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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"



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THE GUIA CIRCUIT HAS  
BEEN UPGRADED TO A GRADE 2  
TRACK AHEAD OF THIS YEAR'S  
MACAU GRAND PRIX

SECRETARY ALEXIS TAM  
LEADS TOURISM DELEGATION  
TO ST. PETERSBURG

THE POLICY RESEARCH BUREAU  
HAS REITERATED THAT MACAU  
WILL NOT NEED TO IMPLEMENT THE  
MAINLAND'S SOCIAL CREDIT SYSTEM

P4

P4

P5

**China-US** Chinese importers are asking U.S. suppliers for prices of soybeans, pork and other farm goods, the Commerce Ministry said yesterday, in a possible goodwill gesture ahead of talks aimed at ending a tariff war. More on p11



**New Zealand** Tongan Prime Minister 'Akilisi Pohiva, who helped wrest power from the royal family and bring greater democracy to the small Pacific island nation, died yesterday at 78. Pohiva died at the Auckland City Hospital at about 9 a.m. after being medically evacuated to New Zealand a day earlier.



**Afghanistan** A Taliban suicide car bomber has targeted an Afghan special forces base on the outskirts of Kabul, killing at least four troops. Authorities also said three other soldiers were wounded in yesterday's attack in the Chahar Asyab district in Kabul province.



**Afghanistan**'s Taliban leaders agree that they want a deal with the United States, but some among them are in more of a hurry than others. Even before Trump over the weekend cancelled a mysterious Camp David summit, the Taliban negotiators were at odds with their council of leaders. More on p15

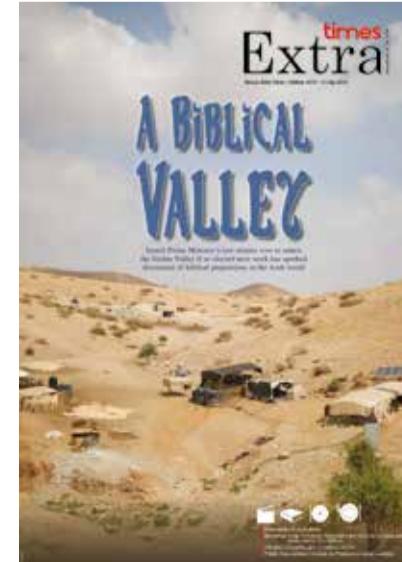
More on backpage

## TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION

# MUST MAKES WORLD RANKING DEBUT, OVERTAKING UM P3



NEW RAINSTORM WARNING TO MEAN  
MANDATORY SCHOOL SUSPENSION



The Israeli Prime Minister's last-minute vow to annex the Jordan Valley if re-elected next week has sparked discontent of biblical proportions in the Arab world

times Extra

## MAINLAND WOMAN ARRESTED AFTER ASSAULTING POLICE

Police have corroborated as genuine a video spreading on the Internet, in which an allegedly drunken woman was seen yelling at and fighting with police officers. Police revealed on Wednesday that the woman, surnamed Jia, is 18 years old and came from the mainland. She was taken to the police sub-station at NAPE by taxi, after the driver accused her of causing damage to the vehicle. The driver added that during her trip, she moved from the back of the car to the front seat and started hitting the driver. After stopping at the police station, the officers on scene were trying to restrain her inside a taxi while they waited for back up. During the arrest, she hit two officers in their waist and abdomen. She was charged by the police with physical assault, resistance, aggravated insult and physical damage.

## GOV'T RETRIEVES COLOANE ALTO LAND PLOT

A land plot on Coloane Alto was retrieved by the government through a cross-departmental operation on Wednesday. The 53,900 square meter land plot was illegally acquired by a property developer, according to the government, which said that the land plot is state-owned. In February last year, the corruption watchdog investigated the matter, and its superintendent, the Chief Executive, instructed that the case be passed to the Judiciary Police. However, since then, the Judiciary Police has not issued any update to the public about the case.

## CE PLEASED WITH INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS SHOW RESTART

Chief Executive Chui Sai On met yesterday with the Chairman of the Macau Industrial Association, António Chui Yuk Lum, and other representatives of the body, in order to exchange views on the city's industrial development. According to a statement issued by the government, Chui indicated that the reactivation of the "Macau Industrial Products Show" last year had yielded good results. The top official said he was pleased to see that the event is being organized again this year. He added that the government will continue to support and collaborate in the preparation of the Macau Industrial Products Show, thereby helping to develop the industrial sector.

# SCHOOLS TO FACE MANDATORY SUSPENSION UNDER NEW RAINSTORM WARNING

DANIEL BEITLER

**ANTHONY LAM**

**SCHOOLS** will be mandatorily suspended when the new Level 3 rainstorm warning is put into effect, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) explained yesterday, revealing the updated mechanism during a meeting with the press.

The DSEJ has conducted a consultation with education stakeholders on the suspension of schools under the new system.

When rainfall measures 20mm, the Level 1 rainstorm warning will be issued, indicating minor inconvenience. Schools are recommended to refrain from punishing students for turning up late to school.

When rainfall measures 50mm, the signal will escalate to Level 2, which will trigger a whole-day suspension for non-secondary foundational education, while secondary schools will be suspended for half a day.

The most severe condition is when Level 3 is issued, indicating 80mm or more of rainfall. School suspension is mandatory, but facilities should remain open to take care of students that are

already on school premises.

The bureau is not worried about possible burden on students, describing it yesterday as minimal.

The new system replaces the existing "on or off" rainstorm warning system, implemented in 2004.

The current system determines only whether there is a rainstorm warning in effect, without actually indicating the severity of the situation.

In addition, the system does not concern secondary school students, meaning that even if there is a rainstorm warning, they will still need to go to school, no matter how heavy the rain becomes.

In July this year, the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau decided to revive the tiered rainstorm warning system. The new system will allow the weather bureau to warn the public with reference and indication to the severity of the condition.

## INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS

In response to questions about the international rankings of Macau's education sys-

tem, the DICJ's Coordinator for School Supervision, Wong I Lin, told journalists to "draw a mind map to understand" the three internationally acclaimed evaluations, PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS.

PISA tests 15-year-old students' literacy in reading, mathematics and science. PIRLS evaluates the reading competency of Primary 4 students. TIMSS focuses on mathematics and science abilities of both Primary 4 and Secondary 2 students.

Macau has yet to take the TIMSS test, but the DICJ aims to take the city's first in 2023.

Wong said these tests are taken to help teachers become more creative and vigorous in teaching, improving the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of learning.

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Reviewing its development, the education bureau said it thinks vocational education in the Macau SAR is quite successful, with 80% of last year's graduates from vocational schools admitted into universities, while half of them extend their vocational path into

tertiary education.

There are a total of 35 multi-faceted courses offered by nine education bodies, covering areas of culinary techniques, Internet communications, hotel management and arts and culture.

The education bureau noted that the final enrolment number is still being calculated as registration is ongoing. However, the trend of late has been downward, following the downturn of overall secondary school enrolment.

The old decree law governing technical and vocational education, numbered 54/96/M, requires students to complete an internship in the final year of their secondary education.

However, with the future law in place, the new internship requirements will allow schools to arrange internships for their students in an independent manner. The internships can be held in one longer period, or divided into phases over the three years of senior secondary education.

For the latter, there must be one phase in which students finish not fewer than 300 hours of interning.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR)\_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com

MANAGING EDITOR\_Daniel Beitler daniel@macaudailytimes.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS\_Eric Sautedé, Leanda Lee, Severo Portela

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS\_Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Lynzy Valles, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Seguí

DESIGNERS\_Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS\_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES\_Associated Press, Bloomberg, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua

SECRETARY\_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Julian Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C,

MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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## TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION

# MUST makes world ranking debut, overtaking UM

THE Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) has made the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for the first time. According to the guide, it has become the top-rated university in the Macau SAR, overtaking the University of Macau (UM) which has made the ranking since 2015.

The two universities are the only ones in the Special Administrative Region to make it onto the list. According to the ranking, the current top university in the Macau SAR is MUST, placing in the range of the top "251 to 300" higher education institutions worldwide. The UM is placed between "301 to 350".

The Times Higher Education does not specify precise rankings after rank 198. However, according to the list, MUST was followed by Medical University of Innsbruck, National University of Ireland and University of Navarra.



MUST scored well in terms of its international outlook, acquiring 99.6 points out of 100. It also earned a high score on its citations, acquiring 83 points.

In terms of teaching and research, it earned 22.4 points and 27.1 points respectively, but gathered 34.8 points in the industry income category. The

full overall score is still not available.

Meanwhile, public university UM was listed within the range of 301 to 350. The UM scored high points in terms of internationalization, acquiring 98.5 points. In terms of teaching and research, it acquired 32.3 points and 32.6 points respectively. Its citation points stood at 61.9 points.

The rankings noted that UM ranked 5th globally for the "international outlook" metric alongside the University of Hong Kong. Meanwhile, MUST was joint second alongside City University of Hong Kong and Qatar University, only behind the University of Luxembourg.

The agency listed that the number of students per staff of both MUST and UM is 24.4 and 14.4 respectively.

The current rank of UM is lower compared to 2015, which was within the range of 276 to 300. Still, today it is higher than

last year, when it was 351 to 400.

According to the publication, all ranked institutions have an overall score and four pillar scores. However, for each pillar, only institutions ranked in the top 500 overall or the top 500 in this pillar have a publicly visible score.

Back in June, UM leapt 56 places in the QS World University Rankings 2020, compared to last year, reaching 387 in the list. Out of the full overall score of 100 points, UM earned 28.7 points.

Meanwhile the University of Saint Joseph congratulated Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP) on becoming the highest-ranked Portuguese university in the rankings. The Portuguese university is now part of the group of 351-400 that are classified in the rankings.

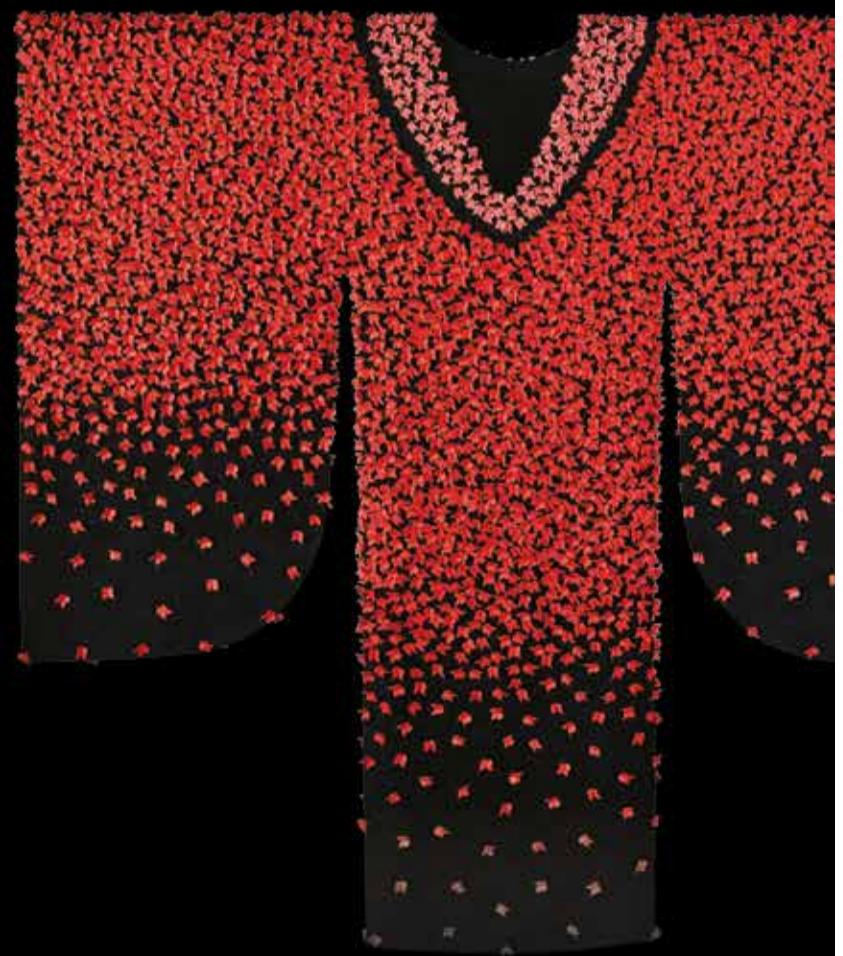
The University of Oxford topped the rankings followed by the California Institute of Technology, University of Cambridge, Stanford University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In mainland China, Tsinghua University was listed as the country's best university, with a global ranking of 23, followed by Peking University and the University of Science and Technology of China which ranked 24 and 80 respectively. LV

