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LAWMAKER HO ION SANG WANTS A WAITING LIST FOR CIVIL SERVANTS AFTER HEARING ABOUT GOV'T INEFFICIENCY IN THE HIRING PROCESS

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MORGAN STANLEY WARNS GAMING CONTRACTION NOT OVER YET

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ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES DISCLOSED THAT JUST HALF OF MACAU'S WASTEWATER RECEIVES MORE THAN A CURSORY TREATMENT

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China A smiling panda and a walking Chinese lantern will be the mascots for the 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics in Beijing.
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Indonesia is sending 547 containers of waste back to wealthy nations after discovering they were contaminated with used plastic and hazardous materials, amid a growing backlash in Southeast Asia against being a dumping ground for the developed world's trash.



Japan's exports fell 8% in August from a year earlier, as trade tensions took a growing toll on demand across the region.

South Korea yesterday dropped Japan from a list of countries receiving fast-track approvals in trade, a reaction to Tokyo's decision to downgrade Seoul's trade status amid a tense diplomatic dispute.



Afghanistan Militants attempted to storm a government office in a provincial capital of eastern Afghanistan, setting off a suicide bombing and running gun battle with security forces, Afghan officials said.

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NINE IN TEN TAKE UP GOV'T OFFER

NINETY PERCENT OF PEARL HORIZON PRE-BUYERS HAVE REGISTERED FOR THEIR REPLACEMENT UNIT

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US LAWMAKERS CONSIDER STRIPPING HONG KONG OF SPECIAL STATUS

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ALIPAY MACAU LAUNCHED WITH EASY CHARGE ACCESS IN TOWN

Chinese online payment application Alipay officially launched a version for Macau users yesterday. Previously, Alipay allowed Macau users to register in Alipay using their Macau phone numbers. However, these users were not able to charge their Alipay accounts. The new version of Alipay Macau allows local users to charge their Alipay through a bank account (only Tai Fung Bank is currently available) linked to the Alipay account, or in Royal Supermarket branches. Moreover, from now on, when shopping on Taobao, instead of using a credit card, Alipay Macau users can use their Alipay wallet to pay in Macau patacas without added charges. Alipay users who have been using Alipay's mainland China version can change to Alipay Macau in their user settings.

MIDDLE SCHOOL RINGS BELL ALARM FOR MUKDEN INCIDENT

Some 3,600 students from Hou Kong Middle School and a primary school affiliated with Hou Kong Middle School participated in a memorial event for the Mukden Incident yesterday. The Mukden Incident was the event that marked the beginning of the Japanese invasion of China. It was an event staged by Japanese military personnel as a pretext for the Japanese invasion in 1931 of Manchuria. This year, which marks the 88th anniversary of the incident, was not the first time Hou Kong Middle School organized a memorial event for the incident. Alarm bells were run during the memorial. In mainland China, on this day, the government rings alarm bells in all cities to remind the public of the incident.

28 PROJECTS AWARDED CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SUBSIDIES

Twenty-eight projects from the restaurant and retail industries have been awarded subsidies by the Cultural Industry Fund. The fund completed an assessment of the Community Cultural and Creative Subsidy Program for 2019, awarding a total of 8.4 million patacas to the chosen projects. The 28 projects are operated by 17 cultural and creative enterprises, ranging from the catering industry to the retail industry. The awarded retail projects involve food sales, whereas the remaining projects are related to the sale of Chinese medicine, and wood and bamboo furniture. The subsidies are specifically aimed at merging the culture and creative design into a local brand and, in turn, attracting more people to shops and improving the community's business environment.

HO ION SANG PROPOSES WAITING LIST FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

JULIE ZHU

LAWMAKER Ho Ion Sang has submitted his interpellation to the government asking about the recruitment of civil servants.

In his interpellation, Ho cited a report of the Commission of Audit (CA) published earlier this month.

The CA accused the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP)'s central recruitment of being ineffective, time-consuming, high-cost, and characterized by an inadequate matching of people and positions.

The CA report specifically accused the SAFP of poorly enforcing the 2011 recruitment system and the 2016 recruitment system, which aimed to solve the problems created in 2011. The audit report concluded that "the efficiency of the



recruitment and coordination of the SAFP is unreasonably low."

"Currently, it takes a resident one to two years to apply for [a job vacancy] and to eventually start work for the position. The

procedure for civil servants' recruitment and selection takes a long time and incurs large costs," noted Ho.

"In the future, what kind of exact institutional measures will the authority propose to

improve the effectiveness of all procedures and reduce the waste of resources, as well as to reduce the negative influence in public and governmental departments?" Ho asked.

"Will the government consider establishing a database for talented people, and list names of people who are qualified but were unable to join the public service at the time [of the civil servants exam] on a waiting list for urgent needs of human resources of various departments, in order to make the recruitment system more effective?"

