Nationalist Party.

Ko, who is serving his second term as mayor of the capital, may also seek to partner with former Foxconn Technology Chairman Terry Gou, who sought the Nationalist nomination but lost to Han, the mayor of the southern city of Kaohsiung.

Citing official statistics, China Daily said the suspension of individual visits would cut the number of Chinese tourist trips to the island by about 700,000 within six months, adding that "may be just the first of a series of moves."

Overall Chinese tourists visi-

ting Taiwan annually have from fallen from 4.18 million in 2015, the year before Tsai's election, to about 2.69 million last year, the paper said.

However, Taiwan's Tourism Bureau reported that more than 1.677 million Chinese visited Taiwan in the first half of the year, an increase of 30% over the same period last year. They were divided roughly evenly between individuals and those in tour groups.

Joining in blaming Tsai's administration for worsening ties, Hu Xijin, the outspoken editor of the nationalist Communist Party tabloid Global Times, said patriotic Chinese were prepared to accept the inconvenience.

Tsai's government has "trampled on cross-strait relations for a considerable time, constantly strengthened their opposition stance against the mainland, and actively acted as a bargaining chip for the United States to suppress mainland China," Xijin wrote on his official microblog.

China cut off all contact with Tsai's government shortly after her 2016 election and has discouraged tourism while working to poach away Taiwan's handful of remaining diplomatic allies and block its participation at international gatherings. **MDT/AP**

AD

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Macau is hosting this year's International Joint Conference on AI (IJCAI) one of the largest annual gathering of AI experts. www.ijcai19.org

We would like to use this opportunity to host an informal networking event to discuss with European experts and guests about trends and development of AI in Europe. A recent McKinsey report suggests that Europe needs to speed up investment to close the technological gap between China and the US.

Others argue that Europe's strength lies in privacy enhancing AI software and applications, and a focus on citizen-centric AI development. What does it mean for companies using machine learning to increase customer loyalty? How can machine learning be used for real-world systems?

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# Stood up in Bangkok: Pompeo regrets N.Korea meeting unlikely

MATTHEW LEE, BANGKOK

**U**.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said yesterday the Trump administration remains ready to resume talks with North Korea now, although he regretted that a meeting between the two sides is unlikely at an Asian security conference this week in Thailand.

Pompeo said he and the administration's chief negotiator Stephen Biegun had hoped to meet with a senior North Korean official while in Bangkok for the annual Association of Southeast Asian Nations forum. No such meeting had been formally scheduled and the North's foreign minister was not expected at the three-day event in the Thai capital, but Pompeo said it looked increasingly like those hopes would be dashed.

"We stand ready to continue our diplomatic conversation with the North Koreans," Pompeo told reporters at a joint news conference with the Thai foreign minister. "I regret that it looks like I'm not going to have the opportunity to do that while I'm here in Bangkok, but we're ready to go."

The annual ASEAN security meeting has been used in the past as a venue for U.S.-North Korea



talks and although the North had signaled that its top diplomat would not attend this year, Pompeo had held out hope for a change of heart.

Despite the apparent stand-up by the North, Pompeo said he believed a new round of working level talks led by Biegun and his North Korean counterpart could happen soon.

"I am optimistic that that will happen before too long," he said.

"We're looking forward to a chance to reconnect with them in a formal way diplomatically."

Biegun was present in Pompeo's meeting with Chinese state councilor Wang Yi and the State Department said he was in Bangkok for North Korea-related meetings but did not elaborate.

Pompeo, who has a full day of meetings in Bangkok today before leaving tomorrow for Australia,

made his comments shortly after the North announced progress in missile tests conducted over the past week.

North Korea said yesterday that leader Kim Jong Un had supervised the first test firing of a new multiple rocket launcher system that could potentially enhance its ability to strike targets in South Korea and U.S. military bases there. A report by North Korea's offi-

cial Korean Central News Agency differed from the assessment by South Korea's military, which had concluded Wednesday's launches were of two short-range ballistic missiles.

The launches from the eastern coastal town of Wonsan were North Korea's second weapons test in less than a week and were seen as a move to keep up pressure on Washington and Seoul amid a stalemate in nuclear negotiations. Pyongyang has also expressed anger over planned U.S.-South Korea military drills.

KCNA said Kim expressed satisfaction over the test firing and said the newly developed rocket system would soon serve a "main role" in his military's land combat operations and create an "inescapable distress to the forces becoming a fat target of the weapon."

The launches on Wednesday came hours after a senior U.S. official said President Donald Trump sent Kim mementos from his brief visit to an inter-Korean border town late last month. The official said a top staffer from the National Security Council hand-delivered photographs from the leaders' June meeting at the Korean Demilitarized Zone to a North Korean official last week.

