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MGM CHINA SAYS IT IS NOT USING FACIAL RECOGNITION IN ITS CASINOS, AMID REPORTS THAT TWO OR THREE GAMING OPERATORS ARE STUDYING ITS USE P3

CHINA WANTS TOTAL BAN ON SOUTHEAST ASIA'S ONLINE GAMBLING P3

A UNIVERSITY OF MACAU STUDENT HAS DISCOVERED TWO EBOLA DRUG CANDIDATES IN WHAT IS BEING HAILED AS AN IMPORTANT BREAKTHROUGH P6



China At least 201 people have been killed and 63 are missing following flooding across China in July and August, according to government rescue services. The most recent deaths came in mountainous Sichuan province, where eight were killed and 23 missing. Earlier in August, 39 were killed and nine left missing by Typhoon Lekima.

China From Thailand to Kenya, trains run on tracks from steel mills in China's northeast, a rust-belt region that is trying to capitalize on a multibillion-dollar national initiative to build ports, railways and other projects abroad.
More on p10



China The foreign ministers of China, Japan and South Korea met in Beijing yesterday as they seek to encourage progress on North Korean denuclearization at a time of tense relations between Tokyo and Seoul over trade.
More on p13



Indonesia has deployed more than 1,000 security personnel to the restive province of West Papua amid spreading protests and violence, police said yesterday. Protests sparked by accusations that security forces had arrested and insulted Papuan students in East Java's Surabaya city turned on Monday.

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TAIPA LINE PREVIEW DROPS 6-PATAACA FARE HINT P4-5



BRIDGE SAID TO BRING 30% MORE SAME-DAY VISITORS P2

MISSION FOR SHENZHEN NOT QUITE TO SPITE HK P9 GREATER BAY

LICENSE FEE FOR CARS TRAVELLING TO HONG KONG TO DECREASE

Macau car owners who hold a one-year permit to drive into Hong Kong have been called to renew their licenses before September 4. Yesterday, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) stated that if owners do not renew their licenses, they will not be assigned to other people. This time, the DSAT will renew licenses for a period of three years at a cost of MOP1,000. From today, the DSAT will reduce new license fees, as well as renewal fees. Owners will be charged MOP1,000 for a new three-year license for a car travelling to Hong Kong.

WANZAI FERRY TERMINAL MAY OPEN AFTER JUNE 2020

The next Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, has claimed that ferries to Wanzai, Zhuhai, may open after June next year. The Inner Harbor Ferry Terminal, where ferries sailed to Wanzai, was closed at the beginning of 2016. The ferry terminal was closed mainly because of road works nearby, and because the government wanted to protect the surrounding roads from further deterioration. In Ho's opinion, if Wanzai offers ferries that sail straight to Cotai, transportation pressure across the Border Gate will largely be reduced.

FOURTH ZHUHAI WATER SUPPLY PIPELINE READY

A fourth water supply pipeline from Zhuhai to Macau has been examined by the Guangdong and Macau governments, and is expected to begin supplying Macau in the near future. Yesterday, the management company responsible for the project completed cleaning of the pipeline. The new water supply pipeline, which will form a circle around Macau's water supply system, is said to be able to meet Macau's future water demands. The fourth water supply channel was designed to have a daily capacity of 200,000 cubic meters. On a daily basis, Zhuhai's water supply to Macau will reach 700,000 cubic meters, spread across the four water supply channels.

DOUBLE-DIGIT VISITOR GROWTH STILL A SLOWDOWN FROM JUNE

DANIEL BEITLER

VISITOR arrivals rose 16.3% in year-on-year terms in July to reach 3.53 million, according to the latest data provided by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), which has attributed part of the growth to the impact of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

The remarkable double-digit growth represents a slowdown from the previous two months. Visitor arrivals in Macau surged by 18.9% year-on-year to about 3.1 million in June, following a 25.6% year-on-year advance in May.

Fueling concerns of overtourism among the public, the rapid rise in tourist arrivals has been concentrated in the same-day visitor segment. Same-day visitors surged nearly 30% year-on-year to 1.81 million, while growth in overnight visitors (1.71 million) trailed by 4.7%.

In view of an increase of 5.4 percentage points in the proportion of same-day visitors to 51.4%, the average length of stay of visitors shortened considerably, according to DSEC. The average length of visit for same-day visitors held steady at 0.2 days, or about four to five hours.

In July, visitors from mainland China increased by 18.5% year-on-year to nearly 2.57 million, with those traveling under the Individual Visit Scheme rising 10.9% to 1.17 million. Visitors from Hong Kong grew 16.4% to 634,400, whereas those from South Korea (55,300) and Taiwan (96,600) decreased by 6.9% and 5.1% respectively.

Meanwhile, visitors from the nine Pearl River Delta cities in the Greater Bay Area surged by 27.5%



year-on-year to 982,400, with those coming from Zhuhai (276,100) and Guangzhou (198,700) climbing 50.2% and 21.1% respectively.

According to the data, about 553,000 arrivals were registered via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge in July, slightly over 15% of the month's total. Earlier this month it was revealed that the Bridge accounted for just 7% of Macau's cross-border vehicular trips.

Visitor arrivals stood at 23.81 million across the first seven months of the year, almost exactly 20% more than in the same seven-month period a year earlier.

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

The rapid rise in the number of visitors has become a source of concern for the Macau public, especially as gaming receipts and other tourism spending are growing at a much slower pace or not at all.

Casino revenues during the

first half of the year contracted 0.5% compared with the equivalent period in 2018, according to the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau.

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

Tourism spending continued its decline in the second quarter, according to official data released yesterday. It fell more than 20% in per capita terms to MOP1,583, completing three consecutive quarters of decline.

Consumer prices hold 2.6% higher

CONSUMER prices in July were on aggregate 2.6% higher than a year earlier, according to the latest data provided by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), virtually unchanged from the 2.62% year-on-year growth seen in June. According to the data, the composi-

te consumer price index (CPI) reached 116.05 in July.

DSEC continues to attribute the growth in consumer prices to dearer charges for eating out, rising rentals and higher prices for motor cars, gasoline and fresh pork, among other goods.

In a statement issued yesterday, the statistics service said that the price indexes of education and transport also grew notably, rising by 5.81% and 5.09% year-on-year respectively. Meanwhile, the index for clothing and footwear dropped 1.25% year-on-year and that

for communication fell 2.45%.

In monthly terms, the composite CPI for July rose by 0.22%, due to higher charges for package tours, and increased airfares and gasoline prices, but was diminished by lower charges for telecommunications services

and adult clothing. The price index of food and non-alcoholic beverages increased by 0.47%, led by the rising prices of fresh pork and vegetables.

For the 12 months ending July 2019, the average composite CPI rose by 2.96% from the previous period, with notable growth in the price indexes of education (+5.75%) and transport (+5.3%).DB

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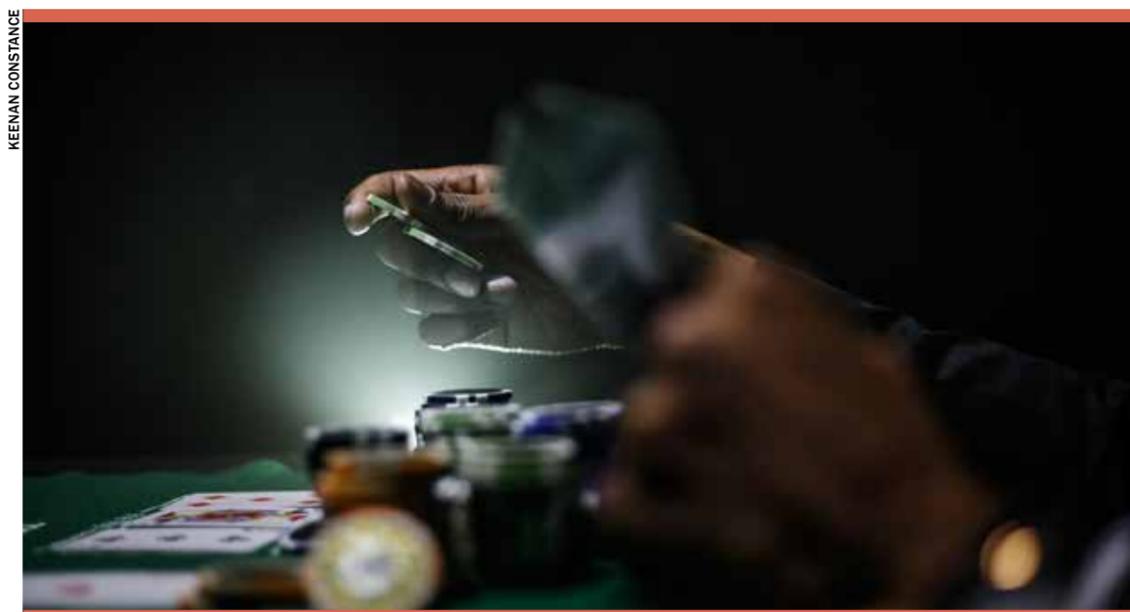
China wants total ban on online gambling in Southeast Asia

CLARISSA BATINO
& ANDREO CALONZO

CHINA wants Philippines to stop all forms of online gambling, as it continues cracking down on a practice it says causes illegal outflow of money.

While China appreciates the move to halt the issuance of new licenses, "we hope the Philippines will go further and ban all online gambling," China's foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said, according to the transcript of his Aug. 20 briefing posted on the website of its Philippine embassy.

The comments are the latest signal that China is mounting pressure on Southeast Asian nations in its effort to stamp out online gambling which it says causes hundreds of millions of yuan to illegally flow out of its economy. Online and phone betting has exploded in countries such as the Philippines and Cambodia over the last few years due to demand from gamblers in mainland China.



KEENAN CONSTANCE

The Philippine gaming regulator said on Monday that it won't halt existing online casinos but will stop accepting applications for new licenses at least until the end of the year to review concerns about the burgeoning sector. Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported on Sunday that Cambodia's Prime Mi-

nister Hun Sen has ordered a stop on new licenses for online gambling operations. Existing licenses won't be renewed upon expiry, said the report.

"We hope it will further strengthen law enforcement with China and jointly tackle criminal activities including online gambling and

cyber fraud," Geng said. This will help create "peace and stability in the region," he said and lauded Cambodia's steps to curb the practice.

The changes in Philippines' gambling policy will hurt its flourishing online casinos that target Chinese gamblers as well as hire

Chinese citizens, after President Rodrigo Duterte awarded more gaming licenses. Earlier this month, the Chinese embassy in Manila had urged the Philippines to stop its casinos from hiring Chinese citizens.

"We will have to ask the president on his policy on this," Philippines presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo told reporters yesterday when asked about China's request for a ban.

More than 50 Philippine offshore gaming operators have received licenses since 2016, and the industry employs about 138,000 workers, most of them from China. Revenue from the offshore gaming industry is projected to touch 9 billion pesos (\$172 million) this year, according to the Philippines gaming regulator.

The online casinos boom had spurred property prices and boosted consumption especially in and around Manila. The uncertainties surrounding the online gaming industry have now begun hurting property stocks, with the index tracking the performance of listed builders hitting its lowest level since March.

The online gambling centers quickly became popular since they allow wagers as low as 10 yuan (\$1.4) and have round-the-clock live streams. That makes them easily accessible to lower-income Chinese in rural areas, who may not have the means to go to Macau. **BLOOMBERG**

MGM says no facial recognition system installed in casinos

THE casinos of MGM Macau and MGM Cotai are not using facial recognition technology in their surveillance systems, according to CEO and Chief Executive Officer of MGM China, Grant Bowie, who said that installing such technology involved complicated data privacy issues.

Speaking to the press on the sidelines of the official opening ceremony of the MGM International Lion Dance Championship, Bowie shared his belief that the company's current monitoring system is sufficient to ensure the casino's operation remains normal and safe.

However, it pledged to comply with the government's guidelines for installing facial recognition system, should it choose to do so in future.

Last month, the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DIC) said that casino artificial intelligence facial recognition systems will only be used for security purposes, and not for tracking gambler's behavior as previously repor-



BLOOMBERG

ted by Bloomberg.