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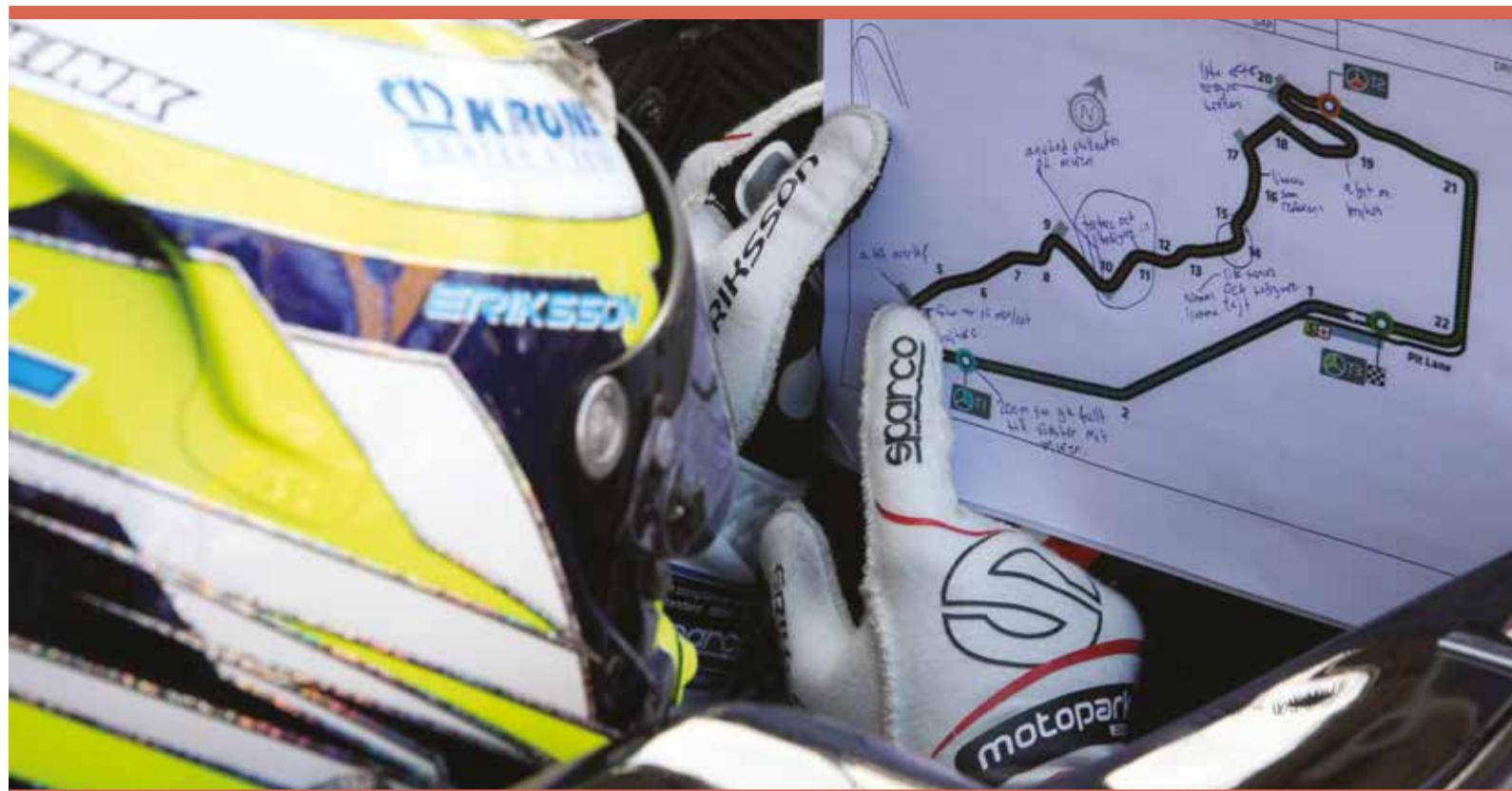
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**MOTORSPORTS**

## GUIA CIRCUIT UPGRADED TO GRADE 2 CLASSIFICATION THIS YEAR

RENATO MARQUES

MACAU'S Guia Circuit has been upgraded from the previous Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) Grade 3 to Grade 2, as revealed yesterday during the press conference of the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC).

According to MGPOC Sporting Subcommittee Coordinator, Chong Coc Veng the upgrade comes as the result of the hosting of the Formula 3 World Cup event which will have new F3 International Series cars on Macau's street circuit this year.

"Because this year's Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix will use cars of a different specification to previous years, we have coordinated with the FIA technical team and designed a number of new measures," Chong said. "The Guia Circuit must be upgraded to cater for these cars. In the past, the Guia Circuit was FIA Grade 3, and this year it will be homologated as an FIA Grade 2 track."

Chong also noted that the change implies that some safety measures have been introduced to the track such as the inclusion of new safety barriers at the Reservoir and Mandarin bends, as

well as the enlargement of the buffer zone at the Lisboa Bend, and the placement of additional impact protection foam at the Guia Hill and "R" bends.

Another noticeable change is the inclusion of electronic flags along the circuit.

All the announced measures were recommended by the FIA and fully accepted by the Grand Prix (GP) committee with the committee preparing a computer-simulated test that will likely happen next month.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event that took place at the Macau Tower Convention Cen-

ter, the MGPOC Coordinator, Pun Weng Kun stated, "safety is always our greatest priority and the aspect we pay most attention to."

He added that due to all the works and changes promoted for this year's edition, "we are confident that this year things will be better [in terms of safety] and we are doing everything according to the worldwide requirements."

**GP RETAINS SPONSORS**

The event held yesterday afternoon also served for the signing of two sponsorship agreements with Sociedade de Jogos de Ma-

cau, S.A. (SJM) and FOOD4U, which will continue to sponsor the Macau GT Cup and the Macau Touring Car Cup respectively, and the title sponsor of the event - Suncity Group.

For the total budget of MOP270 million announced by the MGPOC, SJM and FOOD4U will contribute MOP4.6 million and MOP1.9 million, respectively.

The total budget of the event, which reaches MOP270 million, a significant increase when compared with previous editions, when the budgets rounded MOP220 million, is precisely the amount needed to upgrade the safety standards of the track, Pun also said.

The GP Coordinator also announced that the contract with BMW Concessionaires (Macau) Limited for the supply of Safety, Medical, Rescue and Official Vehicles had been renewed for another two years, with BMW responsible for supplying all the required vehicles for both the 2019 and 2020 editions of the local Grand Prix.

**LOCAL RACES TO INCLUDE 36 ENTRIES**

In the only racing event that still preserves a significant local representation, the Macau Touring Car Cup will continue to feature two different categories including cars from the class of 1600cc Turbo engines and 1950cc or over. The classification races were held during the months of May and June.

According to Chong, this racing event will continue to include a total number of 36 participants, most of them from Macau or Hong Kong, who every year compete to be included in the racing program of the largest sporting event in Macau.

## Alexis Tam leads tourism delegation to St. Petersburg

SECRETARY for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam led a local delegation to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in St. Petersburg this week to discuss issues with representatives of the tourism sector from around the world.

The Secretary joined other delegates from around the world in discussing how the tourism sector was working toward the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through education and employment.

Tam, along with the delegation, attended the plenary session and the High-Level Forum on Medical and Health Tourism, and also met with Executive



Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam (second left) and Director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) Helena de Senna Fernandes (left)

Director of the WTO, Zhu Shanzhong, and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific of the WTO, Xu Jing,

During the meeting, Tam presented an array of tourism initiatives conducted in Macau in parallel

with the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the progress of coordinating the Global Tourism

Economy Forum.

Meanwhile, during the General Assembly, Tam met with the ministers of Brazil and Argentina, both of whom confirmed their presence at the upcoming Global Tourism Economy Forum which will be held in Macau in October.

Participating in WTO as an associate member, Macau has been actively engaging in the organization's events and projects towards the goal of strengthening international tourism cooperation. The Global Tourism Economy Forum, hosted by the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture, is a partner with the Organization's Awards Ceremony in 2019, while the WTO is the forum's collaborative partner

this year.

The WTO convened the 23rd Session of its General Assembly in St. Petersburg, Russia. Held biennially, the WTO General Assembly is the largest and highest-level meeting for the global tourism community, attended by senior tourism officials and leaders of the private sector from around the world. This session brought together delegations from over 120 countries and regions as well as over 90 ministerial officials.

The delegation from the Macau SAR included the Director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Helena de Senna Fernandes, as well as advisors from the Office of the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture. DB

# Gov't replies to Sulu Sou on social credit system

THE Policy Research and Regional Development Bureau has reiterated the "one country, two systems" principle and the stipulation on the protection of fundamental rights and freedom in the Basic Law, in a reply to lawmaker Sulu Sou's written interpellation on the implementation of the mainland's social credit system in Macau.

To start, the bureau stated that the credit system is a fundamental mechanism in a market economy, citing that the U.S. started its own credit system in the 1970s based on its Fair Credit Reporting Act. The reply then points out the legal foundation on which the mainland credit system is based, including a mention in the latest plan for the country's development.



Noting that the socialist system and policies would not be implemented in Macau for 50 years following the handover - pursuant to the Basic Law of the territory - the three-year action plan compiled by Guangdong will only take effect within the province. Any stipula-

tion will not be applied to Macau.

The Macau government, the reply states, has been law-abiding in its governance. For example, the Civil Code stipulates the rights to personal privacy, while the Personal Data Protection Law protects han-

dling of personal data.

Sou sent his interpellation in July. He questioned the government about the suspected implementation of the mainland social credit system in Macau. The system's legitimacy, legality, equality and protection for all, according to the lawmaker, have never been proven to meet international standards.

The lawmaker cited cases in which the children of the suspect of a criminal case were suspended from enrolling in a university. He thinks this "filial penalty system" is not suitable for today.

Less severe penalties include banning a person with low social credit score from purchasing air tickets, train seats and even taking a taxi. The system, as the lawmaker puts it, is a violation of equality, dignity and privacy. **AL**

## SANDS CHINA HONORS EMPLOYEES AT GRADUATION CEREMONY

SANDS China Ltd. held its Diversified Local Talent Graduation Ceremony for the Sands China Academy this week to celebrate the achievements of its local employees that participated in the company's human resource development programmes.

Three key areas of the company's focus are horizontal and vertical management talent development, professionalism training, and development of industry professionals outside of the gaming operator.

During the ceremony, company employees participated in a sharing session featuring a video presentation, a quiz show and a performance.

Some of the initiatives celebrated were the first of their kind in Macau and are now being offered to those who are not direct employees of Sands China, such as those employed by the company's partners.

A total of 6,200 participants graduated in 2018-2019.

Sands China Ltd. president Wilfred Wong and officiating guests presented certificates to graduating employees, and representatives of retailers and SME suppliers.

"Learning is a life-long process," said Wong. "Sands China is more than pleased to provide a diversity of initiatives for local talent, not only by providing short-term courses, but by offering a continuous, fruitful learning experience."

According to the gaming operator, the academy has provided over 8.3 million training hours to employees to date, including more than 1.7 million training hours delivered in 2018.

According to the president, Sands China Academy will "continue to help team members grow along with the company." **LV**

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# AIRPORT CONDUCTS DRILL FOR LANDING ACCIDENT

**M**ACAU International Airport conducted an emergency drill in the early hours of yesterday, simulating an accident in which an aircraft veered off the runway and crashed into the sea. The airport emergency plan was activated to attend the accident and, according to a statement from the Civil Aviation Authority, the exercise ran smoothly and achieved its goal.

The simulation tested safety and emergency procedures for the case of an accident during which the fuselage was broken into several sections and were floating some distance from the runway. The simulated aircraft was carrying 80 passengers and six cabin crew members. The simulated accident resulted in some passengers being trapped inside one section of the fuselage while other passengers were thrown into the water.

The airport emergency operations center was ac-



tivated and the fire services and the rescue team arrived on location to provide search and rescue services; it was confirmed that there were 10 deceased passengers and 45 injured passengers; those injured requiring medical treatment were sent to the hospital; a family reception area and a counseling center were

also established in the passenger terminal to provide inquiry and counseling services to the uninjured and the family members of those injured and the deceased.

The drill started at 3 a.m. and lasted for three hours. All participating entities were able to act following the airport emergency

plan, as well as the contingency plans.