The DMZ meeting was the third summit between Trump and Kim. At their second meeting, in Vietnam in February, Trump rejected Kim's demand for widespread sanctions relief in return for dismantling the North's main nuclear complex, a partial disarmament step. **AP**

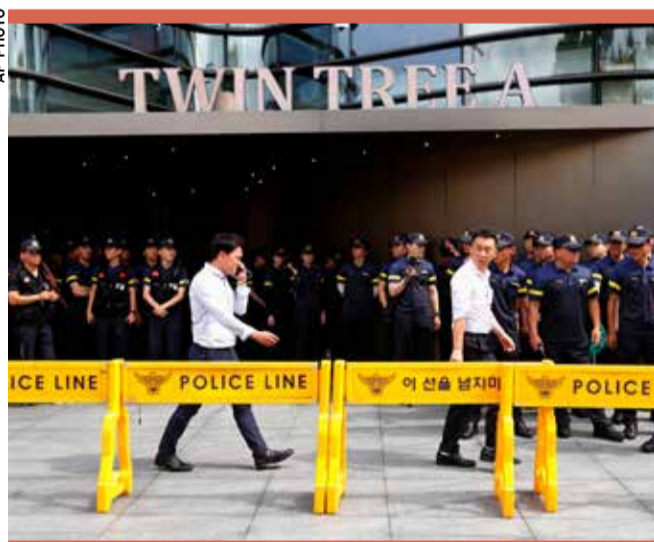
# Police: South Korean man set himself ablaze to protest Japan

KIM TONG-HYUNG,  
SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

**A** 72-year-old South Korean man was in critical condition after setting himself ablaze in downtown Seoul yesterday, apparently to express his anger toward Japan amid worsening tensions between countries over trade and wartime history, a police official said.

An official from Seoul's Jongno Police Station said the man was being treated at a Seoul hospital for burns over his entire body. The incident came a day before the Japanese government was widely expected to remove South Korea from a 27-country "whitelist" receiving preferential treatment in trade, which if carried out is likely to aggravate the dispute that sank bilateral relations to its lowest point in decades.

Police at the scene found a bag that likely belonged to the man and con-



tained a memo and leaflet criticizing Japan over its decision to tighten controls on high-tech exports to South Korea and vowing to fight Tokyo until Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe apologizes.

Also inside the bag was a book about the late Kim Bok-dong, who was one of the first victims to speak out and break decades of silence over the Japanese military's sexual slavery

during World War II, according to the police official, who didn't want to be named, citing office rules.

The incident came weeks after a 78-year-old South Korean man died after self-immolating near the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. Police last month said the man had phoned an acquaintance earlier to say he planned to set himself on fire to express his antipathy toward Japan.

The dispute between South Korea and Japan erupted last month when Tokyo tightened 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.

South Korea's removal from the Japanese preferential trade list could have a broader impact as it would require Japanese companies to apply for case-by-case approvals for exports to South Korea of hundreds of items deemed sensitive, not just the three materials affected by the trade curbs that took effect July 4. It will also allow Japanese authorities to restrict any export to South Korea when they believe there are security concerns.

South Korea's presidential office said President Moon Jae-in discussed issues surrounding the Japanese export controls with

Cabinet ministers for more than two hours on yesterday, but didn't immediately reveal what was said. Following a meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings in Bangkok yesterday, South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha told reporters that the Japanese side did not give a "firm answer" to South Korea's demands that the country remain on Japan's trade list.

Kang told reporters "there will be grave ramifications on bilateral relations" if South Korea is removed from Japan's list.

Kang and Kono are scheduled to meet U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in a three-way meeting today, which will come after South Korean efforts to seek U.S. help in resolving its trade row with Japan.

"We hope that they will find a way to move forward

together," Pompeo told reporters in Bangkok. "Japan and South Korea is an incredibly important relationship for the region. We're very hopeful that those two countries will find a way to ease the tension that has arisen over the past couple of weeks."