The regulator also previously confirmed that there are now two or three operators that are using facial recognition systems. It said that this could be one method to enforce Macau's city-wide casino entry ban for gaming staff at any of the six operators or their satellite affiliates.

However, the gaming bureau said that the use of facial recognition technology would

still need the government's approval before it is introduced inside specific venues.

Meanwhile, commenting on incoming Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, Bowie remarked, "we've spoken in the past but the candidate is always extremely busy spending a lot of time canvassing comments from the community. We look forward to working with him to continue to allow Macau to prosper."

The comments were made on the sidelines of the MGM International Lion Dance Championship. MGM announced that this year's championship will take place at the MGM Theater at MGM Cotai on November 23 and 24, gathering lion dance teams from all over the world to perform and compete with one another.

The two-day action-packed championship will also include the "Female Traditional Lion Dance Championship" with an international standard rating system and "Junior Lion Dance Performance Competition", which was launched just last year.

Further, a certificate presentation session was also held yesterday to congratulate the fresh graduates of the 5th Junior Lion Dance Training Program, which took place over the past seven weeks.

A total of 76 graduates aged between five and eight were awarded with certificates.

MGM recently organized an exchange visit to Guangzhou for 43 children of the "MGM Junior Lion Dance Continuous Training Program," aiming to enhance their knowledge and skills. **LV**

CROWN RESORTS WOES DEEPEN AS VIP BUSINESS SHRINKS

CROWN Resorts Ltd.'s high-roller gambling business continued to shrink, cementing the company's woes amid allegations that criminal gangs laundered money at its casinos.

Turnover from the VIP program tumbled 26% to AUD38 billion (\$26 billion) in the year ended June, Melbourne-based Crown said yesterday. The stock rose 0.1% in Sydney as earnings broadly matched estimates.

Weakness in Crown's VIP business was enough to drag down total group revenue, indicating the company's reliance on big-gambling overseas visitors in a sluggish Australian market.

The regulatory investigations into the media reports - that Crown used junket operators linked to drug traffickers to attract wealthy Chinese gamblers - risk compounding the current weakness in Crown's VIP business, reported Bloomberg.

That also bodes badly for Crown's planned luxury casino in Sydney, which is due to be completed in 2021 and will rely in large part on VIP gamblers.

Crown reiterated yesterday the media reports "unfairly sought to tarnish Crown's reputation." **BLOOMBERG**

Held back by bureaucracy, LRT Taipa Line is

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macau Light Rapid Transit (LRT) is almost ready to begin operation.

Months of testing have passed and, although they will continue for a few more months in order to ensure the service's quality and safety, the only hurdle that seems to be stalling the progress of the project is the creation of the LRT Company that will take over the project from the government's Transportation Infrastructure Office (GIT).

That acknowledgment was made yesterday by the Coordinator of the GIT, Ho Cheong Kei, during a media tour organized by the Office to the LRT operations site.

Yesterday's media tour included a visit to the Operations Coordination Center (CCO) located at the LRT Depot, as well as ride through the full length of the Taipa line.

Asked when the long-awaited LRT will finally open to public, Ho said, "the facilities and trains are basically ready and we are performing tests for some time now but, in order to open the LRT to public use we need to set up the LRT managing company."

Ho said that the bureaucratic process involved in the establishment of the company might take a few more months. The government is aiming to open the service to the public before the celebration of the Handover of Macau on December 20.

The creation of the "Macao Light Rapid Transit Corporation Ltd." was ordered by the Chief Executive (CE) on February 22 this year, following a series of nominations of public officials to represent the several governmental entities involved in the project up until April 4.

Another of the necessary steps was concluded three weeks ago when the LRT Transportation System Law was approved on its final reading at the Legislative Assembly.

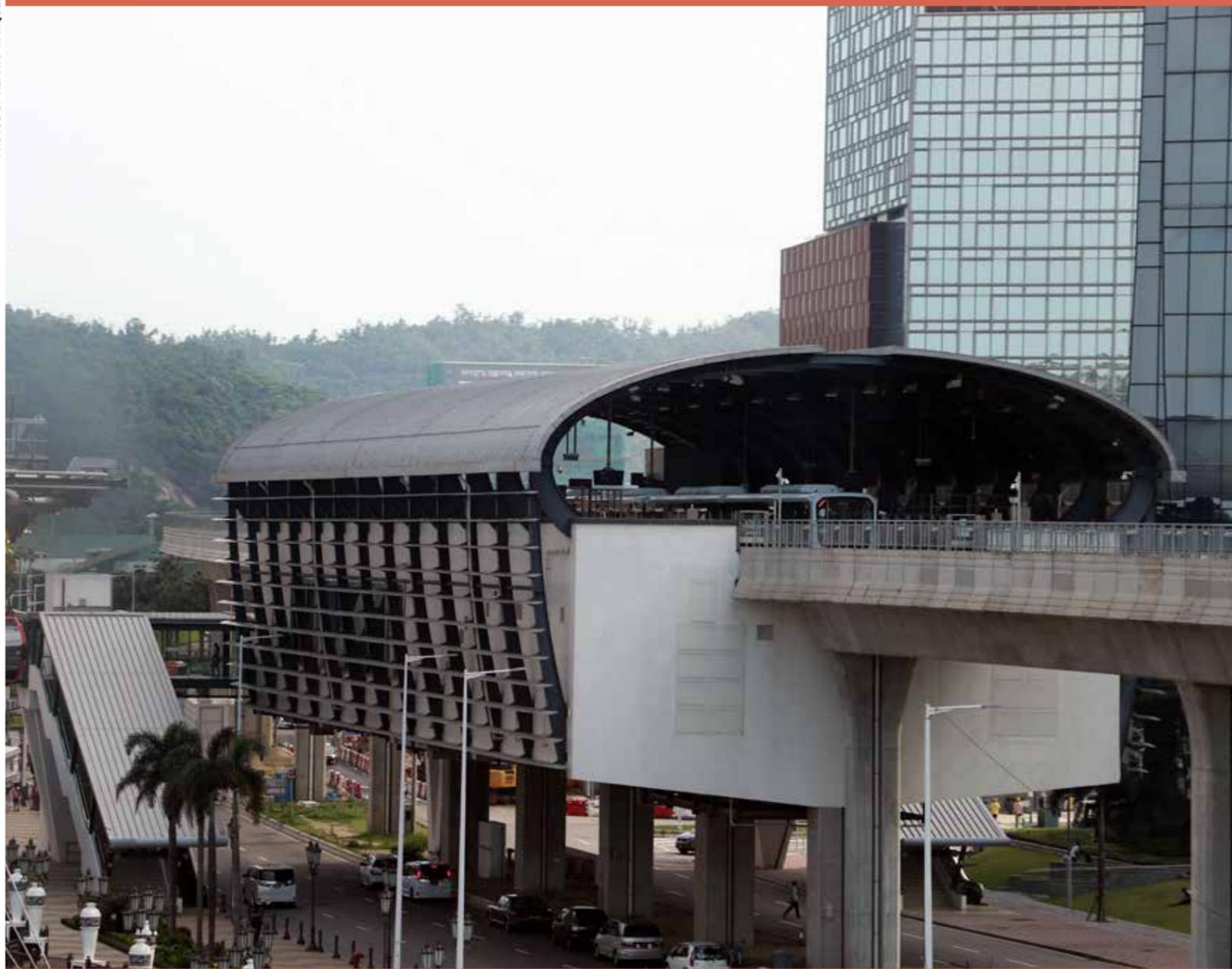
DOUBLE-CAPACITY TRAINS ONLY 'IF NEEDED'

The GIT Coordinator explained that the LRT is composed of two kinds of trains. There are regular ones, composed of two cars and with a maximum capacity of 200 passengers (100 per car) and the "double-capacity" trains, composed of four cars carrying a total of 400 passengers.

Ho said that by default the LRT Company will run the regular two-car trains, but according to "the needs, double-capacity trains can be deployed." The official recalled that for the time being the LRT will have at its disposal a total of 110 train cars.

According to information provided by the same official, a one-way journey connecting the ends of the line - from the Taipa Ferry Terminal

PHOTOS BY RENATO MARQUES



Station to Ocean Station - will take about 25 minutes.

The trains circulate the line at different speeds according to the conditions of each place, with its maximum speed reaching 80 kilometers per hour in between stations, while their approach the station platform will be managed at an average speed of 30 kilometers per hour.

The fastest section along the line is the part connecting the Macau Stadium to the terminal station of Ocean, passing through the Jockey Club station.

As for the rest of the line, "the area is small and so there is no space to have long straight sections where the top speed could be achieved," said Ho, reaffirming that the purpose of the LRT is the cut travel time and increase comfort and accessibilities to both visitors and residents.

'STANDARD RULES' ADOPTED FOR TYPHOONS

The LRT will follow the same, standardized rules in effect for other public transport systems (such as the buses) in the event of the occurrence of a powerful typhoon, said a project manager from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Martin Leung. The Japanese firm is the system's

manufacturer.

"We will keep operating during typhoon signal 3 [or lower], but we will suspend the operation of the LRT when typhoon signal 8 [or higher] is hoisted," said Leung.

The company representative said that this was to prevent the possibility of "objects falling on the LRT line," more than safety concerns regarding the strong wind and heavy rain weather conditions, which he said the trains and system can resist.

MACAU PASS TO BE ADDRESSED LATER

As for the introduction of the "Macau Pass system" as a means of paying for transport on the LRT, the GIT Coordinator said that, as previously mentioned by the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, there are contracts signed between the government and the Mitsubishi company that did not include such an option when they were drawn up in 2011.

Ho noted that it is the intent of the GIT to address the "bigger problems first," noting that the inclusion of the Macau Pass payment system is not considered one of these major problems. Ho also stressed

that "the future LRT Company would be able to address those other problems," such as the inclusion of Macau Pass.

IMPORTANT ISSUES YET UNSOLVED

Questioned on the estimated number of passengers, the frequency of the trains, the working hours of the LRT, as well as the ticket fares and when it will open to the public, the GIT official said he was not in a position to provide any answers.

These aspects would fall on the

"to-do list" of the future LRT Company.

"It is very hard to predict [the number of passengers] at this time," admitted Ho. "We will see how the operations will start and the receptiveness from the public. We can adjust according to the needs."

Although the opening date appears to be a well-kept secret, Ho admitted that it probably "needs to be before December 20."

"But all I can say [for sure] is that it will start before the end of this year."

LRT TICKET MIGHT COST 6 PATACAS PER TRIP

ALTHOUGH the government has not been able to provide any clear indication on the matter of fares, yesterday, while the media began to test the system, the Times observed that 6 patacas was deducted from an LRT pass used to test the system.

This is perhaps an indication that a journey on the LRT will have a provisional,

fixed fare price of MOP6 per journey on the Taipa line.

The fare price would be in line with what several government officials have hinted at in the past.

Although the price has not been confirmed and so it is liable to be adjusted before it is officially announced, the Times understands that for the time being, the amount is being considered. **RM**

ready to open by December

KEY DATA

Number of stations

11

Journey time

25m

Passengers per car

100

Maximum train speed

80km/h

Tentative ticket fare

mop6

Tentative opening

Dec 20



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News at hand



"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

MACAO MARATHON RETURNS DECEMBER WITH NEW PRIZES

ANTHONY LAM

THE Galaxy Entertainment Macao International Marathon is returning on December 1 for its 38th edition. A press conference was held yesterday to announce the event, as well as new prizes this year to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the handover.

Similar to previous years, the race is categorized into Full Marathon, Half Marathon and Mini Marathon, the latter of which is 5 kilometers in length. Registration will start on August 31 for the first two categories, while that for the Mini Marathon will start a day later.

The registration fee varies for each category and type of registrant. It ranges from MOP70 to MOP400. There are two ways in which registration can be done, namely on-site registration and online registration.

Registrants aiming to conduct on-site registration should visit the Macau Forum between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. before September 2. On or after which, the registration location will be changed to the Macau Stadium.

This year, quotas allotted to each category are 1,600, 4,600 and 5,800



ANTHONY LAM

Sports Bureau Director, Pun Weng Kun

respectively for Full Marathon, Half Marathon and Mini Marathon.