The statement notes that a total of 350 participants were involved in the drill including 14 public and private entities – the airport management, security forces, and several other bureaus and companies that provided assistance or participated as observers. RM

## FORUM

### PORTUGAL-CHINA TIES BEST EVER, SAYS AMBASSADOR

**P**ORTUGAL'S relationship with China is the best it has ever been, according to an article penned by the Chinese ambassador to Portugal in the China Daily newspaper.

"The bilateral relationship is, at present, the best ever, with Portugal being a 'good friend' of China in the European Union, an important participant in the construction of the Belt and Road, an attractive place for Chinese companies wanting to internationalize and an effective platform for the expansion of trilateral cooperation," said the Chinese ambassador Cai Run, in the article.

Portugal was also the fifth-largest investment destination for Chinese companies in Europe, which, according to incomplete statistics, reached around \$10 billion, which was invested in the energy, finance, insurance and health sectors, among others.

The ambassador pointed out that investment by Portuguese companies in China is growing steadily, although he provided no figures. MDT/MACAUHUB

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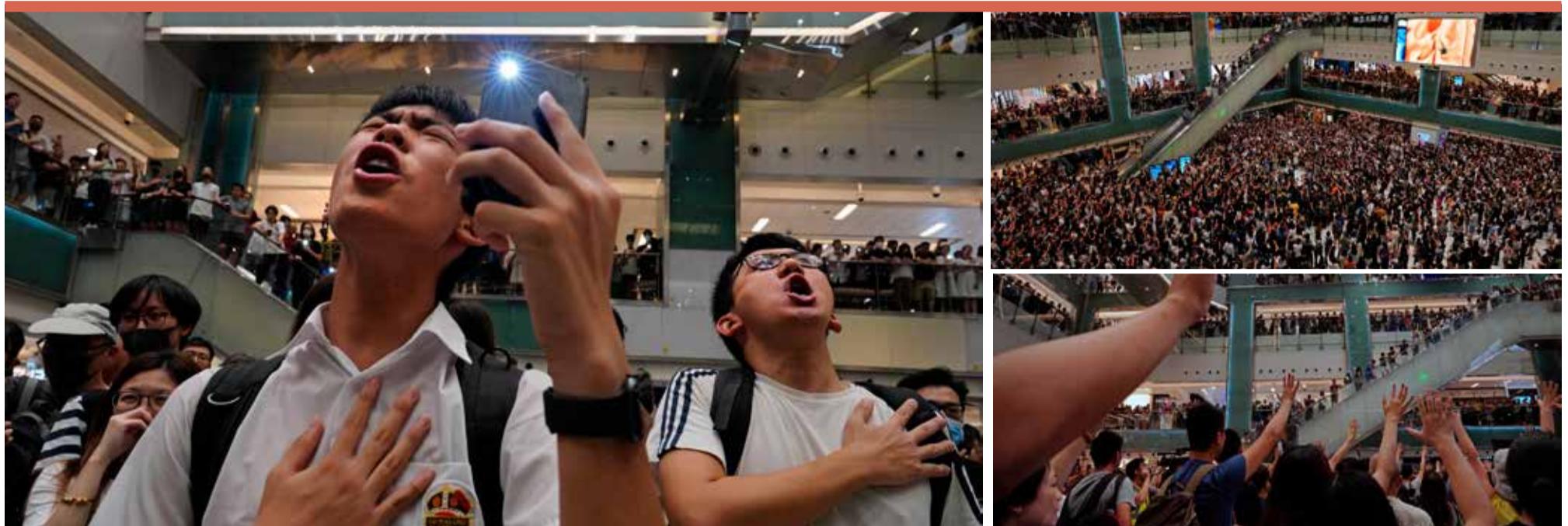
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AP PHOTO



# Belting out protest song is latest act of HK movement

EILEEN NG

**T**HOUSANDS of Hong Kong people belted out a new protest song in karaoke-style at shopping malls in the latest act of resistance that highlighted the creativity of demonstrators in their months-long fight for democratic freedoms in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Late Wednesday, activists and ordinary citizens sang "Glory to Hong Kong" at several malls for a third straight night in a respite from recent violence clashes. More protests are expected this weekend, though on Thursday police banned one planned rally, citing safety concerns.

The protesters have adopted the song, penned anonymously, as their anthem. The lyrics reflect protesters' vow not to surrender despite a government conces-

sion to axe an extradition bill that sparked the summer of unrest.

At the New Town Plaza in Sha Tin district, some 2,000 people spread across several floors chanted slogans before breaking out into song in an emotional scene, with some crying with their hands to their hearts while others lifted their hands in the air. Many referred to lyrics on their phone as they sang a cappella.

The crowd included families with young children, students and senior citizens, many of them not wearing masks, the usual attire of protesters. The busy mall is linked to a subway station where police fired tear gas on Sunday after protesters vandalized the station.

Local media showed singing taking place in at least seven other malls, as well as in some spots including outside a subway station. The South China Morning Post

said participants responded to online calls to gather and sing. Police were absent and the gatherings dispersed peacefully.

The song has been sung at almost every protest since it emerged Aug. 31, including during a World Cup qualifier match on Tuesday with Iran where Hong Kong soccer fans booed at the Chinese national anthem before kick-off.

Protesters over the more than three months of demonstrations have also sang the Christian hymn "Sing Hallelujah to the Lord" and the "Les Misérables" tune "Do You Hear the People Sing?"

The sing-alongs have boosted protesters' morale and highlighted their creativity in inventing new ways to get their message heard by the authorities.

Yesterday, hundreds of pro-Beijing supporters staged a

counter protest during lunchtime at a swank mall downtown, singing the Chinese national anthem and waving red five-star national flags.

Protesters have widened their demands to include calls for direct elections for the city's leaders and police accountability. Many saw the extradition bill, that would have sent some suspected criminals to China for trial, as a glaring example of the city's eroding autonomy since the former British colony returned to Chinese control in 1997.

The Civil Human Rights Front, which has organized several massive rallies, said yesterday it is appealing the police ban on its planned march Sunday.

Police had also banned the group's Aug. 31 march but protesters turned up anyway. Violent clashes erupted that night, with police storming a subway car and

hitting passengers with batons and pepper spray.

Front coordinator Bonnie Leung said police noted the proposed route would pass close to high-risk buildings including the police headquarters, government offices and subway stations that have been a focus of protests in recent weeks.

She said police also told the group they cannot stop protesters from breaking away and carrying out illegal violent acts. But Leung said violent clashes were unrelated to the group.

"We create a safe zone for people to protest. Our marches are like Hong Kong people giving a chance to the government to end the crisis peacefully but now, they have closed the valve to release public anger. It's like declaring war to peaceful protesters," she told the Associated Press.

Leung accused authorities of trying to provoke protesters to carry out illegal gatherings to find an excuse to crack down. She urged activists "not to fall into the trap," saying protests can be in many forms and that they should keep safe to sustain the protest movement. AP

## Hurdles mount for Hong Kong Exchange's \$36.6 billion London bid

DINESH NAIR &amp; VIREN VAGHELA

**T**HE Hong Kong Exchanges & Clearing Ltd. plan to take over London Stock Exchange Group Plc is running into multiple obstacles less than 24 hours after the surprise bid was launched, with the U.K. bourse leaning toward rejecting the offer in its current form, according to people familiar with the matter.

HKEX shares fell as much as 3.8%, while LSE

is trading at about 14% below the offer price, highlighting skepticism such a deal will get done. LSE declined to comment.

LSE must decide between HKEX's offer on Wednesday and its own plan to acquire Refinitiv to become a global data powerhouse. If LSE decides to fend off HKEX's bid for the marketplace, it can count on some powerful allies. While the takeover represents a vote of confidence in London as a post-Brexit financial hub,

officials in the U.K. and U.S. are likely to look skeptically at the prospect of Chinese links to the world's biggest venue for handling interest-rate swaps.

"Shareholders who previously welcomed the proposed acquisition of Refinitiv will be seeking assurances that the strategic rationale will not be undermined by a successful bid for LSE," said Rhona Millar, an investment analyst at Aberdeen Standard Investments which holds LSE shares.

Shares in LSE initially rose as much as 16% after HKEX said it wanted to combine the exchanges in a cash-and-stock deal that valued the London firm at 29.6 billion pounds (\$36.6 billion). However, the stock pared gains as analysts raised doubts about the deal gaining approval from shareholders and global regulators.

"The London Stock Exchange is a critically important part of the U.K. financial system, so as you would expect, the

government and the regulators will be looking at the details closely," said a spokesperson for the U.K. government on Wednesday. "We cannot comment further on commercial matters."

The government has the power to intervene in mergers on public interest grounds.

LSE senior managers were blindsided by the offer, said another person familiar with the situation, who asked not to be named discussing matters that aren't public on Wednesday. Internally, recent meetings have concentrated on the significant benefits of the Refinitiv deal, the person said.

With global political

tensions rising - including protests in Hong Kong and U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war with China - commercial arguments may not be the most compelling. U.S. regulators last year rejected a bid by a Chinese-linked consortium to take over the Chicago Stock Exchange, a deal that then-candidate Trump blasted when it was announced in 2016.

Both firms have been involved in exchange merger deals in recent years, with LSE failing in its attempt to combine with Deutsche Boerse AG and HKEX acquiring London Metal Exchange in 2012. BLOOMBERG

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**中秋園遊晚會 2019**  
 Celebração da Lua · Festividade do Bolo Lunar

**13 / 09 / 2019**  
 18:30 - 21:30

**Venue**  
 Albergue SCM - Patio & D1 Room

**Program**

- Chinese calligraphy demonstration
- Music Performance
- Traditional Rabbit Lanterns to Children (Availability Limited)
- Snack boxes with traditional festive selection
- Snack and Drink (Availability Limited)
- Chinese sweet dumplings (Availability Limited)
- Snack boxes with traditional festive selection  
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 The tag is limited to one per person.  
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**慶祝中華人民共和國成立七十周年**  
**13 / 09 ~ 04 / 12 / 2019**

**Duration of Exhibition**  
 September 13th 2019 until December 4th 2019

**Opening Hours**  
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 Tuesday to Sunday, from 12:00PM to 08:00PM

**Opening Ceremony**  
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# Filipinos dropping out of the workforce benefit economy

SIEGFRIED ALEGADO

**L**OW unemployment in the Philippines may be masking the fact that more people are opting not to work - and preferring to stay in school for longer.

The jobless rate has been fairly steady around 5% for more than a year, down from 6.6% two years ago. A closer look at the data shows more than 750,000 Filipinos aged 15 or above dropped out of the labor force last year. That means some 28 million people - about 40% of the working-age population - aren't employed and aren't looking for jobs.

"Most of the youth stayed out of the labor force," Economic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia told reporters in Manila. "Boys cited staying in school as their reason for not working."

At first glance, that would seem like a major drag on growth. But a better-educated workforce would be a significant boost down the line for a country that counts population size as a major driver of its economy.

Traditionally, young Filipino men have worked without pay on family farms or earn meager salaries for manual labor at construction sites, markets or ports.

The number of men aged 15-24 who were not in the labor force - and which would include students - increased by 1.25 million between 2010 and 2018, according to the statistics agency. At the

BLOOMBERG



same time, the number of females joining the labor force climbed: About 1 million more young women actively looked for employment or had joined the workforce in 2018 compared to 2010.

Families may be keeping their sons in school longer as they benefit from a decade-old government cash-transfer program, as well as free tuition at technical schools and state colleges, said Emilio Neri, a senior economist at Bank of the Philippine Islands in Manila.

"All of those efforts led to more students gaining more access to tertiary and technical or vocational" education, he said.

In addition, high schools

- which used to end at 10th grade - added two extra years of studies several years ago. That may have kept young people out of the workforce for longer, but wouldn't have stopped some families from taking teens out of school and sending them to work if necessary.

Among Filipino men, 21% have undertaken college or other post-secondary education, compared to 25% of women, the latest data from the statistics agency show. Most male students in tertiary education are studying information technology, while most women are in business administration and related fields.

There are signs that the programs are slowly transla-

ting to a better-educated labor force.

"It's to the country's advantage to make the best of the increasing labor force to boost economic output," Pernia said, adding that the government intends to invest more in educational programs.

Better education and training will surely deepen the available talent pool. But the key test will be whether the economy can create enough jobs outside service industries like tourism and call centers.

"The challenge is really to continue generating the opportunities for higher-skilled workers," Neri said.