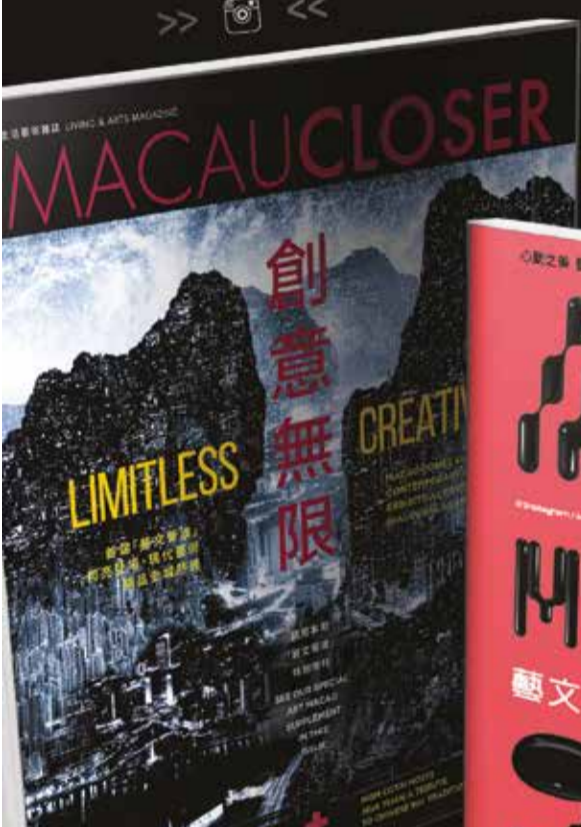

The deteriorating relationship between South Korea and Japan could possibly complicate U.S. efforts to strengthen three-way cooperation on North Korea's nuclear program and in countering China's growing influence in the region. But it's unclear how much the Trump administration would be willing to intervene.

"Whether it's mediation [by the United States] or a meeting of a certain kind, we are ready to positively consider a variety of measures," said a South Korean presidential official, who requested anonymity during a background briefing. **AP**

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# Mozambique's last rebel fighters finally lay down their arms

ANDREW MELDRUM,  
GORONGOSA NATIONAL PARK

**M**OZAMBIQUE'S president and the leader of the Renamo opposition signed a peace accord yesterday to end years of hostilities that followed a 15-year civil war.

The former rebel group's remaining fighters are disarming just weeks before a visit by Pope Francis and a national election that will test the now-political rivals' new resolve.

The permanent cease-fire is the culmination of years of negotiations to end fighting that has flared several times in the more than 25 years since the end of the civil war in which an estimated 1 million people died.

Pope Francis has said he is coming to promote reconciliation in the southern African country of some 30 million people. The Catholic church's Sant'Egidio community helped to negotiate the war's end in 1992 and the church has encouraged peace since then.

President Filipe Nyusi and Renamo leader Ossufo Momade signed, shook hands and embraced at Gorongosa National Park, near the Renamo headquarters where the group has maintained an armed base for more than 40 years. Of the more than 5,200 fighters who are disarming, some 800 are coming down from their camp on



AP PHOTO

Mount Gorongosa and register for employment at the wildlife park.

The accord will be followed by another agreement to be signed in Mozambique's capital, Maputo, on Aug. 6 pledging peace in the Oct. 15 national elections. Previous elections have been marked by violence and Renamo allegations that the ruling Frelimo party rigged the results.

Renamo, which is the Portuguese acronym for National Resistance of Mozambique, became an opposition party after the civil war but had never fully disarmed until now.

"This agreement has historic significance because up 'til now Mozambique has had an opposition party in parliament that also has armed fighters in the countryside. Now there can be peace," said Neha Sanghrajka, a negotiator of the deal. Unlike in previous peace efforts the important issues have been implemented before the signing, she said.

The issues include an amnesty for rebel fighters that Nyusi signed earlier this week and a constitutional amendment that stipulates provincial governors will be elected rather than appointed by the

central government.

There is "tremendous symbolic value" in having the signing at Gorongosa, said fellow negotiator Swiss Ambassador Mirko Manzoni, who is also an envoy of the United Nations secretary-general.

"Gorongosa was where the war started and now it is where it ends," Manzoni said, pointing out that the mountain is in a strategic location in the center of Mozambique. "This agreement gives people hope that there will be lasting peace."

Renamo's longtime leader Afonso Dhlakama died in Goron-

gosa in 2018. Momade succeeded him and is responsible for concluding the peace agreements.

"We will no longer commit the mistakes of the past," Momade said this week as Renamo fighters turned in their arms. "We are for a humanized and dignified reintegration and we want the international community to help make that a reality."

Momade also said he hoped Gorongosa Park would help Renamo's ex-combatants and their families re-enter society.

In recognition of its pivotal role, Mozambique's president declared Gorogosa to be a peace park.

After falling into neglect during the civil war, the park that sprawls over 4,067 square kilometers has been re-invigorated with help from American philanthropist Greg Carr. He has said he was inspired after former South African president Nelson Mandela told him that wildlife parks should be places of national reconciliation and development.