If they make it into the top five, local residents participating in the Full Marathon will be awarded cash prizes ranging from MOP2,000 to MOP15,000. For the Half Marathon, the top three local residents to finish will be awarded prizes worth between MOP2,000 and MOP4,000.

Galaxy Entertainment Group is renewing their title sponsorship for the event. The casino operator will title sponsor the event from this year to 2021, concluding three consecutive years. It has been a sponsor at the event 18 years ago.

This year, the "GEG Handover Cup" will be introduced to reward first three local residents finishing the Full Marathon and the Half Marathon, besides the aforementioned cash prizes.

The company will also hold a week-long carnival at their Broadway Macau property, featuring themed games, performances and food and beverage elements.

When asked about voluntary enthusiasts offering supplies to runners last year, Sports Bureau Director, Pun Weng Kun, reminded the general public that it may be against the match regulations and the authority of the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races to provide supplies to runners along the road, as the organizer has no way to confirm their contents and ingredients.

Pun recommended members of the public show their support by cheering along the road instead.

EBOLA DRUG CANDIDATES DISCOVERED BY UM STUDENT

TWO Ebola virus drug candidates discovered by University of Macau (UM) student Faraz Mohammadali Shaikh have been validated by the University of Oxford in the U.K.

Shaikh, a PhD student from the Faculty of Science and Technology at the UM, recently discovered two Ebola virus drug candidates. The discovery has been validated by collaborators from the University of Oxford through biological experiments, according to a statement from the UM.

Shaikh was awarded the Carl Storm International Diversity Fellowship, which sponsored him to attend the 2019 Computer-Aided Drug Design Gordon Research Seminar (GRS) and the 2019 Computer-Aided Drug Design Gordon Research Conference (GRC) in the United States to present his findings, in order

to help the medical industry develop more anti-Ebola drugs.

The research study was conducted by Shaikh under the guidance of Assistant Professor Shirley Siu Weng In from the UM. Using hierarchical molecular docking techniques, Faraz computationally screened a traditional Chinese medicine-derived library of nearly 2.5 million compounds against the Ebola glycoprotein, from which he identified eight candidates with potential inhibitory effects on Ebola infectious activities.

Biological experiments were carried out later by collaborators from the University of Oxford, and eventually, two compounds were validated to show strong activity against viral entry. The groundbreaking discovery has been published in the Journal of Medicinal Chemistry.

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BODY FOUND IN NAM VAN LAKE



THE body of a woman was discovered in Nam Van Lake on Monday evening by the Fire Services Bureau and subsequently reported to the Judiciary Police (PJ).

The body was initially spotted ashore near the Nam Van Lake Aquatic Activity Centre, along Av. Panoramica do Lago Nam Van.

Judging by images taken by a passersby, the scene was in the proximity of the first protruding triangle along the bank, to the north of the Aquatic Centre office.

When PJ inspectors arrived at the scene, the

body had been moved to dry land by the firefighters.

As per their preliminary inspection, there was no sign of injury on the body that could cause suspicion, according to the PJ. The bureau also disclosed the fact that no traces of personal property or identification document could be found.

The deceased was aged between 20 and 30 years old, according to the police report.

The case has been transferred to the police investigation unit for follow-up. Further autopsy will be needed to determine the cause of death. **AL**

GARBAGE TRUCK STRIKES OVER 30 VEHICLES

A Garbage collection truck from CSR Macau-Companhia de Sistemas de Resíduos, Limitada damaged over 30 other vehicles parked on Estrada do Cemiterio during the early hours of August 20.

Although the reasons for the traffic accident are yet to be explained, the truck is understood to have traveled backward down the one-way street hitting first the sidewalk fence in front of Cemiterio de São Miguel Arcaño and then striking a van that belongs to the

Municipal Affairs Bureau, and finally a group of motorcycles parked further down the street.

According to a police officer from Public Security Police Force – Transit Department, the accident occurred at about 3:35 a.m. and the number of vehicles involved exceeds 30, mostly motorcycles. Approximately two months ago and at around the same hour, a truck from the same company crashed a few meters away from this location into an old cafeteria on Avenida de Sidónio Pais.

RENATO MARQUES



TYPHOON BAILU EXPECTED TO HIT TAIWAN THIS WEEKEND



ACCORDING to a forecast by the Japan Meteorological Agency, tropical cyclone Bailu, which is currently located east of the Philippines, may make landfall over Taiwan this coming weekend. Previously, the typhoon looked set to move into the South China Sea, however that forecast had changed by last night.

The Central Weather Bureau of Taiwan made a similar forecast. It reported that as of yesterday afternoon, typhoon Bailu was moving northward from the east coast

of the Philippines at a speed of 16 km/h. The sustained wind speed near the center of the storm was 64 km/h, with gusts reaching 90 km/h.

A forecast by website windy.com predicts the typhoon to make landfall in Taiwan on Saturday, at a maximum sustained wind speed of about 70 km/h.

Macau may experience hot weather this weekend. The temperature may reach 35 degree Celsius. Sufficient water intake is recommended to avoid heatstroke. **AL**

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JAPAN 'DEEPLY CONCERNED' ABOUT ONGOING UNREST

Japan's top diplomat has told his Chinese counterpart that Japan is "deeply concerned" about the continuing protests in Hong Kong. Foreign Minister Taro Kono said Tuesday that he told Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that Japan hopes the situation will calm down soon and be resolved peacefully through dialogue. The two met in Beijing ahead of a three-way meeting with the South Korean foreign minister (more on p13). Kono said he also told Wang that it is important that Hong Kong stay free and open and continue its prosperity under the "one country, two systems" framework.

PROTESTERS MARK BRUTAL MOB ATTACK WITH SIT-IN

Hundreds of Hong Kong protesters have held a sit-in at a suburban train station to mark a month since a violent attack there by masked assailants on supporters of the anti-government movement. The protesters, many wearing black, flooded into Yuen Long station last night to commemorate the July 21 rampage by a group of men suspected of organized crime links. They also wanted to draw attention to what they say is the lack of progress by police in investigating the attack, which left both protesters and passers-by injured. The protesters observed a moment of silence, then covered their right eyes, a reference to a woman who reportedly suffered a severe eye injury from a police projectile.

CITIZENS RALLY FOR DETAINED UK CONSULATE WORKER

Hong Kong protesters rallied for the release of a U.K. consulate worker whose family said was detained during a recent visit to mainland China, as near-daily demonstrations continue in the financial hub (more on p12). The "Save Simon Cheng" event was held last night at the U.K. Consulate General in central Hong Kong. Cheng, 28, was revealed to be missing Tuesday after failing to return from an Aug. 8 meeting in the border city of Shenzhen and hasn't contacted his family since. Hong Kong police said a day earlier only that a missing person investigation was underway and that they were in close touch with Chinese authorities.

CHINA SEEKS TO SHAPE HONG KONG NARRATIVE WITH LETTER TO MEDIA

EPPENG CHEONG



CHINA is looking to reshape the global narrative over Hong Kong as months of street protests dominate news agendas around the world.

In a letter sent to senior editors at international media outlets including the Wall Street Journal, Reuters, Bloomberg and Agence France-Presse, the Chinese Foreign Ministry outlined its account of the protests in the former British colony.

The letter and supporting documents clock in at a hefty 43 pages and include a timeline of what President Xi Jinping's government describes as "violent activities that are aimed to trample the rule of law" and have caused "mayhem in Hong Kong." It cites news articles, largely from Chinese state media, detailing links between "foreign forces" and protesters.

The rhetoric is in line with China's previous efforts to highlight the city's chaos, portray

the protesters as rioters and blame the "black hand" of the U.S. for fomenting violence amid clashes between demonstrators and police. Protests began in June in opposition to proposed legislation easing extraditions from the Asian financial hub to mainland China and have since widened into a broader movement to secure democratic freedoms promised to the city after the handover from Britain in 1997.

China's government is under attack globally on a host of issues, from the Trump administration's charges of technology theft and currency manipulation to criticism at the United Nations of its crackdown on ethnic Muslim Uighurs. The letter comes ahead of the politically sensitive Oct. 1 anniversary of 70 years of rule by the Communist Party, which took power pledging to end foreign influence over Chinese territory.

In each of these cases the government has sought to finess the international narrative. In June, it countered the U.S. account of how trade talks broke down between the two countries with a White Paper blaming the U.S. for its "beggar-thy-neighbor unilateralism." It's also released reports defending its policies in Xinjiang and began hosting foreign journalists on carefully choreographed tours of detention camps holding Uighurs in the far western region.

In continuing to allege foreign interference in Hong Kong, the Foreign Ministry's letter details meetings of activists across the world in venues including the Oslo Freedom Forum. It also cites media reports on meetings between U.S. consulate officials and Hong Kong opposition leaders, and links the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy to Hong Kong

activists.

The letter outlines police responses to protester violence across the U.S., U.K. and France and quotes foreign politicians who have called for calm in the city. Among those cited are Singapore's Minister for Law and Home Affairs, K Shanmugam, and former British parliamentarian George Galloway, who's known for his staunch opposition to the Iraq war.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang on Tuesday linked Beijing's charge of foreign meddling in Hong Kong with similar accusations raised by Russia over U.S. interference in protests there.

"We strongly agree with Russia's stance" on "illegal protests," Geng told reporters in Beijing. He said China had "shared interests" with Moscow on "upholding national sovereignty and social stability." **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

AD



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

China's alleged plans to make Shenzhen better than HK not quite what they seem

JULIE ZHU

THE Chinese government has set up additional goals for making its pride city of Shenzhen a world-leading metropolis within the next five years.

In a document issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on August 9, the government outlined six general goals and three specific ones for making Shenzhen a pilot area of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The release of this document has been interpreted by some media outlets as China's warning to Hong Kong, amid the ongoing protests in the city. The outlets suggest that the timing of the plan's release is a signal from China that the central government is willing to siphon benefits away from Hong Kong and toward other municipalities within the Greater Bay Area, should the HKSAR continue to step out of line.

However, the announcement of the plan during the Hong Kong protest period may just be a coincidence.

The goal of making Shenzhen a "pilot area for socialism with Chinese characteristics" was first proposed in May 2017 by the Shenzhen Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC). In 2018, the Shenzhen Municipal Committee of the CPC outlined a plan for making Shenzhen a "pilot area" from 2018 to 2035. The document was submitted to the central government for approval.



JOSEPH CHAN

In the second half of 2018, after the Chinese central government reviewed the original draft, the wording was changed to "exemplary zone of pilot area of socialism with Chinese characteristics."

In the original draft, it was stated that by 2020, "Shenzhen will basically be built into a modern, international and innovative city, and a high-quality, comprehensive and well-off society."

In the latest version of the plan, released on Sunday, the central government outlines a roadmap for the city's development over the next three decades.

By 2025, the government wants Shenzhen to become one of the world's leading cities in terms of

economic strength and quality of development. Its research and development output, industrial innovation capacity, quality of public services and ecological environment are expected to become first-class in the world, according to the document.

By 2035, it is hoped that Shenzhen will become a national model of high-quality development, and a hub of innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity with international influence.

By the mid-21st century, China wants Shenzhen to become one of the top metropolises in the world, as well as a global trendsetter with outstanding competitiveness, innovative capacity and influence.

"High quality development; pi-

lot area of the city of rule of law; model of urban civilization; role model of livelihood and happiness; [and] pioneer of sustainable development" are the six general goals listed in the document.

Regarding Macau and Hong Kong, the plan is proposing to "continuously improve the level of openness of Shenzhen to Macau and Hong Kong, support Shenzhen in building a big data center in the Greater Bay Area, vigorously promote the humanistic spirit in Greater Bay, encourage Shenzhen to co-organize various forms of cultural and artistic activities with Hong Kong and Macau, constantly enhance the sense of identity and cohesiveness of Hong Kong and Macau com-

patriots, strengthen the cooperation of digital creative industries in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau, and use Hong Kong and Macau's exhibition sources and exhibition industry advantages to organize large-scale cultural exhibitions."

All of the abovementioned goals are hoped to be achieved through the "enhanced CPC's leadership," according to the document.