BLOOMBERG

## CHINA VIDEO APP SEEKS FUNDS AT \$25 BILLION VALUE BEFORE US IPO

CRYSTAL TSE &amp; LULU YILUN CHEN

**C**HINESE startup Kuaishou is considering to go public in the U.S. to bankroll its expansion in short videos and fend off competition from TikTok owner ByteDance Inc., according to people familiar with the matter.

The company, backed by Tencent Holdings Ltd., plans to list next year, the people said, requesting not to be named because the matter is private. One person said Kuaishou also weighed the option of going public this year. The video startup is raising more than \$1 billion at a \$25 billion valuation in a pre-IPO round mostly from Tencent, one of the people said.

Kuaishou is an important part of Chinese social media giant Tencent's strategy to compete against ByteDance, which is now the world's most valuable startup. Tencent has devoted a lot of resources toward building a library of short and mini video offerings - key to retaining user attention and boosting advertising revenue - but has yet to catch ByteDance.

"Tencent's biggest enemy is ByteDance right now," said David Dai, a Hong Kong-based analyst at Bernstein. "Tencent hasn't been very successful in short videos in the past, so resorting to investing in other companies instead is its best option."

Tencent President Martin Lau said during an August earnings call that short and mini videos would be a key vertical for expansion.

Kuaishou or "fast hand" first established its popularity among users in China's smaller cities and rural areas, with people streaming slices of everyday life from harvesting corn to slurping noodles. It's also been luring users in bigger cities and expanding its content to include everything from people playing video games to teenagers lip-syncing songs.

Kuaishou was seeking funds in January last year at a valuation of \$17 billion. The company was valued at \$3 billion in January 2015 by CB Insights.

The eight-year-old company also counts Sequoia and Morningside Group Holdings as backers. It had 110 million daily active users as of December 2017, according to its website. Annie He, a spokeswoman for Kuaishou didn't respond to requests for comment. Tencent declined to comment in an emailed statement.

"Kuaishou is the only one that can still counter ByteDance now," said Dai. BLOOMBERG

## CORPORATE BITS

### Social media users win getaway at Conrad's Presidential Suite



Facebook fan of Conrad Macao, Cotai Central, Wing Chan from Hong Kong, and Instagram fan Fernando Alberto Xavier Pereira from Macau, have each won a getaway in the hotel's luxurious Presidential Suite, valued at MOP46,000, just by uploading a photo of a Conrad Macao teddy bear taken at a world-famous location on their Facebook and Instagram pages. The winning photos were taken against the backdrop of Paris City Hall and the "Vessel" in New York City.

The promotional campaign gave Conrad Macao fans

the chance to win a #TravelBear2019 Getaway Package if they uploaded a photo of one of the hotel's signature bears, taken at famous destinations and tourist attractions, on their Facebook or Instagram pages.

Fans would also need to use the hashtag #TravelBear2019 and tag Conrad Macao's Facebook or Instagram to enter the competition. The competition, now in its sixth year, has reached more than 2.6 million users, with over 1,340 likes and 364 shares.

Conrad Macao's collection of bears have become collectible items since the hotel opened in April 2012. In addition to the gold bear guests receive when they stay, there is also an exclusive collection of four seasonal bears every year.

### Local students get behind-the-scenes look at Parisian Macao



Around 180 middle school students visited the back-of-house areas of The Parisian Macao last week and Friday, as part of Sands China's ongoing support of Macau International Start-Up Week (MIS Week).

Students from Hou Kong

introduced the facility's daily operations to the students, helping them learn more about the receiving procedures, systems and equipment, thereby giving them a closer look into the running of an international large-scale integrated resort like The Parisian Macao.

Organized by the Youth Entrepreneurship Innovation and Cultivation Committee, MIS Week was held from September 5 to 7 at The Venetian Macao. The week is a Macau entrepreneur-based exhibition and large-scale platform, providing entrepreneurs a wide range of support to help them successfully advance and promote the development of their businesses.

# TAIWAN'S PRESIDENT RISES FROM THE ASHES WITH A HAND FROM HONG KONG UNREST

CINDY WANG &amp; MIAOJUNG LIN

**H**EADING into 2019, Tsai Ing-wen looked at risk of becoming Taiwan's first one-term president. Then came the unrest in Hong Kong.

Tsai had clawed back some ground in opinion polls before protesters started taking to the streets of Hong Kong in the hundreds of thousands in June. But the mass demonstrations there against China's deepening encroachment have given her a noticeable boost ahead of Taiwan's presidential elections in January.

As Taiwanese watch with concern the events in Hong Kong, particularly crackdowns on demonstrators, with scenes of police beating protesters huddled in balls on the floors of Hong Kong's subways, Tsai's firm stance on China has become her biggest selling point.

What happens in Hong Kong, including the way Beijing responds to protracted unrest, matters for democratically run Taiwan, which China considers part of its territory. The island's leaders have often faced challenges in dealing with China, which is much bigger geographically, economically and militarily. There are risks at home from being seen as either too hard or too soft. And it was indeed her China policy that tripped Tsai up in the second half of last year.

Tsai's refusal to endorse Beijing's bottom line that both sides belong to "one China" - sometimes called the 1992 Consensus - while at the same time avoiding overt moves to assert Taiwan's independence upset people on both sides of the spectrum. The upshot was a sense she had mismanaged the China issue.

Still, President Xi Jinping's Jan. 2 speech - he urged "in-depth democratic consultations" to work toward China's long-held goal of unification and explicitly reaffirmed "one country, two systems" as his preferred model - followed by the protests in Hong Kong have rallied support behind Tsai taking a stronger stance. She has said Taiwan will never unite with China as long as she's in power.

In Taiwan's last presidential election in 2016, Jamie Chiang voted for a candidate who promised a closer relationship with China. Come January, she will back Tsai.

"I am terrified Taiwan may become like Hong Kong if we accept the 92 Consensus," the Taipei electronics company worker said. "I am worried we may lose our democracy, freedom, and everything we are used to because you can't trust China."

Tsai's popularity sank as low as 15% after her Democratic Pro-

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Tsai leads [KMT's candidate] Han by eight percentage points, according to a late August survey by broadcaster TVBS

gressive Party fared poorly in local elections in November. Part of her falling approval was due to cuts in civil servant, teacher and military pensions, plus wage stagnation. Tsai stepped down as party chief, and there was chatter she could be dumped as its candidate for the election.

Before the pro-democracy protests erupted in Hong Kong, Tsai still lagged challenger Han Kuo-yu of the pro-China opposition Kuomintang by double digits in most opinion polls. Now, she leads Han by eight percentage points, according to a late August survey by broadcaster TVBS. Much of her support is from those under 40.

With an increasingly assertive Chinese leadership under Xi - and a trade war threatening to split the world into competing spheres of Chinese and U.S. influence - the presidential election is shaping up to be Taiwan's most consequential since its first in 1996. The DPP favors eventually formalizing Taiwan's independent status, thus making unification even harder.

Hong Kong was returned to Chinese rule in 1997 under an agreement with the U.K. that guaranteed the territory a "high degree of autonomy" until 2047. Beijing always saw the use of the model in Hong Kong as a test case for Taiwan. The two sides have been

ruled separately since Chiang Kai-shek moved his Nationalist government across the Taiwan Strait during the Chinese civil war.

Tsai has been vocal on the turmoil in Hong Kong, speaking at least once a week via Facebook and Twitter in support of the demonstrators. She was the first leader to express concern over the arrests of prominent Hong Kong opposition figures. In a Facebook post in August, she vowed Taiwan would never become like Hong Kong as long as she's president. And last week one of Hong

## Tsai's firm stance on China has become her biggest selling point

Kong's most well known pro-democracy activists, Joshua Wong, visited Taiwan and met with the DPP chairman.

China has pointed to Tsai's party as one of the key agitators behind the protests. This week, the Taiwan Affairs Office in Beijing urged the DPP to withdraw its "black hand" from Hong Kong and to stop sheltering "radicals."

Chiang, the Taipei resident, says she has mostly voted for KMT candidates in previous presidential elections, eager to maintain a harmonious cross-strait relationship since her father works in China and her sister-in-law is

from the eastern Chinese province of Zhejiang. That changed with Hong Kong's forceful response to the protests and what she sees as China's willingness to violate international agreements.

"I don't believe anything they say about one-country, two systems," she said.

Concern in Taiwan over China's response to the Hong Kong protest movement is showing up in its ubiquitous bubble tea shops. Some Taiwanese chains with mainland branches bowed to online pressure and voiced support for the view that Hong Kong and Taiwan are both part of China. Back in Taiwan, there have been countercampaigns to buy tea only from outlets that support the demonstrations.

China has used its economic leverage at times of political tension with a number of neighbors, and Taiwan is no exception. Since Tsai came to power Beijing has curbed the number of mainland tour groups allowed to visit and banned individual tourist travel entirely. Around 40% of Taiwan's exports go to China and about 400,000 Taiwanese work there.

While the protests have given Tsai a boost other factors have helped, especially among younger voters, such as Taiwan's economic resilience in the face of the U.S.-China trade war and a land-

mark decision to legalize same-sex marriage in May.

A Taiwan Mainland Affairs Council poll at the end of July showed the number of Taiwanese who support formal independence, either immediately or at a later date, rose to 26% - more than double those who want unification. It also showed that almost 90% of respondents opposed "one country, two systems," and about 65% supported protests in Hong Kong.

The hand of China has played out ahead of previous elections. The People's Liberation Army conducted missile tests in the Taiwan Strait in 1996 in an unsuccessful effort to scare voters against voting for then-President Lee Teng-hui. Shortly before the 2016 poll, Chinese internet users pressured a 16-year-old Taiwanese member of a South Korean pop band into recording a video apologizing for appearing on a Korean TV show holding Taiwan's flag.

Tsai's victory is by no means assured, as two other high-profile figures continue to hint at presidential runs. Taipei city Mayor Ko Wen-je and Terry Gou, the billionaire founder of iPhone assembler Foxconn, have until Tuesday to decide whether to run. Gou appears closest to joining the race, having sent aides to Taiwan's election commission to discuss the application procedures for formally registering his intention to run.

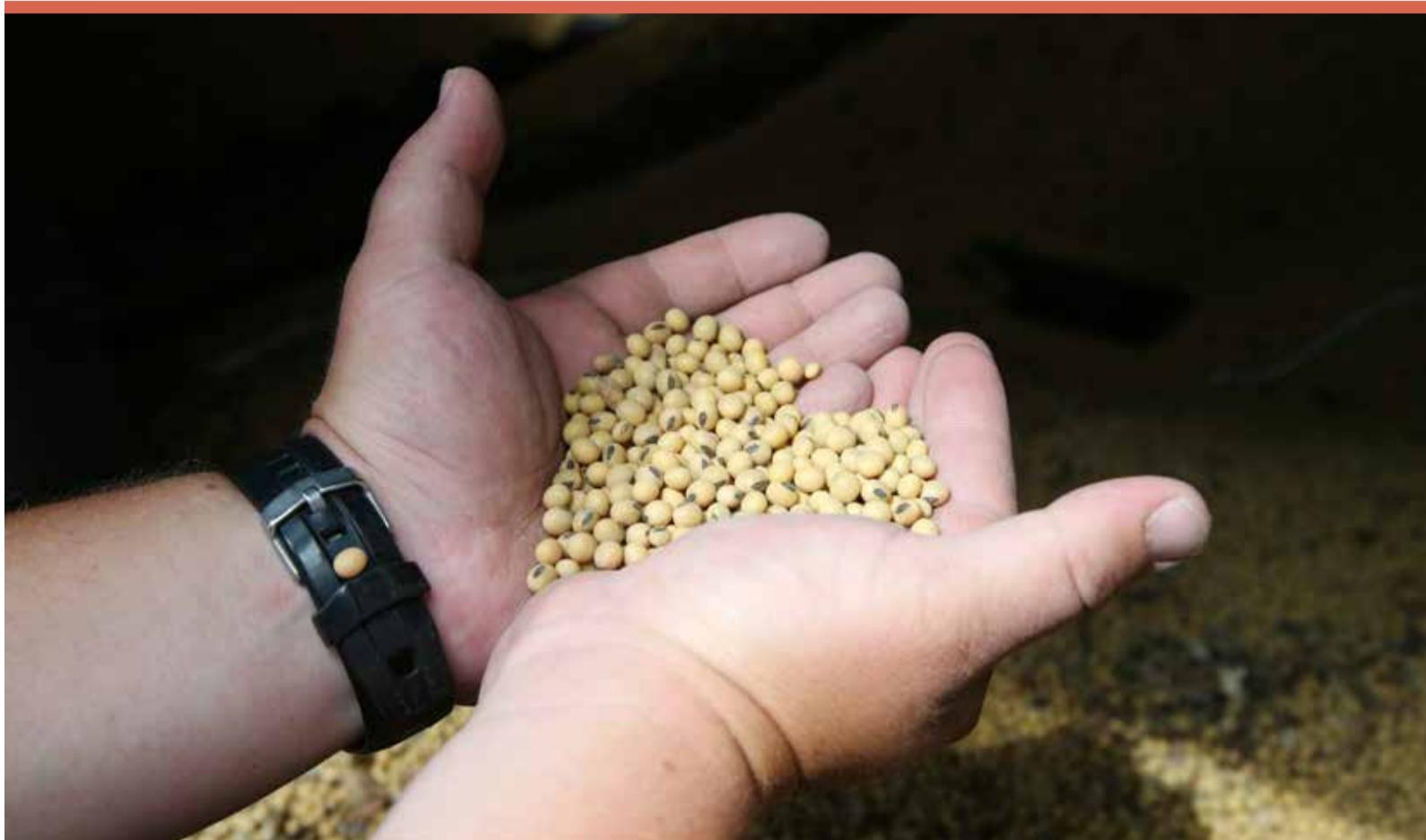
KMT challenger Han favors closer exchanges with China, but has been quiet about specific cross-strait policies since he won the party nomination. He plans to give a detailed account of his stance by the end-September, says political adviser Chao Chien-min. Chao stresses that Han disagrees with "one country, two systems."