The park also has helped surrounding communities recover after Cyclone Idai devastated large parts of central Mozambique in March and killed more than 600 people. More than 80,000 people are receiving food aid and help in planting crops, while aid groups warn that many others in the region face a hunger crisis in the months ahead.

"I'm excited at what the park can do in the next five years and beyond to help keep the peace," Carr said. "We need the park to deliver opportunities and benefits to the demobilized fighters to sustain the peace. Now it's go, go, go for us to build on the achievement of this peace agreement." AP

# Iran president: US sanctions on foreign minister 'childish'

MEHDI FATTAHI  
& AYA BATRAWY, TEHRAN

**I**RAN'S president lambasted new U.S. sanctions by the Trump administration targeting the country's foreign minister, describing the move yesterday as "childish" and a barrier to diplomacy.

Hassan Rouhani's remarks came after the Trump administration announced Wednesday it had imposed financial sanctions on Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif as part of its escalating campaign of pressure against the Islamic Republic.

The highly unusual action of penalizing another nation's top diplomat followed President Donald Trump's executive order placing sanctions on Iran's



AP PHOTO

supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"They have started doing childish things," Rouhani said in a speech in western Azerbaijan province.

"Every day they claim: 'We want to negotiate with Iran, without any pre-con-

ditions' and then they put sanctions on the country's foreign minister," he said.

The European Union expressed its regret at the U.S. sanctions levied on Zarif and said it would continue to keep contact with him regardless of Washington's move.

"We will continue to work with Mr. Zarif, as Iran's most senior diplomat, and in view of the importance of maintaining diplomatic channels," European Commission spokesman Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela told reporters in Brussels.

This latest round of sanctions comes amid a spike in tensions between the U.S. and Iran. The U.S. has boosted its military presence in the Persian Gulf while Iran has begun openly exceeding limits on its nuclear activities set in a 2015 accord with world powers.

Trump withdrew the United States from Iran's nuclear deal, which Germany, Britain, France, Russia and China are still signatories to, before imposing crippling sanctions on the

country, targeting key industries like Iran's oil exports and sending its economy into free fall.

Zarif, a relative moderate within Iran's clerically overseen political system, was an architect of the nuclear deal, which offered Iran sanctions relief in exchange for internationally-monitored limits on its nuclear program.

U.S. sanctions targeting the foreign minister, however, do not inhibit Zarif's travels to New York for official United Nations business, in accordance with America's international obligations. They also have little impact on Zarif financially.

"It has no effect on me or my family, as I have no property or interests outside of Iran," Zarif himself tweeted

about the U.S. move.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Fifth Fleet naval force said allied nations met in Bahrain on Wednesday to discuss a Trump administration initiative to boost maritime security in the Persian Gulf region. The U.S. has declined to name which countries participated in the meeting, which the statement said focused on ways to maritime security in the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and Gulf of Oman.

Trump administration officials have floated the idea of what's been named the "Sentinel Program" to allies, but already Germany has ruled out joining, saying priority should be given to diplomacy and efforts at de-escalation with Iran. AP

## TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Agua de Mar
15:45	Zig Zag
16:15	Sim, Chef! Sr.1
16:45	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
17:35	Corpo Clínico
18:05	Amor Maior (Repetição)
18:55	Portuguese In California
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	O Costa do Castelo
02:00	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:45	RTPi Directo

## cinema

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02 Aug



#### THE LION KING

ROOM 1

2:30, 4:45, 9:15pm

Director: J Jon Favreau

Starring: Donald Glover, Beyoncé, Seth Rogen

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 118min



#### TOY STORY 4

ROOM 2

2:15, 4:05, 9:45pm

Director: Josh Cooley

Starring: Will Smith, Mena Massoud, Naomi Scott

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 109min



#### THE FAST & FURIOUS: HOBBS & SHAW

ROOM 2

2:30, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30pm

Director: David Leitch

Starring: Dwayne Johnson, Jason Statham, Idris Elba

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 135min



#### CRAYON SHINCHAN 2019

ROOM 3

2:30, 7:30pm

Director: Masakazu Hashimoto

Starring: Yumiko Kobayashi, Toshiyuki Morikawa, Miki Narahashi

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 100min

#### THE CONFIDENCE MAN JP - THE MOVIE

ROOM 3

9:30pm

Director: Ryô Tanaka

Starring: Yôsuke Eguchi, Masahiro Higashide, Michael Keida

Language: Japanese (English & Chinese)

#### CHILDREN OF THE SEA

ROOM 3

4:30pm

Director: Ayumu Watanabe

Starring: Mana Ashida, Hiroyuki Ishibashi, Seishû Uragami

Language: Japanese (English & Chinese)

Duration: 110min

## this day in history



### 1990 IRAQ INVADES KUWAIT

More than 100,000 Iraqi soldiers backed up by 700 tanks invaded the Gulf state of Kuwait in the early hours of this morning.