On Weibo, both the People's Daily and CCTV propagandized the general and vague plan as a threat to Hong Kong, despite the fact that Shenzhen only has one year left to achieve its original 2020 goal of becoming a first-class world city.

HONG KONG

Third pilot leaves Cathay amid tumult tied to protests

A third pilot left Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. amid Hong Kong's anti-Beijing protests, with the departure related to comments he made about a rally at the city's airport last month.

The pilot is no longer with Cathay, a spokeswoman for the Hong Kong-based airline said yesterday, without elaborating or disclosing whether he resigned or was fired. The pilot made comments about the protest to passengers on a flight to the city from Tokyo, Hong Kong Economic Journal said, without saying where it got the information.

Last week, Cathay said it



BLOOMBERG

fired two pilots in relation to the protests.

Cathay also said yesterday that it expects "significant impact" on its revenue from August and beyond as

travel demand gets affected by the months-long protests in Hong Kong.

Both business and leisure travel into Hong Kong has "weakened substantially"

and traffic from Hong Kong has started to soften, especially on short-haul routes to such countries as China and South Korea, Cathay Chief Customer Officer Ronald Lam said in an emailed statement yesterday. Demand on China routes fell 2.8% in July, the biggest decline since February.

Cathay has been going through a volatile month that led to the naming of a new chief executive officer Friday, a week after China imposed a swathe of demands on the airline for its workers' participation in the protests. Chinese state-owned firms have also

started boycotting the airline, raising further concerns that the demonstrations in Hong Kong could undermine the company's efforts to turnaround its business.

Overall traffic, measured by revenue earned per kilometer, rose 6.7% in July, Cathay said. The airline filled 86.1% of its seats last month, compared with 86.7% in the same month last year.

Cathay said on Aug. 7 that inbound traffic to Hong Kong fell in July due to the protests and forwarding bookings declined by a "double digit" percentage.

Earlier this month, China's civil aviation authori-

ties barred Cathay staff who took part in or supported Hong Kong's protests from flying to the mainland and demanded Cathay provide a plan for improving flight safety and security. On Thursday, the regulator said the carrier had complied with its demands.

Most of Cathay's 32,800 workers are based in Hong Kong and its hub is the airport that had become a key site for the protesters. Last week, the Hong Kong airport was shut down as demonstrators occupied key buildings, forcing Cathay to cancel hundreds of flights.

DB/BLOOMBERG

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

RUST-BELT CHINA LOOKS ABROAD AS ECONOMY SLOWS, TARIFFS BITE

FROM Thailand to Kenya, trains run on tracks from steel mills in China's northeast, a rust-belt region that is trying to capitalize on a multibillion-dollar national initiative to build ports, railways and other projects abroad.

Announced in 2012, the Belt and Road Initiative is helping to boost demand from developing countries at a time when China's economy is slowing and exporters face U.S. tariff hikes in a war over trade and technology.

It calls for building railways, power plants and other infrastructure across an arc of more than 60 countries from the South Pacific through Asia to Europe and Africa. Estimates of the total cost of planned projects run as high as \$6 trillion, though it's unclear if all will be built.

Ansteel, in Liaoning province, has won bids to supply steel for railways in Thailand and Kenya. In Pakistan, the company has delivered 8,000 tons of track for the \$1.6 billion Orange Line of the Lahore Metro.

"Where the Belt and Road construction goes, our railway tracks will follow," said Wang Jun, manager of Ansteel's Bayuquan production base in Yingkou.

State-owned Ansteel is among dozens of suppliers of steel, industrial equipment and other goods in the region that are pinning their export hopes on Chinese building projects.

Liaoning was left behind as market-style economic reforms transformed China's east coast and southeast into the world's factory.

Most Belt and Road projects are financed by Chinese bank loans and built by Chinese contractors using technology, steel and other materials from China.

AP PHOTO



The government releases no information on the number of projects or the scale of investment. Less than \$200 billion had been spent through the end of 2018, according to Derek Scissors at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

Liaoning's exports to Belt and Road countries rose 20.3% in the first quarter of 2019 from a year earlier, according to the provincial Commerce Department.

Sales to Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates doubled, said the department's deputy director, He Rui.

President Donald Trump's tariff hikes have dented Liaoning's exports, but the United States accounts for only 10% of its foreign sales of car parts, refined oil and farm goods, said He.

Ansteel built the Bayuquan base to sell to Southeast Asia, Japan and South Korea, according to Wang.

Many host governments want more building materials to come from local suppliers, but Belt and Road still is an export opportunity for Chinese suppliers of high-speed rail, power plant and other technology.

Dalian Huarui Heavy Industry supplied equipment for the \$3.3 billion Hassyan coal-fired power station in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Huarui has contracts in 15 Belt and Road countries, including Bangladesh and Pakistan, said its vice president, Wei Xufeng. Wei said those account for 60% of its exports and 20% of total revenue.

Local leaders are promoting

Dalian in Liaoning, the northeast's busiest port, as a Belt and Road hub to connect shippers with East Asia and Europe.

Plans call for opening six railway routes and more than 100 sea routes, according to Xia Ting, manager of Dalian Container Development of Liaoning Port Group.

Trains on one of six routes that link Dalian with Russia carry Samsung electronic products and components made by other washing machine and television manufacturers. In 2017, the line carried a total of 4,500 containers of goods worth \$270 million.

"In the future, we aim to sell more with high added value," said Xia. "We think these are suitable for China-Europe cargo trains."

The port can move Japanese

and South Korean autos to Kazakhstan or other Central Asian countries by train, said Ding Hao, manager of Dalian Car Wharf.

"Belt and Road will bring us significant benefits, but we need some time to see it," said Ding.

Still, Belt and Road faces hurdles that might trip up hopes for boosting Chinese exports.

Governments including Thailand, Tanzania, Sri Lanka and Nepal have scaled back or renegotiated projects they said were too costly or gave too little work to local contractors.

Ansteel's experiences reflect the potential volatility of exports based on the ebb and flow of Chinese-led construction projects. It reported 2018 exports of 5.8 billion RMB (\$840 million), or about 5.5% of its total revenue, down by 10% from 2017.

Developing countries need industrial equipment but cannot replace U.S. demand for consumer goods, said economist Zhu Zhenxin at the Rushi Financial Institute in Beijing.

The northeast also is targeted in a multi-year government effort to shrink the bloated state-owned steel industry in hopes of making producers more efficient and profitable.

Liaoning closed 18 steel mills and eliminated 6 million tons of production capacity in 2016.

Policies aimed at reviving the northeast were unveiled by Beijing in 2003, but the region is struggling with pollution and an aging population.

In 2016, Liaoning's economy shrank by 2.5%. Its output was less than one-third that of Guangdong province, the manufacturing powerhouse that abuts Hong Kong.

The total population of Liaoning and the two other provinces in China's northeast — Jilin and Heilongjiang — declined by 380,000 people last year as migrants left for other regions in search of work. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Experience Portugal's flavors with Chiado restaurant's new menu



Michelin-starred celebrity chef Henrique Sá Pessoa will present a new menu at Sands Cotai Central's Chiado restaurant from August 29 to September 1, 2019.

The five-course menu will feature signature dishes from Henrique's Michelin two-star restaurant Alma in Lisbon.

Diners can experience "cured cod with

gazpacho and pickled cucumber; roasted octopus and miso romesco with baby asparagus; steamed seabass with green peas, chorizo and noisette hollandaise; carabineiro red prawn rice with herbs; and berries, coconut sorbet and pistachio cream in a merengue shell," the restaurant said yesterday in a press release.

Chiado was developed in partnership with celebrity chef and Portuguese cuisine ambassador chef Henrique. It will offer sharing plates and a full à la carte menu.

Melco introduces 'In Your Shoes' program



Melco Resorts & Entertainment Limited has launched the "In Your Shoes" program to allow the management team to experience a day in the life of their frontline

colleagues, in order to facilitate and enhance communication, and deliver better service quality.

To date, more than 70 team members have taken part in the

program, with five "In Your Shoes" sessions being held across Melco properties.

After experiencing the life of a housekeeping attendant, David Sisk, property president of City of Dreams Macau, said, "with more than 8,000 people working at City of Dreams Macau, I am always looking for ways to gain their perspectives and ideas to improve what we do and how we do it."

"This project is a wonderful opportunity offering just that. It was insightful to get to understand in greater depth the operational ins and outs of the housekeeping team, to see the obstacles they are faced with daily, and the teamwork and efforts required to overcome these."

TARIFF WAR

Beijing appeals to US to 'meet halfway' on trade



BEIJING appealed to Washington yesterday to "meet China halfway" and end a tariff war after President Donald Trump said Americans might need to endure economic pain to achieve longer-term benefits.

A foreign ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang, expressed hope Washington can "get along with

us" and restore "mutually beneficial" trade.

The United States is pressing China to narrow its trade surplus and roll back plans for government-led development of global competitors in robotics and other technologies. Beijing's trading partners say those plans violate its market-opening commitments. Some American officials worry

they might erode U.S. industrial leadership.

Negotiations are deadlocked over how to enforce a deal. Beijing says punitive tariffs imposed by Trump on Chinese products must be lifted as soon as an agreement takes effect. Washington wants to keep some to ensure Beijing carries out any promises it makes.

Talks last month in Shanghai ended with no sign of progress. More talks are scheduled in Washington next month.

"We hope the United States will meet China halfway," said Geng. He expressed hope they can "work out a resolution that is acceptable to both sides on the basis of mutual respect and equal treatment."

China has offered to narrow its trade surplus by purchasing more soybeans and other U.S. exports but is resisting pressure to discard its industry development plans.

Earlier, Trump responded to complaints about the impact on the United States by telling reporters "somebody had to take China on."

Trump said the question of whether the United States might be pushed into a recession was irrelevant.

"Whether it's good or bad short term is irrelevant," he said. "We have to solve the problem with China."

Trump said the United States is "very far from a recession" but that he is considering tax changes to spur economic growth.

The United States has imposed 25% tariffs on \$250 billion of Chinese products. Beijing retaliated with its own penalties on \$110 billion of goods from the United States. AP

CHINA SAYS IT WILL SANCTION US FIRMS OVER TAIWAN WARPLANES

CHINA says it will impose sanctions on U.S. companies involved in plans for an \$8 billion sale of F-16 fighters to Taiwan.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang warned yesterday that the U.S. should "immediately back away" from the arms sale proposal and end its military interactions with Taiwan.

The Trump administration informed Congress last week that it plans to sell the warplanes despite repeated warnings from China over what it perceives as interference in its internal affairs.

Taiwan is a democratically governed island that broke away from the Communist Party-ruled mainland amid civil war in 1949. China maintains that Taiwan is part of its territory.

Geng did not elaborate on any specific measures planned in response to the arms sale. AP

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BEIJING SAYS BRITISH CONSULATE STAFFER DETAINED 15 DAYS

KELVIN CHAN, HONG KONG

CHINA said yesterday a staffer at the British consulate in Hong Kong has been given 15 days of administrative detention in the city of Shenzhen for violating regulations on public order.

The case has stoked fears among Hong Kong residents that Beijing is extending its judicial reach to Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory and former British colony.

"The relevant employee is a

Hong Kong resident, not a British citizen," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a daily briefing. "In other words, he is Chinese. This is purely the internal affairs of China."

Geng said the man violated regulations on "Punishments in Public Order and Security Administration," but gave no further details, adding that his case is "not a diplomatic issue."

About two dozen people gathered yesterday outside the British consulate in Hong Kong to de-

mand the U.K. government step up efforts to secure the release of Simon Cheng Man-kit, a trade and investment officer at the consulate.

"Save Simon now!" the crowd chanted in front of a wall of missing person posters with pictures of Cheng.

Max Chung, the event's organizer and an acquaintance of Cheng's, said Cheng traveled to the neighboring mainland city of Shenzhen on a mainland travel permit for Hong Kong and Macao

residents. He holds a British National Overseas passport, according to Chung. The travel document is issued by the U.K. to Hong Kong permanent residents.

Public order and security infractions are generally minor — for instance, fighting on the street — and result in administrative rather than criminal punishments. The maximum penalty for such transgressions is 15 days in detention.