Han has previously described Taiwan and China as two partners in an "arranged marriage" who had fallen "madly in love" and said peace talks between the two were inevitable. He became the first elected official from Taiwan to visit Beijing's liaison office - the Communist Party's outpost in Hong Kong - during a trip there in March.

For Tsai, much may depend on how the Hong Kong protests play out.

"Even though Hong Kong's protest has a decisive effect among the young generation in Taiwan in helping them form their political preferences for the first time, its effect among the older generation depends on how much the protest and the trade war influence China's economy," said Austin Wang, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Nevada. "It's too early to say who will win in the end." BLOOMBERG

AP PHOTO

**TRUCE**

# China buyers asking about US soy, pork before trade talks

JOE McDONALD, BEIJING

**C**HINESE importers are asking U.S. suppliers for prices of soybeans, pork and other farm goods, the Commerce Ministry said yesterday, in a possible goodwill gesture ahead of talks aimed at ending a tariff war.

The statement followed President Donald Trump's decision Wednesday to postpone a planned Oct. 1 tariff hike on Chinese imports.

The gestures appear meant to reduce tensions ahead of the October negotiations over trade and technology. But the two sides have given no sign of progress

toward ending an escalating dispute threatening global economic growth.

"Chinese enterprises have started to inquire about the price of American farm goods including soybeans and pork," ministry spokesman Gao Feng said at a news briefing.

Asked whether the purchases were part of a deal to relax U.S. sanctions against Chinese tech giant Huawei, Gao said, "I don't know that such negotiating conditions exist."

Chinese leaders are resisting U.S. pressure to roll back plans for government-led creation of global competitors in robotics and other industries.

Washington, Europe, Japan and other trading partners say those plans violate China's market-opening commitments and are based on stealing or pressuring companies to hand over technology.

Trump said the delay in tariffs due to be imposed Oct. 1 was a "gesture of good will." Instead, the penalties take effect Oct. 15.

Trump has imposed or announced penalties on about \$550 billion of Chinese imports. Tariffs of 25% that were imposed previously on \$250 billion worth of Chinese goods were due to rise to 30% on Oct. 1.

China has raised duties on about \$120 billion of U.S. products. Some have been hit with increas-

ses more than once, while about \$50 billion of U.S. goods is unaffected, possibly to avoid disrupting Chinese industries.

Washington also imposed curbs on sales of U.S. technology to Huawei Technologies Ltd., one of the biggest makers of smartphones and telecom switching equipment. The company, China's first global tech brand, has warned its smartphone sales will be hurt badly if the controls take effect.

The two sides are expected to meet in Washington early next month but haven't announced a date.

By delaying his tariff hike, Trump allowed for the possibility they might make enough progress

to avert the increase indefinitely. However, economists say a final agreement is unlikely this year.

Earlier Wednesday, Beijing announced exemptions for 16 categories of American products from punitive duties. But it kept in place penalties on soybeans, the biggest U.S. export to China, and other farm goods. Those target farm states that supported Trump in the 2016 presidential election.

The Chinese exemptions apply to raw materials needed by farmers and factories. Gao, the Chinese spokesman, said they were granted if no alternative suppliers could be found or the increase would hurt Chinese industry or the economy.

At home, China is facing factory-price deflation, falling exports and an uncertain path for government stimulus policy given the nation's debt load and fragile property sector. In the U.S., factory activity unexpectedly contracted in August for the first time in three years, underscoring how slowing global growth and an escalating U.S. trade war with China are taking an even bigger toll on domestic producers.

"Trump's goodwill gesture suggests that the trade war is starting to bite and the U.S. may be more eager to close a deal," said Chua Hak Bin, an economist at Maybank Kim Eng Research Pte. in Singapore. "The clock is ticking and Trump's approval ratings are sliding, with manufacturing now in recession."

Despite the goodwill gestures, the two sides remain far apart on fundamental issues, and officials continue to trade barbs. China wants the U.S. to remove all extra tariffs, and the U.S. has long sought concessions on intellectual property and state-subsidies for industry that Beijing has been unwilling to give.

"The negotiators have had a year to come to an agreement, and they remain structurally at odds on key issues," said Andrew Polk, co-founder of research firm Trivium China in Beijing. "Another two-week reprieve doesn't change those fundamentals."

**MDT/AGENCIES**

# Chinese businesswoman guilty in Mar-a-Lago trespassing case

**YUJING** Zhang's desire to meet President Donald Trump and his family turned the Chinese businesswoman into an American felon.

A 10-woman, two-man federal jury convicted Zhang yesterday [Macau time] of trespassing at the president's Mar-a-Lago club in March and lying to Secret Service agents. The 33-year-old Shanghai consultant faces up to six years in prison when District Judge Roy Altman sentences

her Nov. 22.

Zhang, who acted as her own attorney after firing her public defenders in June, showed no reaction when the verdict was read. She then spoke calmly with federal marshals, discussing what would happen with her legal papers. She smiled at her standby public defenders and was led back to jail.

Prosecutors and Zhang's standby attorneys declined to comment. Jury forewoman Shelly Hoffman said

only, "You heard our verdict."

Zhang's troubles began in February when she paid \$20,000 to "Charles," a man she knew only online, to attend a Chinese-American friendship event at Mar-a-Lago on March 30. It included a promised photo with the president or a member of his family, evidence showed. Such meet-and-greets are common during events at Mar-a-Lago, the exclusive club Trump has run since 1995 on the grou-

nds of a 1920s mansion built by cereal heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post.

Zhang's former public defenders believe "Charles" is Charles Lee, a Chinese national who ran the United Nations Chinese Friendship Association. It is not affiliated with the U.N. He was photographed at least twice with Cindy Yang, a Republican donor and former Florida massage parlor owner who organized Mar-a-Lago events.

Zhang's decision to re-

present herself frequently frustrated Judge Altman during pretrial hearings and the trial and he often beseeched her to use her public defenders. She sometimes spoke well in English, but other times relied on her Mandarin interpreters. At one point she claimed she couldn't fully understand Mandarin because she hadn't spoken it much in six months, but Altman found that claim ridiculous.

Still, the former fede-

ral prosecutor appointed by Trump earlier this year frequently tried to help Zhang navigate the trial by stepping in where defense attorneys normally would. For example, he ordered prosecutors to reword questions and he stopped an FBI translator from noting a stamp on the contract Zhang signed with Charles contained the initials of the Chinese Communist Party, a potentially prejudicial but irrelevant revelation. **MDT/AP**

# CAMBODIA, LAOS, AGREE TO STEP UP BORDER DEMARCACTION EFFORT

THE leaders of Cambodia and Laos agreed yesterday to step up efforts to complete demarcation of their border, where disputes have led to armed confrontations in recent years.

Prime Minister Hun Sen and his visiting Lao counterpart, Thongloun Sisoulith, agreed in a statement to complete the process now that 86% of the border has been marked. The two countries are to add border pillars and produce a map of the borderline as party.

The statement also said the countries would encourage their citizens to act responsibly to turn the frontier area "into a border of lasting peace, friendship and cooperation."

Cambodia and Laos reportedly dispatched troops to the border region last month in a standoff over the disputed boundary.

There was a similar confrontation in August 2017 when Laos objected to Cambodia's construction of a road in disputed territory.

AP PHOTO



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen (right) with his Lao counterpart Thongloun Sisoulith yesterday, in Phnom Penh

Thongloun and his delegation are meeting top Cambodian leaders during a two-day visit. Both countries have liberalized their economies, but Laos remains a single-party state and both nations restrict

political dissent.

The countries signed four agreements concerning Cambodia's purchase of electricity from Laos, and a memorandum of understanding covering cooperation on labor.

Cambodia faces a shortfall of electricity as it has undergone a construction boom, funded in large part by investment from China. Laos has an electricity surplus from its large hydropower projects. AP

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## AUSTRALIA

# Canberra presses Iran to release three citizens from prison

ROD McGUIRK, CANBERRA

**A**USTRALIA'S foreign minister said yesterday her government is pressuring Iran to free three Australian citizens from a Tehran prison and she did not believe their arrests were related to Iran's current conflicts with the West.

Foreign Minister Marise Payne told the Senate that she had raised the arrests of two British-Australian women and an Australian man "many times" with her Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, while the Australian Embassy in Tehran had made "repeated representations to very senior Iranian officials" on the prisoners' behalf.

Analysts and family members of dual nationals and others detained in Iran have long said hard-liners in the Islamic Republic's security agencies use the prisoners as bargaining chips in negotiations with the West. A U.N. panel in 2018 described "an emerging pattern involving the arbitra-

AP PHOTO



In this 2006 file photo, Iranian female prisoners are at their cell in the Evin prison in Tehran

try deprivation of liberty of dual nationals" in Iran, which Tehran denied.

Payne said she did not believe the arrests of Perth couple Mark Firkin and Jolie King, or the earlier arrest of a Melbourne academic, whose name has not been released, "relate to broader issues."

"We have no reason to think

that these arrests are connected to international concern over Iran's nuclear program, United Nations sanctions or sanctions enforcement or maritime security and the safety of civilian shipping," Payne said.

Britain and Australia last month signed onto a U.S.-led maritime security mission to protect in-

ternational shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, where Iran's recent seizures of vessels has raised tensions with the West.

Travel bloggers Firkin and King had been detained for "a number of weeks," while the university lecturer had been detained for months, Payne said.

Manoto TV, a Persian-language

broadcaster in London, reported the couple were arrested for flying a drone near Tehran. The couple use a drone to make videos of their travels which they post on social media.

Their relatives said in a statement yesterday, "Our families hope to see Mark and Jolie safely home as soon as possible."

The academic who studied at Cambridge University had been sentenced to 10 years in prison, The Times newspaper in London reported. It said she was being held in solitary confinement but it did not know what she had been convicted of doing.

The detentions were "a matter of deep concern to the government and to me personally as the foreign minister," Payne said.

"Since they were detained, the Australian government has been pressing at the Iranian government for their release," she said.

"The government has been making efforts to ensure they are treated fairly, humanely and in accordance with international norms," she added.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison declined to say whether he intends to raise the issue with his Iranian counterpart.

"Engaging in public commentary about process on consular cases is never in the interests of those who are caught up in these issues," Morrison told reporters. AP

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AP PHOTO



Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the chief negotiator and co-founder of the Taliban (second left)

**AFGHANISTAN**

# Taliban want US deal, but some in bigger hurry than others

KATHY GANNON, ISLAMABAD

**A**FGHANISTAN'S Taliban leaders agreed they wanted a deal with the United States, but some were in more of a hurry than others.

Taliban negotiators were at odds with their Council of Leaders, or shura, about whether to travel to Camp David even before President Donald Trump abruptly canceled the high-stakes meeting planned for last weekend.

According to Taliban officials familiar with the discussions, the shura opposed the trip to Camp David and chastised the negotiators who were eager to attend.

The Taliban have been holding talks with the U.S. for over a year in the Qatari capital, Doha, where the militant Islamic movement maintains a political office under the banner of The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Suhail Shaheen, a spokesman for the Doha office, told the Taliban Al-Emarah website this week that U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad had invited Taliban negotiators to Camp David in late August.