Iraqi forces have established a provisional government and their leader Saddam Hussein has threatened to turn Kuwait city into a "graveyard" if any other country dares to challenge the "take-over by force".

Iraqi jets have bombed targets in the capital and special forces have landed at the defence ministry and at the Emir's palace. Road blocks are in place and there are reports of looting in the city's shops.

Initial reports suggest up to 200 people have been killed in heavy gunfire around the city.

It is reported that the younger brother of Emir Sheikh Jaber al-Sabah has been killed whilst trying to defend the palace, while the Emir himself has escaped to Saudi Arabia.

All communication has been cut with Kuwait and many people, including thousands of foreign nationals, are trapped in the city.

The invasion has sparked strong condemnation from leaders around the world.

The United Nations Security Council, in emergency session, has called for the "immediate and unconditional" withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, branded the invasion as "absolutely unacceptable" while American president George Bush condemned the attack as "a naked act of aggression."

So far there has been no condemnation of the attack from any Arab country.

Kuwait's assets in the UK and the US have been frozen to prevent Iraq from seizing them and the US has also frozen Iraq's assets.

The Soviet Union, Iraq's main supplier of arms, has suspended the delivery of all military equipment to Iraq.

In recent weeks Iraq had accused Kuwait of flooding the world market with oil and has demanded compensation for oil produced from a disputed oil field on the border of the two countries.

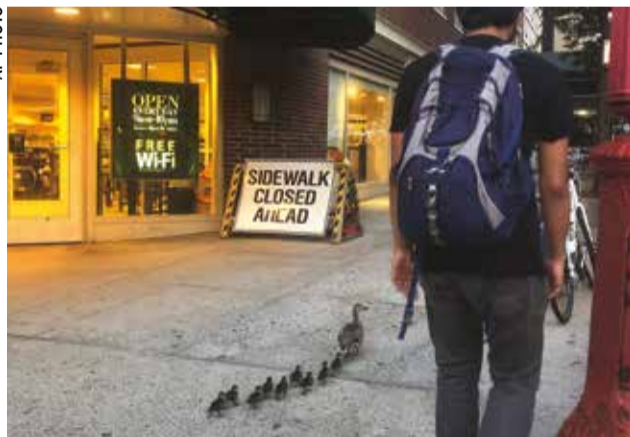
In response to the news of the invasion the price of oil rose dramatically and stock markets around the world have fallen.

Kuwait has appealed for international aid but there is no suggestion of any military action from the West at this stage.

Courtesy BBC News

## Offbeat

### DUCKS, STUCK, LOOSE: POLICE RESCUE 3 DUCKLINGS FROM GRATE



A mother duck and her nine babies were crossing a New York City street when three ducklings fell through a storm grate and had to be retrieved by police.

The rescue happened Sunday in the bustling Brooklyn neighborhood of Park Slope.

Witness Lynn Harris told the news site Gothamist people had noticed the ducks and were following beside them, trying to provide a safe escort when the mother duck was spooked by a dog.

That's when three of her little ones dropped through the grate outside a hospital.

A crowd including animal rescuer Sean Casey gathered to help. Police officers opened the grate — but then dropped it into the hole.

A nurse peeked in and shouted, "They're alive!"

The ducks were then taken to a shelter.

## IN CONTEXT

On 9 August 1990 the UN Security Council voted 15-0 to declare Iraq's annexation of Kuwait null and void.

During the next three months allied forces were deployed to the region as part of Operation Desert Shield. The Soviet Union stated it would not participate in military action. The Gulf crisis intensified and President Bush continued preparations to remove Iraq from Kuwait by force. Iraq ignored all deadlines set by the West to end its occupation of the Gulf state.

On 17 January 1991, coalition forces launched Desert Storm in what would be the longest air strike in the history of aerial warfare.

Iraq responded by launching Scud missiles against Israel and Saudi Arabia. Fierce fighting continued until 28 February when Iraq, whose military capability had by now been seriously harmed, agreed to a ceasefire.





## JASON MOMOA VISITS PROTESTERS BLOCKING NEW HAWAII TELESCOPE



**A**QUAMAN star Jason Momoa on Wednesday visited Native Hawaiian protesters blocking the construction of a giant telescope on Hawaii's tallest mountain.