The British foreign ministry has said it is "extremely concerned"

about its staff member. Local media said he attended a business event in Shenzhen on Aug. 8 but never returned to neighboring Hong Kong despite plans to do so the same day.

The seizure of consular staff of any status or rank is highly unusual. Despite Beijing's declaration of a "golden era" in Sino-British ties, Sino-British relations have grown tense in recent months amid pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, a former British colony.

"Regarding the series of words and deeds by the British side recently on Hong Kong-related issues, we have repeatedly lodged solemn complaints with the U.K.," Geng said, adding that China urges the U.K. to "stop meddling in Hong Kong affairs."

Chung and other friends of Cheng said they believe he was detained at the high-speed railway station in West Kowloon, part of Hong Kong. The station stirred controversy ahead of its opening last September because passengers go through Chinese immigration and customs inside it.

Mainland law applies in the customs area, sparking concerns among Hong Kongers over the ability of mainland authorities to enforce Chinese law on Hong Kong soil. Some said this is a breach of the "one country, two systems" framework, which allows Hong Kong to largely run its own affairs until 2047.

Hong Kong Senior Police Superintendent Kong Wing-cheung said Tuesday that Hong Kong law enforcement agencies were not notified about the case by mainland Chinese authorities under a mutual notification arrangement set up for such cases. AP

Chinese woman accused of Mar-a-Lago trespass angers judge

TERRY SPENCER, FORT LAUDERDALE (FLA.)

A Chinese woman accused of trespassing at President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago club and lying to Secret Service agents is frustrating the federal judge hearing her case as she ignores his questions and leaves him bewildered with her answers.

The woman, 33-year-old Yujing Zhang, is acting as her own attorney and faces up to six years in prison if convicted at her trial set to start in two weeks. But for the second straight pretrial hearing, U.S. District Judge Roy Altman accused Zhang yesterday [Macau time] of feigning ignorance and pleaded with her to work with her public defenders,

whom she fired in May without explanation. He also ruled she will be tried by a jury after she refused to respond to a prosecution suggestion that Altman decide whether she is guilty.

"I know full well that you understand what I am saying to you both in English and in Mandarin," Altman told her, alluding to the translator who whispered to her throughout the 20-minute hearing. "I know full well you are trying to play games with the court."

Prosecutors say Zhang falsely told a Secret Service agent she was there to swim and a clerk that she was there for a United Nations friendship dinner that she knew was canceled. Prosecutors say Zhang was carrying a computer, cell-

phones and other electronics, but isn't charged with espionage.

Altman scheduled this hearing a week ago after prosecutors made their suggestion for a non-jury trial. Last week's hearing did not go well, with Altman growing frustrated by Zhang's lack of cooperation. This time didn't go any better.

As Zhang awaited her appearance before Altman, she sat shackled in a chair with her head down against the armrest, her eyes closed. At times, she appeared to be asleep.

When Zhang's turn came, Altman asked her if she wanted a jury trial. After a long pause, she replied through her translator, "Do you think we can reschedule this?"

When Altman said no, she replied, "I don't want to continue staying in prison," saying she felt ill.

Altman, frustrated, told her she had to make her decision -- jury trial or not?

"I don't want either," she replied.

"Sometimes we have hard choices," Altman replied. "I will make it simple for you. Do you want me to decide your case or not?"

"I don't want to continue," she replied. Altman ignored her and ruled she will have a jury trial.

But that led to the next dilemma. At most trials, defendants wear nice clothing instead of jail overalls so jurors won't be prejudiced by their appearance. Prosecutor Rolando Garcia said the Secret Service will give

the clothes found in Zhang's hotel room to her former public defenders, whom Altman has standing by in case Zhang changes her mind about using them. But Garcia and public defender Robert Adler agreed it is uncertain whether Zhang would agree to wear them. Altman said that would be up to her.

Altman moved on, asking Zhang again to accept Adler and his colleagues as her public defenders. She sat silently.

"Are you just ignoring me, Ms. Zhang?" Altman asked.

After nearly a minute of silence, she said something unintelligible in English. Altman told her to speak through her translator.

"Are you saying I need a

lawyer?" she asked in Mandarin.

"You need a lawyer," Altman replied, sounding somewhat exasperated.

Zhang then went back in time, answering that she doesn't want to change her clothes in the jail because it is dirty.

Altman explained why she should wear civilian clothes at trial, but then again tried to persuade her to accept her public defenders.

"If you really do desire to go home, back to China, and get out of jail ... the best way to assure that that happens is to have trained and experienced lawyers," he told her.

"No thank you," she replied in English.

Altman adjourned the hearing. AP

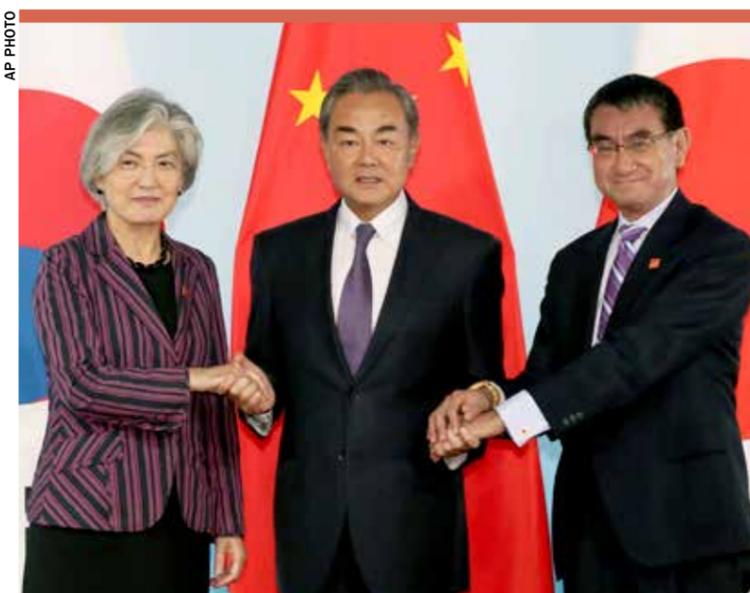
China hosts Japan, S. Korea ministers in bid to smooth row

THE foreign ministers of China, Japan and South Korea met in Beijing yesterday as they seek to encourage progress on North Korean denuclearization at a time of tense relations between Tokyo and Seoul over trade.

In talks with Japan's Taro Kono and South Korea's Kang Kyung-wha, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China will work with the two countries to maintain multilateralism and free trade and commit to the region's stability.

"We support Japan and South Korea in taking the chance of the trilateral foreign ministers meeting to have their bilateral talks," Wang said at a news conference following morning talks. "We hope both sides can address the concerns of each other, handle the disputes constructively and find a proper way of solving the problems."

China is also using the trilateral meeting to reiterate its opposition to either Japan or South Korea playing host to



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (center) holds hands of his counterparts Kang Kyung-wha (Korea, left) and Taro Kono (Japan)

new U.S. intermediate-range ballistic missiles that Washington says it plans to deploy to the region as soon as possible after leaving the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty earlier this month. China has threatened to punish any country that

does so, and Chinese state media said Wang brought up the issue in separate meetings with Kono and Kang on Tuesday.

Ties between Japan and South Korea have been strained since Japan tightened export controls on key materials for South

Korea's semiconductor industry and decided to downgrade the nation's trade status.

Seoul accuses Tokyo of weaponizing trade to retaliate for political rows over wartime history. The row threatens to upset economic security in Northeast Asia, as well as Washington's hopes for military cooperation between its two treaty allies.

While Taro called for cooperation among the three despite the feud, Kang attacked Japan over its export controls, according to Japanese news reports. At the news conference, however, both sides appeared eager to downplay the dispute.

"It is inevitable that sometimes the bilateral relations among us have some difficulties," Kono said. "The three of us have important responsibility for the stability and prosperity of the region and the whole world and the cooperation among us will definitely make major contributions in this regard."

Kang said the Japan-Sou-

th Korea dispute shouldn't be allowed to affect trilateral relations.

"In order that the three-way cooperation can be developed in a stable way without being affected by the bilateral relations, we should enrich the contents of the exchanges among the three countries and let the people of the three countries feel the substantial benefit from such cooperation," Kang said.

Despite their close economic interdependence, ties between the three have often been fraught over trade frictions, the role of the U.S. and lingering resentment over Japan's colonial legacy and World War II aggression.

China and South Korea only recently began healing ties after Beijing exacted painful economic retaliation on South Korea over Seoul's decision to host a powerful U.S. missile defense system.

China and Japan meanwhile are enjoying an unusually calm period in their often-turbulent relationship, which was at a breaking point a few years ago due to a dispute over East China Sea islands controlled by Japan but claimed by China.

China is North Korea's most important ally and has argued that steps by Pyongyang depend on security assurances from Seoul and Washington. AP

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AUSTRALIAN COURT UPHOLDS SEX ABUSE VERDICT OF CARDINAL PELL

ROD MCGUIRK, MELBOURNE

AN Australian appeals court yesterday upheld convictions against Cardinal George Pell, the most senior Catholic to be found guilty of sexually abusing children, in a decision cheered by scores of abuse survivors and victims' advocates demonstrating outside the court.

A unanimous jury in December found Pope Francis' former finance minister guilty of molesting two 13-year-old choirboys in Melbourne's St. Patrick's Cathedral more than two decades ago. The Victoria state Court of Appeal rejected his appeal in a 2-1 ruling, with the court's chief justice saying the majority found Pell's accuser to be a compelling "witness of truth."

Pell's lawyers will examine the judgment and consider an appeal to the High Court, Australia's final arbiter, his spokeswoman Katrina Lee said. "Cardinal Pell is obviously disappointed with the decision," her statement said.

The Vatican noted Pell had always maintained his innocence and had a right to appeal. It said its own investigation into Pell would await the outcome of any final appeal in Australia.

"... the Holy See confirms its closeness to the victims of sexual abuse and its commitment to pursue, through the competent ecclesiastical authorities, those members of the clergy who commit such abuse," a Vatican state-

ment said, adding it respected the Australian judicial system.

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference said all Australians must be equal under the law and it accepted the verdict.

"I respectfully receive the court's decision and I encourage everyone to do the same," Melbourne Archbishop Peter Comensoli said in a statement.

Pell was sentenced to six years in prison in March and is no longer a member of Pope Francis' Council of Cardinals or a Vatican official. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said soon after the appeal was rejected that Pell would be stripped of his Order of Australia honor.

Pell, 78, showed no emotion when Chief Justice Anne Ferguson read the verdict to a packed courtroom but bowed his head moments later. He wore a cleric's collar but not his cardinal's ring. Pell had arrived at the court in a prison van and was handcuffed as he was led away by a guard.

Clerical sexual abuse and the Catholic Church's handling of such cases worldwide have thrown Francis' papacy into turmoil.

In a little more than a year, the pope has acknowledged he made "grave errors" in Chile's worst cover-up, Pell was convicted of abuse, a French cardinal was convicted of failing to report a pedo-

phile, and a third cardinal, former U.S. church leader Theodore McCarrick, was defrocked after a Vatican investigation determined he molested children and adults.

Ferguson said she and President of the Court of Appeal Chris Maxwell "decided that it was open to the jury to be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Cardinal Pell was guilty."

The two judges "accepted the prosecution's submission that the complainant was a very compe-

Pell's lawyers will examine the judgment and consider an appeal to the High Court

ling witness, clearly not a liar, was not a fantasist and was a witness of truth," Ferguson said.

The dissenting judge, Mark Weinberg, "could not exclude as a reasonable possibility that some of what the complainant said was concocted," particularly in relation to the charge that Pell had squeezed the boy's genitals and shoved him against a cathedral corridor wall as they passed in the midst of the choir moments after a Mass, she said.

"Justice Weinberg found that the complainant's account of the second incident was entirely implausible and quite uncon-

vincing," Ferguson said. The full, 325-page ruling was published after she summarized the court's findings.

One of the choirboys, identified by the sentencing judge as J.J., was the key prosecution witness. His friend, identified as M.R., died of a heroin overdose in 2014 at the age of 31 without ever complaining he had been abused. Neither victim can be named.