The Taliban accepted, only to delay, demanding the deal be announced first by Qatar. They also

wanted a signing ceremony witnessed by the foreign ministers of several countries, including Pakistan, Russia and China. The delay followed the shura's rejection and admonishment of its negotiators.

This wasn't the first disagreement between the negotiators and the shura, according to Taliban sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss internal debates with reporters.

Several months earlier, the shura opposed an offer by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the chief negotiator and co-founder of the Taliban, to give the Americans 14 months to withdraw their roughly 14,000 troops from Afghanistan. The shura let Baradar know it wasn't on board with the timeline and that he could not make decisions independent of the shura.

Still, several Taliban officials familiar with both the negotiating team and the shura said that while opinions differed, the Taliban leadership debated every article of the agreement and the negotiating team either got the shura to agree

or bowed to its decisions.

"What's striking is how the Taliban mobilized at the highest levels to support negotiations with the U.S.," said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center. "Senior Taliban officials didn't only endorse the talks; they

**What's striking is how the Taliban mobilized at the highest levels to support negotiations with the US.**

MICHAEL KUGELMAN  
WILSON CENTER

helped lead them."

"This suggests that Washington would have trouble exploiting fractures within the Taliban in an effort to strengthen its hand in negotiations," he said. "There may be divisions within the Taliban, but they presented a relatively common front in the negotiating process. That's more than one can say for the Afghan government, or

even the Trump administration."

Baradar, the lead negotiator and believed to be the most influential of the Taliban interlocutors, has been pushing a peace deal in Afghanistan even before the U.S. was willing to enter talks. As far back as 2010, he had secretly opened peace talks with Afghanistan's then-president, Hamid Karzai. When neighboring Pakistan found out, Baradar was arrested in a raid jointly carried out with the CIA.

He spent eight years in a Pakistani jail — punishment for trying to sideline Islamabad in peace talks.

Karzai previously told The Associated Press he asked both Pakistan and the U.S. on at least two occasions to release Baradar, but was turned down. The first secret contacts between the Taliban and the U.S., aimed at finding a way to talk, reportedly did not occur until 2013.

Even as Washington seeks an exit to its longest war, the Taliban are at their strongest since their ouster in 2001 and hold sway over more than half the country, staging near-daily, deadly attacks across Afghanistan.

Khalilzad's year-long peace mission has been Washington's most dedicated push for peace, focusing not just on the Taliban, Afghanistan's government and prominent Afghan powerbrokers but also on its neighbors, who are often blamed for outright interference in Afghanistan.

The meddlers include Pakistan and Russia, accused of aiding the Taliban against Islamic State insurgents with deep connections to Central Asia, and also Iran, which has trained Afghan fighters known as the Fatimayoun Brigade that fought alongside Iran's Revolutionary Guard in Syria.

"One of my concerns is that if the talks don't start up again soon, the tremendous progress that Zal (Khalilzad) made in generating a strong ... regional consensus for peace in Afghanistan could dissipate, and (Afghanistan's neighbors could) revert to destabilizing, hedging behavior," warned Andrew Wilder, Asia Programs' vice president at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

"If Pakistan feels the U.S. is going to precipitously withdraw troops during the next year ... Pakistan may decide that it's more important than ever to support a proxy like the Taliban to protect Pakistan's perceived interests in Afghanistan," which would be to keep India's influence to a minimum, said Wilder.

Meanwhile, the Taliban have been unapologetic about their relentless attacks that have killed scores of civilians — and which have been blamed for the talks' collapse.

Trump claimed earlier this week that the Taliban had later expressed regret.

Shaheen, the Taliban spokesman in Doha, seemed anything but repentant. He argued that the U.S. has also continued its military campaign in parallel to the peace talks, adding that "there was no cease-fire and the agreement was not signed."

Despite the posturing, it appears the two sides are still talking, even if it is just to ask the other what it all means.

"We have contacted them (U.S. officials) and they too have approached us," Shaheen said. "We have sought formal clarification from them about Trump's decision. We are hopeful of a response and are waiting for their response."

The U.S. still wants its troops out of Afghanistan. Even as Trump declared talks with the Taliban "dead," he said American troops have become policemen in Afghanistan and that's not their job. He said the Afghan administration has to "step up" and take on that role.

"The Taliban are in a good place right now," said Kugelman. "They'll remain open to renegotiating a troop withdrawal deal with the U.S. in the future, but unlike the U.S. they're in no rush to get one." AP

**TV canal macau** 
**FRIDAY**

- 13:00 TDM News (Repetição)  
 13:30 Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)  
 15:00 Água de Mar  
 15:30 Zig Zag  
 16:20 Sim, Chef! Sr.2  
 16:55 Quem Quer Ser Milionário  
 18:00 Corpo Clínico  
 18:25 Amor Maior (Repetição)  
 19:10 Portuguese in California  
 19:40 Os Nossos Dias Sr.2 - Fim  
 20:30 Telejornal  
 21:15 Viagens em Série

**Offbeat**
**COURT CUTS JURY AWARD, WARNS STEINBECK KIN TO END LITIGATION**

AP PHOTO



A federal appeals court attempted to close the book on endless litigation between the relatives of author John Steinbeck (pictured) in a ruling that upheld a \$5 million verdict against his daughter-in-law, but threw out \$8 million she faced in punitive damages.

The decision by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals this week delivered partial victories to the late author's stepdaughter, Waverly Scott Kaffaga, and to Gail Steinbeck, the widow of his son, Thomas.

The court upheld a jury verdict two years ago in Los Angeles federal court that found Gail Steinbeck and her husband meddled with Kaffaga's plans as executor of the estate to profit off the Nobel Prize-winning author's works.

Gail Steinbeck helped kill a remake of "The Grapes of Wrath" to be directed by Steven Spielberg and an "East of Eden" reboot to star Jennifer Lawrence, Kaffaga said.

The lawsuit followed decades of disputes between Thomas Steinbeck and Kaffaga's mother over control of the author's works. Kaffaga's mother, Elaine, was Steinbeck's third wife and was married to him when he died in 1968.

Elaine Steinbeck died in 2003, leaving her daughter as executor of the estate. Gail Steinbeck became executor of her husband's estate when he died in 2016.

The court threw out the punitive damages because it said Kaffaga hadn't shown Gail Steinbeck, who lives off publishing royalties of \$120,000 to \$200,000 a year — could afford it.

Gail Steinbeck's rental home and belongings in the ritzy Santa Barbara County enclave of Montecito were severely damaged or destroyed by mudslides last year that killed 23 people, her lawyer said in court filings. He estimated it would take her 65 years to pay off the punitive damages.

While lifting that penalty from Steinbeck, the ruling may finally free Kaffaga to make the most of Steinbeck's copyrights. His major works have not come to the big screen in recent years.

**cinema** 
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12 - 18 Sep



**IT CHAPTER TWO**  
 ROOM1  
 2:30, 6:00, 9:00pm  
 Director: Andy Muschietti  
 Starring: Jessica Chastain, James McAvoy, Bill Hader  
 Language: English (Chinese)  
 Duration: 169min



**ABIGAIL**  
 ROOM2  
 2:30, 4:30, 7:30pm  
 Director: Aleksandr Boguslavskiy  
 Starring: Tinatin Dalakishvili, Eddie Marsan, Rinal Mukhametov  
 Language: English (Chinese)



**ANGEL HAS FALLEN**  
 ROOM2  
 9:30pm  
 Director: Ric Roman Waugh  
 Starring: Gerard Butler, Frederick Schmidt, Danny Huston  
 Language: English (Chinese)  
 Duration: 121min



**FAGARA**  
 ROOM 3  
 2:30, 4:45, 9:30pm  
 Director: Heiward Mak  
 Starring: Kenny Bee, Vicky Chen, Sammi Cheng  
 Language: Chinese (English)  
 Duration: 120min

**ONE PIECE STAMPEDE**  
 ROOM3  
 7:30pm  
 Director: Takashi Otsuka  
 Starring: Chō, Hiroaki Hirata, Katsuhisa Höki  
 Language: Japanese (Chinese)  
 Duration: 92min

**this day in history**

**1993 RABIN AND ARAFAT SHAKE ON PEACE DEAL**

The Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, and the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, have shaken hands before cheering crowds on the White House lawn in Washington.

The handshake — the first ever in public between the two former arch enemies — marked the signing of a Declaration of Principles for peace between the Arabs and Israelis.

Under the terms of the deal, Israel has agreed to withdraw its troops from Gaza Strip and West Bank by April 1994. Elections will be held in the territories to allow the Palestinians some form of self-government.

A deadline for a final settlement has been set for February 1999.

The deal has only been made possible by talks brokered by the Norwegians earlier in the year — and by the election of Mr Rabin's Labour government which includes the pro-peace campaigners Shimon Peres and Yossi Beilin.

President Bill Clinton introduced the two leaders to the crowd of invited guests in front of the White House. By his side, were former Presidents Jimmy Carter and George Bush who had vigorously campaigned for peace during their terms in office.

Mr Clinton said: "The peace of the brave is within our reach. Throughout the Middle East there is a great yearning for the quiet miracle of a normal life.

"We know a difficult road lies ahead. Every peace has its enemies."

The leaders did not sign the declaration themselves. Instead, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and his Palestinian counterpart did the signing.

Mr Rabin then addressed the crowd: "We who have fought against you the Palestinians, we say to you today in a loud and clear voice, enough of blood and tears, enough."

Mr Arafat said: "The difficult decision we reached together was one that required great courage."

The BBC's correspondent John Simpson said Mr Arafat had undoubtedly put his life on the line for this agreement.

**Courtesy BBC News**

**IN CONTEXT**

The Declaration of Principles paved the way for Israel's first withdrawals from occupied territory and Yasser Arafat's triumphant return to Palestinian territory in July 1994. He was elected president of the Palestinian National Authority in 1996.

Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist wanting to prevent further Israeli withdrawals on 4 November 1995.

Binjamin Netanyahu of Likud won Israeli elections in 1996. He agreed to a withdrawal from Hebron in the West Bank but talks on further peace moves with the Palestinians stalled.

His successor Ehud Barak was equally unsuccessful and in the impasse veteran right-winger Ariel Sharon toured the al Aqsa mosque/Temple Mount complex in what was seen as a provocative move by the Palestinians.

Demonstrations soon turned into another uprising or intifada.

**YOUR STARS****ARIES**

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Spend some time with people you love to laugh with, and take plenty of time today to talk about lighthearted matters. Forget about things you have no control over.

**TAURUS**

Apr. 20-May. 20

One of the many good things about having so many people in your life right now is that you always have tons of feedback available at your fingertips. So why aren't you taking advantage of this abundance of honesty?

**GEMINI**

May. 21-Jun. 21

Either your flexibility skills are at an all-time high, or the changes you expected weren't so drastic. Either way, you can breathe a great big sigh of relief today.

**CANCER**

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Accept the whole person - the good and the bad. Ending a relationship because of one event or conversation is shortsighted. Embrace differing opinions and contrary viewpoints.

**LEO**

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

There will always be obstacles in your life - that's just a fact. Your attitude will make all the difference, so put a shine on your outlook! Whenever you need a lift in life, just remember all the successes you've had.

**VIRGO**

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Inspiration will flood over you today - enjoy having your curiosity tickled and excited. You are extremely open to new ideas right now, so why not try a few new things?

**LIBRA**

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You may think that you are judged by the company you keep, but that is not necessarily true. Today, don't worry about people basing assumptions about you on whom you are with.

**SCORPIO**

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

If you are in a mood to hide from the world, then today will offer you the perfect opportunity. The people in your life are a bit distracted with other things right now.

**SAGITTARIUS**

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Your daily life is currently being polluted a bit by someone whose maturity level leaves a lot to be desired. Luckily, you will find the right words today to help this person grow up a bit.

**CAPRICORN**

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You basically have all the time you want, especially right now - your schedule is under your exclusive control for a limited period of time, and you should make the most of it!