The Native Hawaiian Hollywood actor wore green leaf lei around his neck and the crown of his head as he attended a ceremony at the protest site.

Honolulu television stations livestreamed dancers in jeans and windbreakers performing hula in chilly weather.

Momoa stooped low to present an offering

wrapped in green ti leaves. He said he was honored to be there, drawing cheers after saying, "We are not going anywhere."

Protesters have blocked the road to the summit for 17 days. Some Native Hawaiians believe Mauna Kea's summit is sacred. The summit also has the best conditions for astronomy in the Northern Hemisphere.

Astronomers haven't been able to view the skies with the existing telescopes for the past two weeks amid protests.

AP PHOTO



## MARIO LOPEZ WALKS BACK REMARKS ON KIDS AND GENDER IDENTITY

**M**ARIO Lopez apologized for telling conservative commentator Candace Owens that it's "dangerous" and "alarming" for parents to honor the wishes of young children who identify with a gender other than the one assigned at birth.

"The comments I made were ignorant and insensitive, and I now have a deeper understanding of how hurtful they were," the longtime "Extra" host said in a statement released by his publicist.

"I have been and always will be an ardent supporter

of the LGBTQ community, and I am going to use this opportunity to better educate myself. Moving forward I will be more informed and thoughtful," Lopez said.

He outraged many when he told Owens on her PragerU YouTube show that, like Owens, he is "blown away" when parents tolerate very young children who make gender determinations that early.

Lopez left "Extra" to be a host of "Access Hollywood." He's due to debut there in September.

## JURY TO FIND WHAT KATY PERRY OWES FOR HIT THEY SAY SHE STOLE

**J**URORS are set to hear closing arguments before deciding how much Katy Perry, her collaborators and her record label owe the writers of a Christian rap song over her hit "Dark Horse."

Lawyers for Perry and for the rapper, Marcus Gray, will make their final cases to jurors on Thursday and are likely to present wildly different numbers.

Gray's attorneys have emphasized the tens of

millions brought in by the song the album it's on. Perry's attorneys have emphasized the tens of millions in expenses used to make and market it.

The same jurors found on Monday that Perry and her five co-writers copied Gray's 2009 song "Joyful Noise" with 2013's "Dark Horse."

The trial has since been in a damages phase where attorneys argue how much Gray should get.

AP PHOTO



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## FIFA expands Women's World Cup

FIFA'S Council has unanimously approved expanding the Women's World Cup from 24 teams to 32 for 2023 and has reopened bidding to host the tournament but made no mention of changing prize money. FIFA said the decision was made remotely.

Nine national associations had expressed interest in hosting and were due to submit their formal bids by Oct. 4: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa and South Korea, which could bid jointly with North Korea

Under the new timetable, any national association has until December to make a bid. FIFA expects a bid evaluation report next April and a decision the following month.

FIFA's statement made no mention of prize money. The U.S. received \$4 million of a \$30 million prize pool for winning the World Cup



on July 7, a small percentage of the \$38 million from a \$400 million pool that France got for winning the 2018 men's World Cup. FIFA has increased prize money for the 2022 men's World Cup to

\$440 million and FIFA President Gianni Infantino said July 5 that he was proposing FIFA double the women's prize money to \$60 million for 2023.

After the U.S. won the

women's final in Lyon, France, fans in the stadium chanted "Equal Pay!"

Infantino said in a statement that "this is the time to keep the momentum going and take concrete steps to foster the growth of women's football" and "it means that, from now on, dozens more member associations will organize their women's football program knowing they have a realistic chance of qualifying."

"We have a duty to do the groundwork and strengthen women's football development infrastructure across all confederations," he said.

The Women's World Cup started with 12 teams in 1991, expanded to 16 in 1999 and 24 in 2015.

The men's World Cup was played with 13-16 teams from 1930-78, 24 from 1982-94 and has been contested with 32 since. It is due to expand to 48 in 2026, when the tournament is co-hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada.

Infantino also has proposed a Women's Club World Cup and creating a women's world league. FIFA is also doubling the funding being made available to women's soccer in the next four-year cycle to \$1 billion. AP

## Ronaldo, Messi, among nominees

FIVE-TIME winners Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi were among the 10 candidates for the FIFA best player award announced Wednesday. United States forward Megan Rapinoe is the favorite for the women's award.

Ronaldo and Messi were joined by three Liverpool players, Mohamed Salah, Virgil van Dijk and Sadio Mane. Liverpool won the Champions League title in June.