J.J. said he felt a responsibility to come forward after attending his friend's funeral. "The criminal process has been stressful. The journey has taken me to places that, in my darkest moments, I feared I could not return from," he said in a statement released by his lawyer.

"I am grateful for a legal system that everyone can believe in, where everybody is equal before the law and no one is above the law," he added.

The victim said he was relieved by the verdict and, "I just hope that it's all over now."

The father of the deceased victim shed tears of relief in the courtroom when Pell's appeal was denied, his lawyer said.

Lawyer Lisa Flynn said the father had an "extremely tough wait" for the judgment against Pell and the court made the correct decision. "The disgraced cardinal is in the right place behind bars."

An earlier trial had ended with a deadlocked jury, with at least

two jurors holding out for conviction or acquittal. While Pell's lawyers argued in the appeal that the jury must have had reasonable doubt, the prosecutors said contrasting evidence from more than 20 priests, choristers, altar servers and church officials still did not preclude guilty verdicts.

The abuse occurred months after Pell became archbishop of Australia's second-largest city and had set the world's first compensation arrangement for victims of clergy sexual abuse.

The victim who testified said the incident in the corridor occurred in early 1997. The jury also concluded that Pell in late 1996 had orally raped the same choirboy and indecently dealt with the boy and his friend in a rear room of the cathedral after catching them swigging altar wine.

Pell did not testify at either of his trials. But both juries saw a video of a police interview of him in Rome in 2016 in which Pell rejected the allegations as "absolutely disgraceful rubbish" and a "deranged falsehood."

A non-profit group that seeks accountability for sex abuse in the Catholic church said the ruling was a watershed that should give all victims hope. "Catholics everywhere owe thanks to the incredibly brave victim who brought Pell to justice," the U.S.-based group said in a statement.

It also expressed hope Australia would continue to investigate Pell. "An abusive bishop is, inevitably, an enabler of other sexual criminals. His sphere of negative influence extends beyond his own victims, hurting the children (who) are raped or assaulted by the abusive clerics to whom he gives safe harbor."

Pell must serve a minimum of three years and eight months of his six-year sentence before he will be eligible for parole. He has been held in a Melbourne prison in protective custody as a convicted pedophile.

Prison authorities have been investigating whether Pell breached rules by writing a letter dated Aug. 1 that was circulated by his supporters on social media. Prison rules forbid prisoners from posting on social media, using the internet, or asking others to post on their behalf.

The two-page, handwritten letter thanked supporters for letters Pell has received and said his faith was his "source of strength."

He could face further legal consequences from an Australian government-commissioned inquiry into how the church and other institutions responded to child sex abuse over decades.

Pell testified to the inquiry by video link from Rome in 2016. The redacted report issued in 2017 made no mention of Pell to avoid publishing information that could "prejudice current or future criminal or civil proceedings." AP

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

TRUMP

US president cancels Denmark visit because Greenland isn't for sale

TWO days after he said buying Greenland wasn't a top priority, President Donald Trump canceled an upcoming trip to Denmark, which owns the mostly frozen island, after its prime minister dismissed the idea.

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen had called Trump's musing about buying the Danish territory "an absurd discussion" after the former real estate mogul-turned-president began to talk up the idea.

Trump said Sunday that he was interested in such a deal for strategic purposes, but said a purchase was not a priority at this time. "It's not No. 1 on the burner," he told reporters.

Trump even joked about his proposal as it came in for ridicule, tweeting a doctored photo of a glistening Trump skyscraper looming over a small village in the



Arctic territory.

"I promise not to do this to Greenland," he joked earlier this week.

But yesterday [Macau time], Trump abruptly canceled the visit, also by tweet.

Just a few hours earlier, the U.S.

ambassador to Denmark tweeted that it was "ready for the POTUS @realDonaldTrump visit!" using an acronym for "President of the United States" along with Trump's Twitter handle.

Trump wrote: "Denmark is a very special country with incredible people, but based on Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen's comments, that she would have no interest in discussing the purchase of Greenland, I will be postponing our meeting scheduled in two weeks for another time."

He added: "The Prime Minister was able to save a great deal of expense and effort for both the United States and Denmark by being so direct. I thank her for that and look forward to rescheduling sometime in the future!"

White House spokesman Judd Deere said later that the visit to Denmark has been canceled.

The White House announ-

ced in late July that Trump had accepted an invitation to visit Denmark's Queen Margrethe and participate in a series of meetings, including with Frederiksen and business leaders.

The trip, set to begin at the end of August, includes a stop in Poland to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the start of World War II.

Trump is expected to go ahead with the Warsaw visit.

Asked about Greenland on Sunday as he prepared to return to Washington after a vacation week at his central New Jersey home, Trump said "strategically ... it would be nice" to own the island.

He also suggested he might not visit Denmark at all, saying he didn't think the previously announced trip had been "absolutely set in stone yet."

Trump's decision to cancel the visit to Denmark took the Danish royal palace by surprise, a spokeswoman said later yesterday.

Lene Balleby told The Associated Press that the news was "a surprise" to the royal household, which formally had invited Trump to visit Denmark Sep. 2 and 3 as part of a European trip. She had no further comments. **MDT/AP**

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what's ON



BATHING IN THE SPRING BREEZE PAINTINGS BY LIU MENGKUAN

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)
UNTIL: August 25, 2019
VENUE: Macau Special Exhibition Gallery, Handover Gifts Museum of Macau
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8701 9814

WYNN PRESENTS: GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

TIME: 10am-10pm
UNTIL: October 6, 2019
VENUE: Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 6882 2839

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

TIME: 24 hours
UNTIL: October 9, 2019
VENUE: The Venetian Macao, The Parisian Macao, Sands Macao & Four Seasons Hotel Macao
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 8888

MGM PRESENTS: HUA YUAN EXHIBITION

TIME: 24 hours
UNTIL: September 3, 2019
VENUE: MGM Cotai
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8802 3333

MANDARIN'S HOUSE

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

Offbeat

GERMAN CITY OFFERS \$1.1M TO WHOEVER PROVES IT DOESN'T EXIST



A German city that's been the subject of a long-running online light-hearted conspiracy theory claiming it doesn't really exist is offering big bucks to whoever proves that's true.

Officials in Bielefeld said yesterday they'll give 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) to the person who delivers solid proof of its non-existence.

They said there are "no limits to creativity" for entrants, but only incontrovertible evidence will qualify for the prize.

The idea that Bielefeld doesn't exist was first floated by computer expert Achim Held, who posted the satirical claim on the Internet in 1994 in an effort to poke fun at online conspiracy theories.

Even German Chancellor Angela Merkel once jokingly cast doubt on the existence of Bielefeld, which is allegedly located about 330 kilometers (205 miles) west of Berlin.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Agua de Mar
15:45	Zig Zag
16:20	Sim Chef! Sr2
16:50	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
17:45	Moda Portugal Sr.4
18:15	Amor Maior (Repetição)
19:00	Portugal que Dança
19:30	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Coisas Curiosas de Saber
21:50	Todas as Palavras
22:25	Amor Maior
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Tanegashima - A Ilha da Espingarda
00:45	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:30	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

22 - 28 Aug

ONE PIECE STAMPEDE

ROOM1
2:30, 7:30, 9:30pm
Director: Takashi Otsuka
Starring: Chô, Hiroaki Hirata, Katsuhisa Hôki
Language: Japanese (Chinese)

DORAEMON THE MOVIE: NOBITA'S CHRONICLE OF THE MOON EXPLORATION

ROOM1
4:30pm
Director: Jeong-beom Lee, Shinnosuke Yakuwa
Starring: Wasabi Mizuta, Sang Hyun Uhm, Jung-jae Lee
Language: Cantonese (English & Chinese)

BODIES AT REST

ROOM2
2:15, 5:50, 9:30pm
Director: Renny Harlin
Starring: Nick Cheung, Richie Jen, Zi Yang
Language: Cantonese (English & Chinese)
Duration: 94min

TOY STORY 4

ROOM2
4:00pm
Director: Josh Cooley
Starring: Will Smith, Mena Massoud, Naomi Scott
Language: Cantonese
Duration: 109min

LITTLE Q

ROOM 2
7:30pm
Director: Wing-Cheong Law
Starring: Allie Chan, Ming Hu, J.J. Jia
Language: Cantonese (English & Chinese)
Duration: 107min



THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE 2

ROOM3
2:30pm
Director: Thurop Van Orman
Starring: Jason Sudeikis, Josh Gad, Leslie Jones
Language: Cantonese (English & Chinese)
Duration: 96min

DORA AND THE LOST CITY OF GOLD

ROOM3
4:30, 7:30, 9:30pm
Director: James Bobin
Starring: Isabela Moner, Eugenio Derbez, Michael Peña
Language: English (English & Chinese)
Duration: 102min

this day in history



1966 ICI ANNOUNCES BIG NYLON JOB LOSSES

Britain's largest manufacturing company Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) is cutting 1,000 staff at its nylon-fibre producing factories.

Six hundred jobs will go at Doncaster, 200 at Gloucester and 250 at Pontypool in Monmouthshire. About half the staff will be given notice on Friday - the other half will be told a week later.

The company has blamed the government's tough economic measures for a fall in demand for nylon. Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced a pay and price freeze last month in an attempt to control runaway inflation.

A statement issued by ICI said: "Economic conditions are unlikely to improve for some time and further, the tax changes and the various deflationary measures are beginning to be felt and will subject industry and commerce to a period of considerable financial stringency."

The redundancies come as a surprise after the company said last year it wanted to take on 2,200 extra staff to cope with an expected growth in demand for nylon.

It means many of the staff being laid off will not qualify for severance pay - but they will be given a week's wages - about £15 to £18 for someone who has been employed six months.

The union representing nylon workers, the Transport and General Workers, says it has not been consulted about the reductions.

Ron Mathias, South Wales regional organiser, said: "It is the old story of areas like South Wales, the North-East and Scotland being hit first of all by a government measure.

"Already there is a scarcity of skilled men and if, as usually happens, some of the workers move away to the Midlands it could put us in a worse position," he said.

ICI still makes more nylon than all the other British producers put together - but it is facing growing competition from Courtaulds, British Enkalon and Chemstrand. In addition, there are new manmade fibres coming onto the market with a wide range of uses from clothing to industry.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Emergency talks between management and unions followed but ICI pressed ahead with the cuts.

Speculation in the newspaper business pages was that ICI had misread the economy and gone ahead with big capital investment in new machinery - aimed at cutting production costs long term - when all the signs were profits were about to be hit in the short term.

The government's pay and price freeze failed to halt inflation. In November 1967, the government was forced to devalue the pound and tighten the credit squeeze by raising borrowing rates and taxes.

Nylon became less popular as a fabric and it was not until 1983 when it was re-designed and launched as Tactel that it became fashionable again.

The Tactel brand became so successful it was a major attraction for the American giant DuPont which bought out the ICI Fibres business in 1992.