**AQUARIUS**

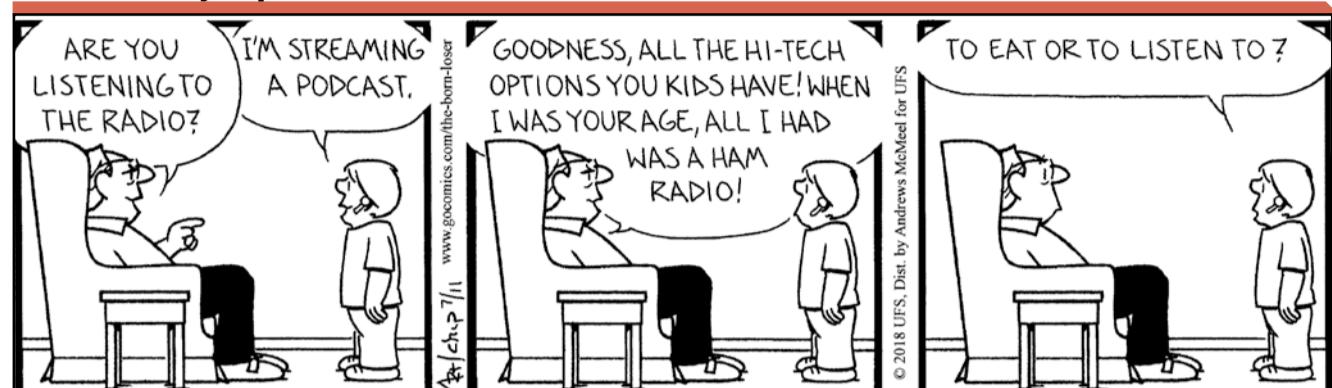
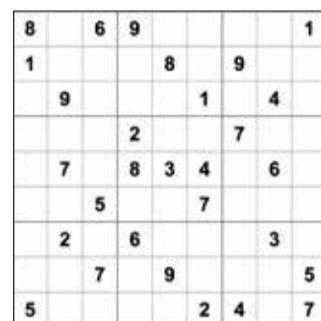
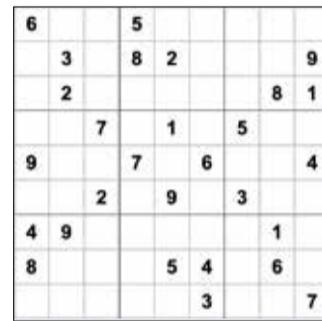
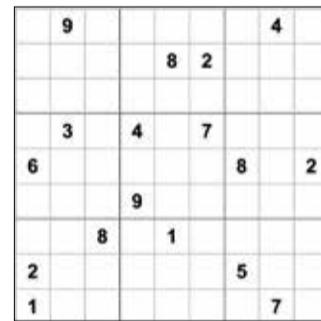
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You feel strong, and you are strong - but you're vulnerable to a lot of potential problems that could pop up today if you aren't careful. Focus your energy on fixing up something around your house.

**PISCES**

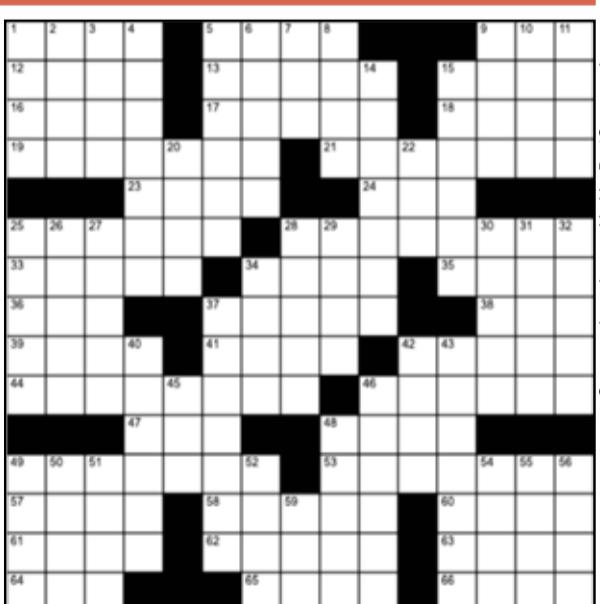
Feb. 19-Mar. 20

To help yourself today, help other people - the overwhelming gratitude you'll receive from the people you've aided will lift your spirits higher than any retail therapy or self-indulgence ever could.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom****SUDOKU****EASY****EASY+****MEDIUM****HARD****CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS:** 1- Grounded fleet; 5- Character; 9- Chinese "way"; 12- Debatable; 13- Sports area; 15- Seniors' org.; 16- Air freshener target; 17- One in a cab, say; 18- Entreaty; 19- U.S. space probe to Jupiter; 21- Extreme; 23- Furnace; 24- Actress Arthur; 25- Wafer-thin; 28- Locomotive track; 33- Burrito topping; 34- Intro to physics?; 35- Divine Secrets of the \_\_\_ Sisterhood; 36- Altar in the sky; 37- Claw; 38- Gun, as an engine; 39- Solitary; 41- Actor Ken; 42- Cheri of "Saturday Night Live"; 44- Assisting the memory; 46- Mingling with; 47- Dernier \_\_\_; 48- You're making \_\_\_ mistake!; 49- Farm measure; 53- Shower alternative; 57- Contest, ethnicity; 58- Nun wear; 60- Roofing item; 61- Diary of \_\_\_ Housewife; 62- Give and take?; 63- "Show Boat" novelist Ferber; 64- Gene Kelly's \_\_\_ Girls"; 65- Caustic solutions; 66- In apple-pie order;

**DOWN:** 1- Problem with L.A.; 2- Fizzy drink; 3- Implement; 4- Hits; 5- Once in a blue moon; 6- Hunter slain by Artemis; 7- Conducted; 8- Cabinet dept.; 9- Soft mineral; 10- Carpeting calculation; 11- Iridescent gemstone; 14- High-spirited horse; 15- Bee house; 20- Old Italian bread?; 22- Tierra \_\_\_ Fuego; 25- Sacred song; 26- Brother of Moses; 27- Flat surface; 28- Thing of the past; 29- Like \_\_\_ of bricks; 30- Paddled; 31- Australia's \_\_\_ Rock; 32- Lifeboat lowerer; 34- French Sudan, today; 37- Duet for Tony and Maria in "West Side Story"; 40- Ran the show; 42- Leave off; 43- Use a clamp, say; 45- Man-mouse link; 46- Subsides; 48- Tolerate; 49- Asia's \_\_\_ Sea; 50- Arrived; 51- Some DVD players; 52- British nobleman; 54- Periodic movement of the sea; 55- Human bone, located in the arm; 56- Fluff egg whites; 59- Sea arm;

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[Taipa] Manhattan 3 2 1,720 ft² \$13,600,000 (ref: n/a)

[Cotai] One Grantai 4 2 2,556 ft² \$25,600,000 (ref: n/a)

[Coloane] Hellene Gardens 3 2 1,663 ft² \$7,950,000 (ref: 19055006SC)

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[Taipa] Nova Grand 2 1 1 \$16,000/mth 986 ft² (ref: 19055007RT)

[Cotai] One Grantai 3 2 3 2 \$23,000/mth 2,122 ft² (ref: 19030001RT)

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## MICHAEL KORS PAYS TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN STYLE ON 9/11

AP PHOTO



**T**HREE were no flag outfits, but Michael Kors' show for New York Fashion Week was very much a patriotic tribute as he saluted American fashion with a collection that ran from nautical chic to classic glamour-girl gowns to whimsical polka-dot designs.

Taking place Wednesday, the last official day of fashion

week, the show fell on one of the most solemn days in New York — the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. While the terrorist attack was not referenced, the show radiated not only American pride but themes of love and peace, from a sweater worn by a model that had the word "HATE" crossed out with a red line to the music of

the Young People's Chorus of New York City, who serenaded the crowd with songs including Don McLean's "American Pie" to Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" to the O'Jays' "Love Train."

He was, of course, inspired by American fashion.

"It's looking at sportswear which, hey, we invented it. America is not the land of the ball gown. And the world dresses in sportswear. It's looking at all of that sportswear, which is finding this wonderful balance of power and glamour," he said.

To that end, the show was a mix of casual, sporty outfits to sparkly dresses that harkened back to the Rita Hayworth era of silver screen glamour.

There was a one-piece bathing suit dotted by tiny metallic anchors; a belted-black romper suit with gold trim, worn by Bella Hadid (pictured); and a whimsical red-and-white checkered outfit that included a blazer, shorts and a bra top paired with chunky white sandals.

Actresses Nicole Kidman, Kate Hudson and Yalitza Aparicio were among the stars who turned out for Kors' show on the banks of Brooklyn in a converted greenhouse that kept its topiary feel with a plethora of trees that decorated the cavernous space.

## THE BLONDS GO OVER-THE-TOP WITH THE HELP OF 'MOULIN ROUGE'

AP PHOTO



**R**UNWAY met Broadway when The Blonds took to the stage of the splashy musical "Moulin Rouge."

With the help of Billy Porter, who performed two songs, the ever-theatrical design duo stuck to the musical's theme, focused on a cabaret, and stayed true to their risqué style for the New York Fashion Week show.

After an opening number by performers from "Moulin Rouge," Phillippe Blond descended from the ceiling in a bedazzled jumpsuit, matching moto jacket and long, blond locks. They dressed models in corsets, bustier tops, lace catsuits (worn by men and women alike) and stiletto boots that hit at the

ankle, knee or thigh.

There was no absence of sparkle on the stage, from Jordan Roth's beaded, sparkling leopard print cape to Paris Hilton's nude bodysuit adorned with crystals. The designers, including David Blond, ended the show by dancing with their models and embracing each other before walking off stage.

Some models, including Hilton, wore elaborate bejeweled head pieces that towered high and had to be sewn into their hair. Porter got one, too.

Model Halima Aden was adorned in animal print, in her jacket, pants and head wrap. There was an abundance of sexy red and black in lace for the high-camp show.

AD

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**RUGBY**

# Wallabies embracing adversity for World Cup campaign

JOHN PYE, BRISBANE

**A**DVERSITY isn't necessarily a bad thing for the Wallabies leading into a Rugby World Cup.

Firing fullback Israel Folau sent Rugby Australia into turmoil at the start of this season, depriving the national team of its undisputed star and triggering a costly court battle.

The termination of Folau's contract for breaching the union's social media protocols overshadowed all other rugby news Down Under, until a shocking 47-26 win over the All Blacks in Perth on Aug. 10 suggested that the Wallabies weren't in terminal decline.

A resounding 36-0 thumping from the All Blacks in the return game at Auckland brought the Wallabies back to earth. And so, the World Cup is set to begin in Japan with the two-time champion and four-time finalist ranked No. 6, behind Pool D rival Wales.

Michael Cheika took over a team in turmoil in October 2014 after Ewen McKenzie's sudden resignation as coach amid an off-field player controversy and disharmony within the squad. Despite losing three of his first four tests in charge, he guided the Wallabies to the World Cup final 12 months later and picked up a Rugby Championship title along the way.

In doing so, he shaped a lineup that had been struggling for cohe-

AP PHOTO



Australia's Will Genia

sion into a tight unit for the tournament.

The four-year cycle between the World Cups has been up and down for the Wallabies, who now have dropped to a winning rate of roughly 50% with Cheika at the helm. But the campaigning-style environment of a World Cup is suited to Cheika, and he's confident his squad can do it again.

"This is the closest I've seen the team from a camaraderie point of view since I've been involved," Cheika said in a TV interview after a warm-up win over Samoa in Sydney. "To go through some of the things we've had to go through off the field — that tests you."

"We've been able to come out the other side. This is a very solid group, and they're eager to make the country proud of us."

Australia's wins over England and Wales in the group stage in 2015 contributed to the early exit of host England. That was followed by a contentious 35-34 quarterfinal result against Scotland, a 29-15 semifinal win over Argentina and a 34-17 loss to defending champion New Zealand in the final.

Cheika was voted international coach of the year that season, but his stocks started falling with five more test losses in a row as the rebuilding started.

Now he's putting his job on the line starting Sept. 21, when Australia kicks off its campaign against Fiji in a group that contains some familiar rivals from 2015. The biggest expected test in the group stage is against the Six Nations Grand Slam-winning

Welsh squad in Tokyo on Sept. 29, before matches against Uruguay and Georgia.

The Australians may not have held the Bledisloe Cup since 2002, or the Rugby Championship since 2015, but it's not all gloomy.

Inspirational backrower David Pocock returned from six months on the sidelines to lead a second-string Wallabies lineup to a 34-15 win over Samoa last weekend.

And his return creates a selection quandary, with Cheika having the "competition within the squad" that he craves with the likes of Michael Hooper, Isi Naisarani, Lukhan Salakaia-Loto and Jack Dempsey available for backrow spots.

But the stocks there can't outweigh some problems areas, particularly around the scrum, the

goal kicking and the playmaking positions.

Christian Leali'ifano and Bernard Foley have both played at No. 10 with varying success this season, but both struggled with the place-kicking duties. Folau's absence leaves Kurtley Beale as the leading candidate at fullback, from where he revels in dry conditions but struggles in the wet and on the high kicks that Folau had usually mastered.