Also in the list were Ajax players Frenkie de Jong and Matthijs de Ligt, who have since joined Barcelona and Juventus, respectively, along with former Chelsea forward Eden Hazard, who has joined Real Madrid, Tottenham striker Harry Kane and Paris Saint-Germain striker Kylian Mbappe.

Luka Modric, who won the award last year after leading Croatia to the

World Cup final, was not on the list.

Rapinoe was in a list of 12 players that included teammates Alex Morgan, Rose Lavelle and Julie Ertz. Ada Hegerberg, a Norway forward who won the Ballon d'Or but skipped this year's World Cup, was also nominated.

Liverpool coach Jürgen Klopp was nominated for best coach along with Premier League rivals Pep Guardiola of Manchester City and Mauricio Pochettino of Tottenham.

Three finalists in each category - best male player, best female player, best coach in men's soccer and best coach in women's soccer - will be announced before the ceremony in Milan on Sept. 23.

The winners will be voted by national team coaches and captains, selected media and online fan voting.

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**OPINION**

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 Eric Sautede



**THE UGLY FOREIGNER**

It's a classic survival tactic: if anything goes wrong, blame it on the other(s) and not on yourself! The burden of responsibility all of a sudden becomes lighter and people's attention then focuses on a more distant horizon.

Back in 2014, the propaganda apparatus in China and in pro-Beijing newspapers in Hong Kong had compared the Hong Kong occupy movement with the early 2000s "color revolutions" that had spread in countries of the Balkans and the former Soviet Union as well as with the Arab Spring of the early 2010s to insist on the nefarious role played by foreign powers and diplomats in instigating these movements. The very same is now happening with the anti-extradition bill protests that have taken front stage in Hong Kong's political life for the past two months, with finger-pointing towards the outside world becoming ever more pressing and stern.

On the day following the first massive march organized on June 9 and gathering a million people in the streets of Hong Kong, the Global Times published an article entitled "Hong Kong's future won't be held hostage by opposition and its Western supporters", in which it emphasized that "some international forces [had] increasingly collaborated with the opposition in Hong Kong," pointing an accusatory finger towards several countries, more specifically the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. It also insisted on the fact that "Washington [had] been particularly active in meddling in Hong Kong affairs."

After two months of continuous mobilization against the bill, with demonstrations turning more violent at times and spreading across the whole SAR territory, the "blame-it-on-them" rhetoric has somehow evolved and become more threatening. In a way, this contrasts strikingly with the absolute stand-still between the government and the demonstrators: apart from the suspension of the bill announced on June 15 — a very partial answer to the main demand asking for a full withdrawal — there has been no further negotiating moves on the government's part, despite a quarter of the Hong Kong population taking to the streets on June 16. Since then the level of trust in the government has dwindled, with the police standing accused by the public at large — hence the mothers of demonstrators organizing sit-ins next to government headquarters — to resort to a disproportionate use of force and possibly collusion with triad-related groups. After only 24 months in office, Carrie Lam's ratings are as low as C.Y. Leung's after five years!

On July 29, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office under the State Council gave its first press conference since the handover in 1997 to condemn foreign "interference," call for the punishment of "radical protesters," while emphasizing the full support the central government was lending to the Hong Kong government in tackling the crisis. Just hours before the press conference, the People's Daily had published a commentary fully supporting the Hong Kong police actions, insisting that "Hong Kong [had] lost its normal way of life as a society governed by the rule of law, and fallen into the 'trap' of foreign forces who are determined to sow unrest in China in the name of 'democracy'" and repeating once more that the protests had been instigated by "hostile foreign forces" and the machinations of "traitors." A week before, a China foreign ministry spokeswoman had urged the US to "retract its black hand from Hong Kong" and on July 31, former Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa denounced "masterminds behind the storm," and that "interference from external forces [...] and various signs [were] pointing towards Taiwan and the US."

In an open and liberal environment, is the rhetoric of "foreign interference" really sustainable? And now that the matter has become political, can mere "livelihood" sweeteners be the answer? Isn't there a trump card for Beijing to play that would leverage a benevolent uncle standpoint? Only an internal-external intervention will be able to help peacefully solve the matter, especially now that we know it is almost exclusively self-inflicted.

**ORGANIZERS FINALLY CANCEL TROUBLED WOODSTOCK 50 FESTIVAL**

THE BUZZ

Woodstock 50 is officially canceled. Organizers announced Wednesday that the troubled festival that hit a series of setbacks in the last four months won't take place next month.

The three-day festival was originally scheduled for Aug. 16-18, but holdups included permit denials and the loss of a financial partner and a production company.

Last week Jay-Z, Dead & Company and John Fogerty announced that they wouldn't perform at the event after organizers said it was moving to Maryland from New York.