ICI now employs more than 36,000 people worldwide. Its main products include paints, food and fragrances.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Real problems require real solutions, not just window dressing. You have to get to the root of the issue and face the truth about what is really going on here.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Your brain is going to be focused on your future now. You're thinking about what will be coming into your life and not as concerned with what is going on in it today, but this is not a bad thing.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

An unthinking person might blurt out something that hurts your feelings today - but getting all emotional about it is not going to help you feel better.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Good energy is coming your way early today, which is good - because you will need it to help you get prepared for something big that's coming your way later on today.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

There is no reason to mingle your professional life with your personal life right now, either - no matter how attractive you think that new coworker might be.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Make that day today. Cancel or postpone whatever you can and give yourself a few hours of nothing to do. Being productive or busy is not the same thing as being happy.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Changing your tactics every once in a while is not only a good way to keep life interesting, it's a great way to generate an air of mystery about yourself.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

It's going to feel a little bit like a tough challenge, but you will have to get going as early as you possibly can today. Go for a morning job or brisk walk around the block.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Even if you feel you are taking a risk, so what? Life calls for risks, especially if you want to make progress. Today, you must face the fact that you create your own reality.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Are you losing your patience with someone who just can't be reasoned with? Don't chastise yourself - your forbearance has been admirable, and you need to know when to say that enough is enough.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

There is one exception, which would be for gifts - if you want to splurge a little bit on someone who you think deserves a little bit of luxury that they don't often get, then you should.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Today, your mental clarity will be extremely strong - which means that you will finally be able to break down that complex challenge you've been struggling with for so long.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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	4							7
							2	
			4	3	9			
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7				5				
	6	9						
								8

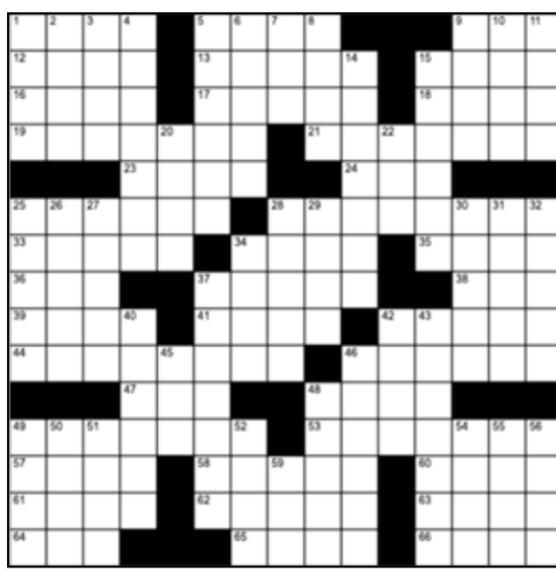
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	32	cloudy
Harbin	20	25	heavy rain
Tianjin	24	33	cloudy
Urumqi	24	36	clear
Xi'an	22	33	overcast
Lhasa	9	21	drizzle
Chengdu	24	33	shower
Chongqing	25	33	cloudy
Kunming	17	25	shower
Nanjing	26	34	cloudy
Shanghai	27	33	drizzle
Wuhan	27	36	cloudy
Hangzhou	26	33	drizzle
Taipei	26	30	heavy rain
Guangzhou	28	37	cloudy
Hong Kong	28	34	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	18	25	drizzle
Frankfurt	15	25	drizzle
Paris	17	26	drizzle
London	15	24	cloudy
New York	23	32	moderate rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Former Russian ruler; 5- Copied; 9- '60s hot spot; 12- Play to ___ (draw); 13- Showed over; 15- River in central Switzerland; 16- Scotch go-with; 17- Earth; 18- Sketched; 19- Bee entrant; 21- In the right; 23- Sailors; 24- Beehive State athlete; 25- Travesty; 28- Convince; 33- Copycats; 34- Earthenware pot; 35- Scanty; 36- Tit for ___; 37- Petty; 38- Summit; 39- Neutral color; 41- Optical device; 42- Lifeless; 44- Synthetic rubber; 46- Stylish; 47- ___ Haw; 48- Microwave; 49- Rotate; 53- Sign of a slip; 57- Nutmeg coat; 58- "I Hated, Hated, Hated This Movie" author; 60- General ___ chicken; 61- Benevolent; 62- Goes it alone; 63- Change decor; 64- Wide shoe size; 65- Meddlesome; 66- Keats creations;

DOWN: 1- Soviet news service; 2- Red sign; 3- Gofer; 4- Home broker; 5- Blood vessel; 6- Jury members; 7- Make a mistake; 8- Challenge; 9- DEA agent; 10- Geometry calculation; 11- Whimper; 14- Biological; 15- Parting words; 20- Chaps; 22- Elevs.; 25- Communion plate; 26- Quickly; 27- Fashionably old-fashioned; 28- Flat surface; 29- Pipe bends; 30- Choir section; 31- Some designer dresses; 32- Vacant; 34- Sign of things to come; 37- Arm coverings; 40- Defend; 42- ___-Seltzer; 43- Conductor; 45- Fam. reunion attendee; 46- Respectful bow; 48- Peter and a Wolfe; 49- Croupier's tool; 50- Pennsylvania city; 51- Hollywood crosser; 52- Black, in poetry; 54- Second hand, took advantage of; 55- Sat on the back of a horse; 56- Those, to Juan; 59- "Hold On Tight" band;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



LARRY KING SEEKS DIVORCE FROM SEVENTH WIFE AFTER 22 YEARS

LARRY King is seeking a divorce from his seventh wife, Shawn King, after 22 years.

The 85-year-old talk show host filed a petition to end the marriage yesterday [Macau time] in Los Angeles Superior Court.

Larry King and Shawn King, then a singer and TV host, married in 1997 and have two adult sons, Chance and

Cannon.

They both filed for divorce in 2010 but later reconciled.

Larry King has been married eight times to seven different women and has five children. He married and divorced Alene Akins twice.

He has overcome several serious health issues in recent years, including a bout with lung cancer two years ago.

LA OPERA NAMES LAWYER TO LEAD PLACIDO DOMINGO INVESTIGATION



LOS Angeles Opera said it will immediately open a "thorough and independent investigation" into allegations of sexual harassment against the opera star Placido Domingo, the company's general director.

In a brief statement, the opera company said it has hired Debra Wong Yang from the law firm of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher to lead the investigation.

LA Opera did not res-

pond to questions about how the investigation would be carried out and its expected duration.

Yang is a former U.S. attorney and Los Angeles County Superior Court judge who is chair of her firm's Crisis Management Practice Group, according to the firm's website. She has been involved in several high-profile cases and was hired by USC in 2017 to investigate the conduct of a former medical school dean.

'AMERICA'S GOT TALENT' CONTINUES SUMMER DOMINANCE FOR NBC

AMERICA'S Got Talent" wasn't content with just the top spot in the Nielsen company's rankings of the most popular television programs last week. This time it took the top two.

First place is familiar territory for NBC's talent competition. It has been the most-watched summer series for six straight years and the No. 1 alternative summer series for all 14 years that it has been on the air.

The dominance continues even though the show is slipping in popularity, which is typical of most TV series these days. "AGT" averages 11.4 million viewers live and within a week of an episode's premiere, down 18% from last

year, Nielsen said.

Still, that's almost 4 million viewers more than the second-ranked show of the summer, ABC's "Bachelorette," which had 7.5 million viewers within a week of its premiere this summer.

"America's Got Talent" still has the capacity to create big moments online, too. A clip of contestant Kodi Lee singing a version of "A Song For You" has been viewed nearly 432 million times online, NBC said.

The summer's ratings illustrate how scripted series are fading away. The most-watched scripted series this summer has been reruns of CBS' "NCIS," at 5.6 million, Nielsen said.



AD

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AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Antonio Brown is all in - at least for now

TIM DAHLBERG

ANTONIO Brown is right about one thing: Helmets are important. The way Brown has been toying with his new team makes you wonder if he's ever worn one.

The latest from Raider Nation yesterday [Macau time] was that the enigmatic wide receiver was on the practice field — and had a helmet officially certified by the NFL with him. That was certainly progress, even if it doesn't mean Brown will be on the field Thursday night when the Raiders travel to Winnipeg to meet the Packers in the last meaningful exhibition game of the preseason.

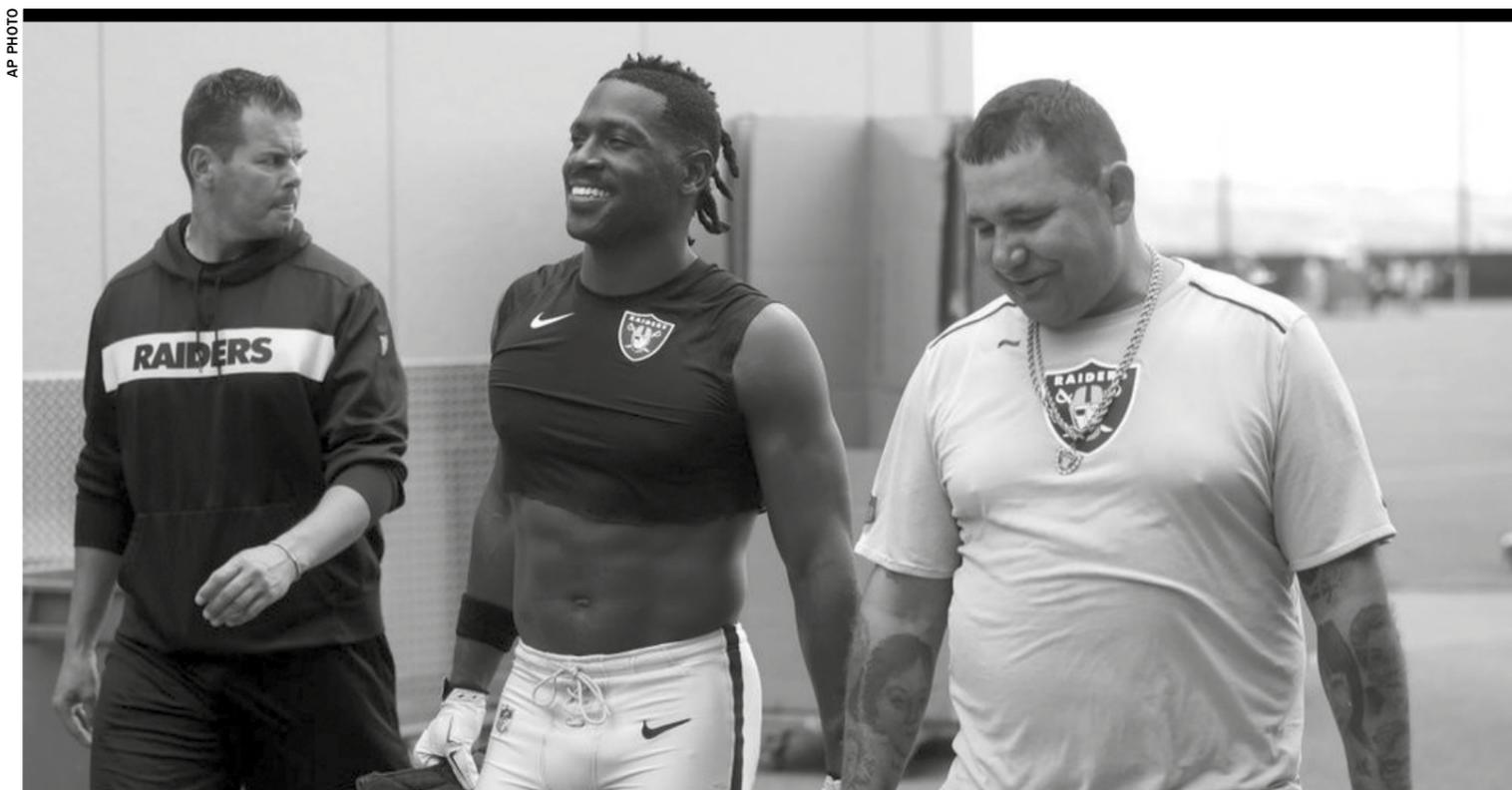
But if any further proof was needed of Brown's intent to play this season — and collect the \$30 million guaranteed under his new contract — he had a smile on his face and a helmet in his hand as he left the closed practice.

And, two days after general manager Mike Mayock issued an ultimatum for his star receiver to decide if he's all in on the season, the official word was Brown was, um, all in.

"I'm confident that he's going to be a heck of a player for us and be ready to roll," coach Jon Gruden proclaimed.

Just what that means for Brown and the Raiders isn't quite clear. The helmet issue isn't totally settled, and neither is the team's relationship with a star being counted on to help lift the Raiders out of the doldrums just in time for the team's move to Las Vegas next season.

But for now all is good from head to toe. Brown's frostbitten feet, Gruden said, are healing, and he's got a certified helmet to use even while filing a second grievance with the NFL to be allowed



Oakland Raiders' Antonio Brown (center)

to wear his old one for one more season.

And, really, the NFL preseason is for rookies, not game-changing superstars. Despite Mayock's bluster, the Raiders will be fine with everything as long as Brown lines up on the outside when the Raiders open their last season in Oakland on Sept. 9 against the Denver Broncos.

"There is a lot of teams that are missing star players," Gruden said. "My brother (Washington coach Jay Gruden) is missing one. The Cowboys are missing one. The Texans are missing one. That's part of this league. Every year there are exceptions that you got to deal with, and I like our team, man. I like the way we are competing, and I like the way we are working."