In Samu Kerevi, the Wallabies have a potential game-breaker in midfield. Without him the attacking options would be less threatening, considerably less cohesive and heap more pressure on reinvigorated scrumhalves Nice White and Will Genia.

While the pack has been troubled at scrum time, the likes of locks Rory Arnold, Adam Coleman and Izack Rodda make it strong in the lineout. And a mobile pack is also an advantage in the humid conditions expected in Japan.

The return of Pocock gives Cheika options to start two fencers, or revert to a bigger backrow and have a fresh No. 7 coming off the bench.

"It'll take him a few games to get reacclimated to the pace but he's a very quick learner," Cheika said. "Just to get him through that time off (on) the back of what's happened so far this season is a big tick for us."

During a high-altitude training camp before a loss in South Africa in July, Cheika gambled his job on Australia winning the World Cup.

"I know most people would think that's a pipe dream, but we don't," he said. "We came second last time and if we come first next time I will have earned the right to stay on as the coach — and if I don't then someone else earns the opportunity. I think that's fair." AP

**FOOTBALL**

# Clubs to get 1/4 of income from Champions League prize money

**T**HE 32 clubs kicking off the Champions League next week will rely on UEFA prize money for one quarter of their total revenue this season.

UEFA research published yesterday forecasts the 1.95 billion euros (\$2.15 billion) prize money shared by the 32 amounts to 26% of their estimated combined annual revenue of 7.8 billion euros (\$8.6 billion).

Some clubs in eastern Europe can expect to get at least half their total income from UEFA.

The Champions League winner this season shou-

ld earn 100 million euros (\$110 million) from UEFA, including results bonuses and a share of national broadcast rights deals.

The latest research into the 32-team Champions League and 48-team Europa League lineups comes amid intense debate between UEFA, clubs, and domestic leagues about changing qualifying paths and competition formats.

European soccer leaders are struggling to find common ground on changes that will take effect in 2024. Some storied clubs want to create Champions League groups of eight teams

to drive up their revenue. It would guarantee 14 games instead of six, with more of those against each other in higher-profile events.

All 32 teams will get at least 17 million euros (\$18.6 million) this season, including a fee based on their historical record in UEFA competitions.

Real Madrid, the highest-earning club in world soccer with revenue of 750 million euros (\$822 million), is sure to get 50 million euros from UEFA this season regardless of Champions League results.

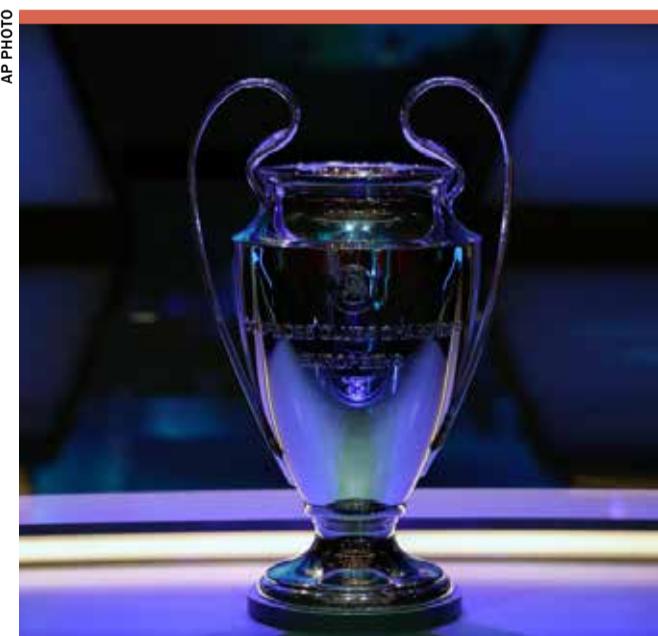
UEFA's research said a combined 663 million

euros (\$727 million) operating profit was made by the 32 clubs in their most recent financial reports. Just 17 were in profit and 15 made a loss.

Deals made by the 32 clubs in the European summer offseason accounted for 2.74 billion euros (\$3 billion) spent — or 40% of the global total — and 2.6 billion euros (\$2.85 billion) recouped in sales.

Six clubs made a net transfer profit of 50 million euros (\$55 million) or more, including Ajax due to Frenkie de Jong joining Barcelona and Juventus buying Matthijs de Ligt.

AP PHOTO



Transfers were skewed more toward younger players with almost two-thirds of spending on players aged 24 or younger, UEFA found.

UEFA calculated Manchester City had the most

expensive squad, spending 953 million euros (\$1.04 billion) on its current players. Manchester United had the most expensive Europa League squad, spending 683 million euros (\$749 million). AP

## OPINION

**Kapok**

Eric Sautede



### THE FAILURE OF SUCCESS

Of course it was meant to be all praise for the Chief Executive-elect, Ho Iat Seng, as he was being anointed by the central authorities this week. After receiving his decree of appointment from the very hands of Premier Li, Mr Ho was hosted by President Xi Jinping to give his trip to Beijing the gravitas a "successful practice of 'one country, two systems' with Macao characteristics" commands.

In Macao, people are 'united', "one country, two systems" is fully 'understood', the Basic Law is 'upheld', the love for the country has been 'passed on', and the livelihood of the people, social harmony and stability have 'improved' for good. This really reads as a reverse image of Hong Kong, that now stands deeply divided, doubtful about the motherland, its intentions and the reality of its "high degree of autonomy," and where gross inequalities have created an overwhelming sense of social distress, especially among young people.

Of course, one could challenge the rosy picture painted by Mr Xi. Macao stands only second to Qatar as the richest place in the world for GDP per capita, but the median salary is stuck at MOP16,000 per month. And then the government still derives more than 80 per cent of its revenues from gambling: what happened to the promise of economic diversification? When it comes to infrastructure, the quality and diversity are simply appalling for such a "rich" place, and this is true for healthcare, transportation and even education.

Politics is simply oligopolistic: the same three families have been dominating political life ever since they kicked-out the Kuomintang's influence in the 1960s. Election mechanisms are so biased that they forbid any hint of competition. Business interests ban all notions of "social progress" — they do charity, at best — and traditional pro-establishment associations keep the society in check thanks to the lavish endowment provided by the losses of mainlanders on Blackjacks tables. And not everybody is happy about corruption at the highest echelon — think Prosecutor General Ho Chio Meng — or the sheer incompetence of the administration — think 20,000 Macao people demonstrating in May 2014 and forcing the Chief executive to 'withdraw' the so-called Perks' bill.

Beyond the irony, one should worry slightly when President Xi tells Mr Ho: "Your nomination and election with overwhelming support fully show that you have won broad endorsement in Macao." Endorsement of who? Even with 98% of the votes in a non-competitive process, that leaves Mr Ho with a meagre 392 staunch supporters. Is it irony? Could there be a threat: we are giving you full support, so you'd better not disappoint us?

And then when Mr Xi adds that in Macao, "One country, two systems" has proven to be a workable solution welcomed by the people," what does it mean? It is for now being irremediably questioned in Hong Kong and rejected with despise by Taiwan, so it most probably says something about Macao and the way the territory accommodates anything and anyone rather than prove anything about the soundness of this unique dual-sovereignty arrangement.

There is no doubt that some Macao people will always be there to serve, especially when this serves their own interests. Such is the case of Pansy Ho who was chosen, along with Annie Wu from the Maxim group, to attend the latest session of the UN Human Rights Council and take a stand "to offer a fact-based perspective of many Hong Kongers on what is really happening in Hong Kong." She was there as the Chairlady of the Hong Kong Federation of Women, a NGO with consultative status with the UN; she was there as a "regular person," and because she herself "feels repressed and lives in fear." She was not there as a billionaire. She was not there as a Macao casino mogul whose gaming license is up for renewal in 2022. And she was not there as the very unhappy businesswoman whose Turbojet's results have dwindled by 32 per cent in the latest interim report of Shun Tak.

If anything happens in Macao, it will stay in the family: the Chairlady of the Macao Women General Association is none other than Ho Teng Iat, the sister of the new Chief Executive!

## EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK DEPLOYS NEW STIMULUS TO HELP ECONOMY

The European Central Bank delivered a new blast of monetary stimulus yesterday to help the shaky economy in the face of uncertainties like the U.S.-China trade conflict and Brexit.

The decision comes as central banks around the world, including the U.S. Federal Reserve, are lowering rates to support slowing trade and growth. Those moves come despite questions over how much more good central banks can do without help from other policies such as government spending and pro-business reforms.

In a wide-ranging package of measures that will ensure ou-

tgoing President Mario Draghi leaves his mark on ECB policies long after he departs next month, the bank cut one key interest rate further below zero. It trimmed the rate on deposits it takes from banks to minus 0.5% from minus 0.4%, a penalty that pushes banks to lend their excess cash.

The ECB also said it would restart its bond-buying stimulus program, which pumps newly created money into the financial system to lower borrowing costs and help the economy. It will buy 20 billion euros (\$22 billion) a month in government and corporate bonds for as long as needed.



**9/11** Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri called on Muslims to attack U.S., European, Israeli and Russian targets in a speech on the 18th anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks. In a video released by the militant group, the 68-year-old al-Zawahri also criticizes "backtrackers" from jihad.



**Israel** Facebook says it has sanctioned the page of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu because of a violation of the company's hate speech policy. Facebook said yesterday that the social network had suspended for 24 hours the page's bot, or automated chat function.



**UK** The British government insisted yesterday that its forecast of food and medicine shortages, gridlock at ports and riots in the streets after a no-deal Brexit is an avoidable worst-case scenario, as Prime Minister Boris Johnson denied misleading the Queen Elizabeth II about his reasons for suspending Parliament.



**Zimbabwe** Controversy over where and when former president Robert Mugabe will be buried has overshadowed arrangements for Zimbabweans to pay their respects to the deceased leader. Mugabe will not be given a state burial on Sunday at the national Heroes' Acre site, family spokesman Leo Mugabe announced yesterday.

## HOUSE COMMITTEE APPROVES GUIDELINES FOR TRUMP IMPEACHMENT HEARINGS

AP PHOTO



House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y.

**MARY CLARE JALONICK, WASHINGTON**

**H**OUSE Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler says there's no confusion about what his committee is doing: It's an impeachment investigation, no matter how you want to phrase it.

Nadler tried to clear up any misconceptions yesterday as the committee approved guidelines for impeachment hearings on President Donald Trump. Some of Nadler's fellow Democrats — including House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer — have stumbled over how to explain what they're doing.

"Some call this process an impeachment inquiry. Some call it an impeachment investigation. There is no legal difference between these terms, and I no longer care to argue about the nomenclature," Nadler, D-N.Y., said as he opened the meeting. "But let me clear up any remaining doubt: The conduct under investigation poses a threat to our democracy. We have an obligation to respond to this threat. And we are doing so."

Republicans disagree with Nadler and they argue that the House has

never voted to open an official inquiry. Georgia Rep. Doug Collins, the top Republican on the committee, said the committee "has become a giant Instagram filter ... it's put in there to look like something, but it's really not."

Collins said Democrats are trying to have it both ways.

"My colleagues know very well they don't have the votes to authorize impeachment proceedings on the House floor, but they want to impeach the president anyway," Collins said. "So, they are pretending to initiate impeachment."

Impeachment has divided Democrats who control the House. Democrats on Nadler's committee, including some of the most liberal members of the House, have been eager to move forward with the process. But moderates, mostly first-term lawmakers who handed their party the majority in the 2018 election, are concerned about the committee's drumbeat on impeachment and the attention that comes with that continued action.

Several of those freshman lawmakers met with Nadler earlier and expressed concerns about the path ahead. "It's sucking the air

out of all the good stuff that we're doing, so that's our concern," said Florida Rep. Donna Shalala, who attended the meeting. She said very few constituents in her swing district asked her about impeachment over the August recess.

Given those divisions, Nadler and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., have been talking about impeachment very differently.

Nadler has been clear that his committee is moving ahead, Pelosi is reluctant to mention the "I" word and has repeatedly said the strategy is to "legislate, investigate and litigate." In private meetings, she has urged caution and told the caucus that the public isn't there yet on impeachment.

At the same time, she has signed off on the committee's moves.

The confusion was highlighted when Hoyer, D-Md., indicated to reporters that there was not an impeachment investigation — and then issued a clarification saying he thought the question was "in regards to whether the full House is actively considering articles of impeachment, which we are not at this time." He said he supported the committee's work. AP