"We are saddened that a series of unforeseen setbacks has made it impossible to put on the festival we imagined with the great lineup we had booked and the social engagement we were anticipating," festival co-founder Michael Lang said in a statement Wednesday.

"We released all the talent so any involvement on their part would be voluntary. Due to conflicting radius issues in the DC area many acts were unable to participate and others passed for their own reasons."

**RUSSIAN MILITARY CALLED IN TO FIGHT SIBERIAN FOREST FIRES**

JIM HEINTZ, MOSCOW

THE Russian military has joined efforts to fight forest fires that have engulfed nearly 30,000 square kilometers (11,580 sq. miles) of territory in Siberia and the Russian Far East — an area the size of Belgium.

The move, which includes sending military transport planes and helicopters that can drop water on fires, came after an order from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Russian authorities have declared a state of emergency in five areas, including all of the Irkutsk and Krasnoyarsk regions, which lie north of Mongolia. Siberia's Krasnoyarsk region, which stretches all the way to the Kara Sea and the Arctic Ocean, can be seen blanketed in smoke by satellite photos from NASA and Europe's Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS).

No injuries or evacuations have been reported so far from the fires, many of which appear to have been started by lightning strikes in "dry thunderstorms" in which precipitation disperses before reaching the ground.

But the fires, which were being spread by strong winds, have produced heavy smoke has clogged the air in several cities, including Novosibirsk, Russia's third-largest city with a population of 1.6 million in southwestern Siberia.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev visited the city of Krasnoyarsk on Wednesday and gave a glum assessment of the forest fires.



Russia's vast stretches of forest have often been hit by widespread fires in the summer months. This year, however, the world experienced the warmest June on record.

"The situation is difficult. Many forests are burning, smog and smoke are observed over many populated areas. The prognosis at this moment is not happy," he said.

Late Wednesday, the White House issued a statement saying President Donald Trump had spoken with Putin earlier in the day and "expressed concern over the vast wildfires afflicting Siberia."

Russia's agency for aerial forest protection, Avialesookhrana, said about 2,700 firefighters were working to put out the blazes but it said about 28,000 square kilometers (10,800 sq. miles) of the fires were in difficult-to-reach areas. Those forest fires, it said, were not being fought because the costs and risks of doing so were higher than the potential damages the fires could cause to unpopulated areas.

"It's not for the first time that we're having this catastrophe in our country," said Mikhail Kreindlin, a Greenpeace activist in Moscow. "Why there is so much attention to it this year is because the smoke from the fires has reached the cities, with activists who [have] started to raise the issue."

Protests demanding action against the heavy smoke from the fires were planned for Thursday in Moscow outside the Ecology Ministry. Greenpeace also planned to submit a petition with more than 200,000 signatures to the Russian government urging a better response to wildfires and more preventive action. AP



**Australia** The government introduced legislation to Parliament yesterday that would give authorities more power to keep extremists behind bars after they have served prison sentences if they are still considered dangerous.

**Australia** launched a new USD55 million program to help Southeast Asian nations combat human trafficking.

**Somalia** President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed is giving up his United States citizenship, his office announced yesterday, a decision seen by some compatriots as an attempt to win support ahead of a run for a second term.



**Congo** The 1-year-old daughter of the man who died of Ebola in Congo's major city of Goma this week has the disease, the health ministry said yesterday, while Rwanda closed its border with Congo over the virus outbreak that now enters its second year.



**Puerto Rico**'s governing party was in full-blown crisis yesterday as the nominee to succeed departing Gov. Ricardo Rosselló headed to a disputed and uncertain confirmation vote in the U.S. territory's legislature.

**UK** Police say a 19-year-old British student fell to her death from a small airplane in Madagascar after opening a door in mid-air.

**GREENLAND SEES MASSIVE ICE MELT**

THE heat wave that smashed high temperature records in five European countries a week ago is now over Greenland, accelerating the melting of the island's ice sheet and causing massive ice loss in the Arctic.

Greenland, the world's largest island, is a semi-autonomous Danish ter-

ritory between the Atlantic and Arctic oceans that has 82% of its surface covered in ice.

The area of the Greenland ice sheet that is showing indications of melt has been growing daily, and hit a record 56.5% for this year on Wednesday, said Ruth Mottram, a climate scientist

with the Danish Meteorological Institute.

More than 10 billion tons (11 billion U.S. tons) of ice was lost to the oceans by surface melt on Wednesday alone, creating a net mass ice loss of some 197 billion tons (217 billion U.S. tons) from Greenland in July, she said.