That's easy to say with near-

ly three weeks before the season kicks off for real. Like every other team, the Raiders are unbeaten and believe they can be playoff contenders, even if the bookies in Las Vegas say otherwise.

But so far Derek Carr hasn't thrown a pass to Brown when he's been covered by someone in a different uniform. So far the only time Brown's name has been mentioned has been in a sentence that included either bad feet, old helmet or hot air balloon.

That gives HBO's "Hard Knocks" series plenty of material to work with. But it doesn't give long suffering fans in Oakland much hope that their beloved Raiders will make one final glorious run to the playoffs before running off to fame and riches in Las Vegas.

For that to happen, Brown has to be the player the Raiders hoped

he would be when they got him on the cheap from the Steelers, who wanted no more of him after he left the team before the final game last year after reportedly arguing with quarterback Ben Roethlisberger.

For that to happen, Carr needs to regain his confidence on the field and find some common ground with his new receiver. And that can't happen with Brown checking into practice only when he feels the inspiration.

Brown is a singular talent, whose 686 catches and 9,145 yards the past six seasons in Pittsburgh are the best marks ever for a receiver in a six-year span. He's a game changer for a team that desperately needs one if it is going to get past the six wins oddsmakers in the team's future home of Las Vegas are predicting this season.

But if his opening weeks with the team are any indication, it's going to take all of Gruden's considerable talents of persuasion to keep Brown on the field. Already, Brown has shown with his twin dramas of frostbitten feet and bad helmet that he's going to have to be coddled to be happy — and he's yet to play a snap for his new team.

Yes, the feet are getting better and Brown may be able to adjust to a new helmet. But the season has yet to begin, and there are plenty of potential minefields ahead.

With all the drama still to come, it might be a good idea for the "Hard Knocks" cameras to stick around.

Because while the Raiders don't figure to be much to watch, Brown will surely be must-see TV. AP

FOOTBALL

Ronaldo says 2018 'probably worst year' of his life

CRISTIANO Ronaldo says the rape allegation against him was an attack on his honor and led to one of the worst years of his life.

Ronaldo was accused of raping a woman in Las Vegas more than 10 years ago but won't face criminal charges after it was determined the investigation failed to show the claim could be proven at trial beyond a reasonable doubt.

Ronaldo has told Por-

tuguese television TVI that "2018 was probably my worst year ever, personally speaking."

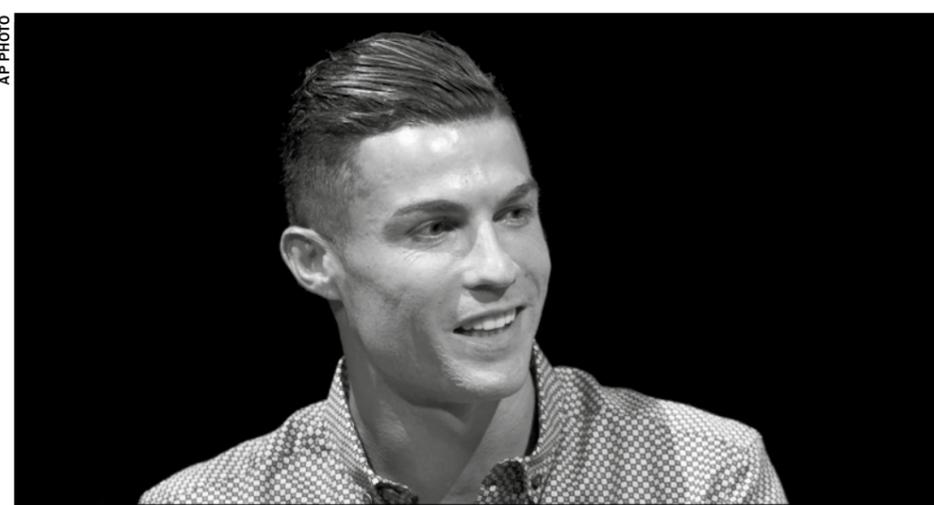
He said that "when people question your honor, it hurts, it hurts a lot."

The Juventus player did not directly talk about the 2009 accusation brought on by Kathryn Mayorga, an American who in a separate lawsuit says she was pressured to sign an agreement to keep quiet in exchange for \$375,000.

The 34-year-old Ronaldo said he was not "comfortable speaking" about the case, "but when people attack your honor, it is difficult."

He said he was thankful and proud that "once again" his innocence was proven.

The Associated Press generally does not name people who say they are victims of sexual assault. Mayorga gave consent through her lawyers to be named. AP



OPINION

World Views

Leonid Bershidsky, Bloomberg

TRUMP TROLLS THE NORDICS. THEY TROLL HIM BACK

Donald Trump's decision to cancel his meeting with Danish Prime minister Mette Frederiksen because she wouldn't sell him Greenland is just another episode in a comedy someone should make about Trump's strange relationship with the Nordic countries. They clearly occupy a special place in his mind, perhaps because they're often held up by his opponents as examples of sound, socially conscious governance and by his supporters as clueless socialist countries ruined by immigration.

Since his election as president, Trump has needled every Nordic nation except Iceland (though his son Eric reportedly had an abortive adventure there in 2016). It could even look as though he's deliberately targeting them one after another; each of the interactions has a surreal element to it.

Trump first trolled Sweden in February, 2017, saying at a rally, "You look at what's happening in Germany. You look at what's happening last night in Sweden. Sweden, who would believe this? Sweden. They took in large numbers and they're having problems like they never thought possible." In response, baffled Swedes, unaware of anything of consequence happening in their country the previous night, created the #lastnightinsweden hashtag and used it to post references various mundane occurrences. Trump explained that he meant something he'd seen on Fox News, and a year later, he claimed - at a press conference with the Swedish prime minister - that he'd made no mistake. The hashtag is still alive, though; it's mostly used by various xenophobes to post links to reports of immigrant crime in the Nordic country.

Trump's second, seemingly unplanned run-in with Sweden is recent; on the urging of his admirer, Kanye West, the president developed an interest in the case of A\$AP Rocky, a U.S. rapper detained after punching a man on a Stockholm street, and started demanding his release. On Twitter, he offered to put up bail for Rocky and expressed disappointment that "we do so much for Sweden but it doesn't seem to work the other way around."

Trump ignored Prime Minister Stefan Lofven's explanation that the Swedish government cannot influence the courts and that the rapper won't get special treatment; his ambassador to Sweden even threatened "negative consequences" unless Rocky got a "humanitarian release." Earlier this month, A\$AP Rocky was allowed to return to the U.S. (Trump celebrated this on Twitter) - but on Aug. 14, the rapper was found guilty of assault, given a two-year suspended sentence and ordered to pay \$1,300 to the victim.

Norway, for its part, had its moment in the Trump spotlight in January, 2018, when he declared at a meeting with legislators that he wanted fewer immigrants to the U.S. from less prosperous countries and more from "places like Norway." This was an occasion for Norwegians to start tweeting that they'll pass ("on behalf of Norway, thanks but no thanks," conservative politician Torbjorn Saetre wrote).

Then came Finland's turn. In November, 2018, Trump said the Finnish president had told him his country prevented forest fires by regularly raking the forest floor. President Sauli Niinisto remembered the conversation differently: He'd told Trump that Finland had a good surveillance system to track fires. And Finns took pains to explain to Trump that their country had about 80% the area of California, three-quarters of it covered by forests, so there just weren't enough people to rake the woods. (To be fair, it's common practice in Finland and most other developed nations to clean up after cutting trees).

Denmark's turn came with the Greenland saga.

Trump, of course, has offended, outraged or bewildered the residents and leaders of plenty of other countries, too. But his history with the Northern Europeans is particularly remarkable for their willingness to troll him back (always in excellent English), to tell the world that they don't share his values and that they place his behavior and beliefs on the spectrum between simply weird and unacceptable. The obvious values gap isn't the stuff of comedy. Post-Trump, the U.S. will need to show some of the wealthiest, most free and democratic Western nations that it's not jingoistic but rather part of the same Western tradition as they are. Otherwise it'll be hard for the U.S. to find the same support for its strategic goals in the north, a region that will grow in importance as the climate changes.

[Abridged]

THOUSANDS INTERESTED IN DUTCH IDEA FOR BREXIT BEACH PARTY

THE BUZZ

As the deadline for Britain to quit the European Union approaches, thousands of people are expressing interest in a Brexit beach party in the Netherlands to say a fond farewell.

By yesterday, nearly 10,000 people had signed up on Facebook to attend the proposed event that would allow people to sit in deck chairs looking out to sea as "Great Britain wakes up as a closed institution" while enjoying "Dutch chips, French wine and German beer."

Another 63,000 have expressed interest in the Oct. 31 party at Wijk aan Zee, 30 kilometers northwest of Amsterdam.

The plan is the brainchild of documentary maker Ron Toekook, who is amazed by the attention it is garnering and now is in the process of trying to make sure it actually happens.

He got the idea from a vacation in Hawaii, when he saw people head to the beach, drinks in hand, to watch the sun set.



Thai Minister of Digital Economy and Society, Phutthipong Punnakant

THAILAND TO SET UP CENTER TO COMBAT 'FAKE NEWS'

PITCHA DANGPRASITH, BANGKOK

THAILAND'S government announced a plan to set up a center to combat unverified news on social media platforms, rejecting concerns that it might be used to suppress free speech.

The planned center's goal would be to fight all kinds of fake news, with a focus on misinformation about disasters and financial matters, Minister of Digital Economy and Society Buddhipongse Punnakanta said.

"Fake news is embedded within every aspect of our society, so it's very hard to specifically pinpoint anything right now besides the obvious problems, disasters and financial news, but as we progress - slowly but effectively - we'll try to cover every aspect possible," Buddhipongse said at a news conference.

He said the center would also teach media literacy and launch a website that would act as a digital verifier of news that people suspected of being fake.

"People can submit any news they're suspicious of being unauthenticated, or that could incite fear and confusion to the public, to the website and our officials would verify its au-

thenticity within two hours," he said.

The center and the website are expected to be launched by October.

The plan has already drawn criticism. A spokeswoman for the opposition Future Forward Party said last month that it shared concerns about fake news, which it said has

center would not interfere with freedom of speech.

"We're not trying to act as a vigilante, and will not be used as a tool by some group of people to justify their action, or someone else's actions," he said.

The issue of fake news has become a major concern in several Southeast Asian nations. Critics have said misinformation circulated on social media, often with malicious intent, helped stir up communal violence in Myanmar, especially toward the Muslim minority. It also plagued recent elections in Indonesia and the Philippines.

At the same time there are concerns that government efforts against fake news may curb free speech and be used as a weapon against political opponents.

Thailand already has a Computer Crime Act that polices online media. It has often been used in cases involving politics and critics of the government.

Buddhipongse said that in order for the center to counter the fake news problem, it needs cooperation from widely used social media platforms in Thailand such as Facebook or the Line messaging app. He said his ministry was already in touch with these media platforms. AP



Australia A Melbourne appeals court yesterday upheld convictions against Cardinal George Pell, the most senior Catholic to be found guilty of sexually abusing children, in a decision cheered by scores of abuse survivors and victims' advocates demonstrating outside the court. More on p14

Australia has joined Britain and Bahrain in signing onto a U.S.-led maritime security mission to protect international shipping in the Strait of Hormuz amid tensions with Iran. Australia will contribute troops, a surveillance plane and a Navy frigate to protect the shipping lanes from Iran, Scott Morrison said.



US-Venezuela President Donald Trump said his government is talking to "various representatives" of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, who also confirmed that "secret" discussions had been taking place. Maduro said after that talks had long been underway between high officials of both countries.

US Four college students were wounded when a gunman opened fire into a crowd of 200 people outside a library near Clark Atlanta University and then escaped in the chaos, authorities said. All four injured women were in stable condition after the gunfire, which happened shortly after 10:30 p.m. Tuesday (yesterday, Macau time).

Afghanistan The death toll in a suicide bombing at a Kabul wedding claimed by the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan has risen to 80, an official said Wednesday, as a U.S. envoy was set to resume talks with the Taliban on ending America's longest war. The initial toll in Saturday's blast was 63.