Ho's third question asked for the government's opinion on proposals for the establishment of legal responsibilities for being absent from the exams, and in regard to application fees. He wanted to know precise measures to avoid low exam attendance, thus reducing the waste of resources.

MACAU GRAND PRIX PORSCHE UNVEILS FOUR-CAR LINE-UP FOR GT WORLD CUP

RENATO MARQUES

A second German-based manufacturer has unveiled its drivers' line-up for the Macau Grand Prix, following BMW motorsports' announcement at the start of the month.

For the FIA GT World Cup this year, the factory-backed Porsche field will include nothing less than four 911 GT3R presented under the colors of Sankt Ingbert-based ROWE Racing and Zhuhai-based Absolute Racing.

ROWE will have at the wheel of their cars the 2016 winner, Laurens Vanthoor, as well as Earl Bamber. Two other very experienced drivers and Guia Circuit connoisseurs will drive under Absolute Racing, Kevin Estre and Alexandre Imperatori.

While Vanthoor is the only racer from the Pors-

che pack that has won the event (with Audi), Estre has actually scored the best result for Porsche so far, achieving the fourth spot in last year's event.

This will be also the first time that both teams enter Porsches in the GT World Cup although both of them have had several previous experiences in the race (ROWE with BMW in 2016 and 2017 and Absolute with Bentley and Audi).

The announcement comes shortly after other teams said they were returning to Macau this November, including Zun Motorsport which returns for their second FIA GT World Cup appearance, this time featuring a Mercedes-AMG. At the driving wheel of Zun's car will be Hong Kong's Adderly Fong, who is also back.

Meanwhile, another Mercedes-AMG will be presented by the Koreans of Solite Indigo Racing and MG Choi, a combination that has worked well at the Blancpain GT World Challenge Asia, where the team leads the standings with just one round remaining, due to be held in Shanghai at the end of the month.

Also unveiled is privateer Lamborghini Huracan from Chinese team Martin Cao Racing that will be driven by Cao himself and an Audi R8 LMS GT3 in the hands of Chinese team TSRT, competing in Macau for the first time.

Although the driver of TSRT car is yet to be known, team manager Lin Shuming has hinted on several occasions that they wish to present a "full Chinese team in the world of GT racing."

MACAU DELEGATION RETURNS FROM ITU TELECOM WORLD 2019

A delegation from Macau has returned from the International Telecommunication Union's Telecom World 2019, a business-to-business trade show in telecom technology, this year held in Budapest, Hungary.

The show saw the inauguration of the Macau Station and Hong Kong Station for the Cross-Border E-commerce Satellite Platform.

Director Ceng Nian of the Macau Satellite Platform Station expressed his confidence in the technology, citing Macau's unique position in the Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative. "Our technology is based in Macau, serves the whole country, and spreads to the world," Ceng said.

One of the companies represented in the Macau delegation was iFood Macau, a locally-developed food ordering and delivery app.

China Aerospace, China Mobile, China Telecom, China Unicom, and Huawei were among the exhibitors at the trade show. They presented 5G technology, smart city facilities, and artificial intelligence.

In addition, the framework agreement on cooperation in relation to the "Belt and Road International E-commerce Satellite Application" was signed with ITU secretary general, Houlin Zhao, as a witness.

The show has attracted more than 20,000 participants, including leaders and officials of countries, as well as decision-makers from global enterprises. **AL**

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90% of Pearl Horizon buyers registered for replacement flats

ANTHONY LAM

OUT of the 2,128 buyers of the failed Pearl Horizon private residential project, 1,932 have applied for the rights to purchase replacement apartments, Macau Urban Renewal Ltd., a publicly-owned entity, confirmed at a press conference yesterday.

The press conference was held to provide updates to the public about the progress of the replacement apartments for the Pearl Horizon project. The government retrieved the land concession for the project in January 2016, because the developer had failed to complete construction work within its 25-year concession.

The registration period for replacement apartments to be built by the government-backed company ended on August 16. Macau Urban Renewal received nearly 2,000 applications with the help of the Municipal Affairs Bureau, and 12 submitted their applications directly to the company. Those 12 applicants had not legally registered their Pearl Horizon purchase.

Among the received applications, 1,716 have been accepted and 216 suspended. The sus-



pending applications were due to ongoing lawsuits between the buyers and the government.

If they win their lawsuits and receive compensation from the government, they will no longer have the right to purchase the replacement units.

They also have the right to withdraw from the lawsuits. If so, they will need to notify the company with legal documents from the Court within 10 days of their withdrawal. They can then revive any applications for replacement units.

The company expects the replacement units will be built in three years. They will be built in the form of private residential projects. As such, the development will include parking lots and a clubhouse.

The development will be bui-

It after the construction plan is approved by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau. The approval process is expected to take about half a year, explained Lam Kam Seng, the Chairman of the Board of Directors for Macau Urban Renewal, but he could not make a promise "for a third party."

The replacement units will be similar in size to the pre-sale units of the original Pearl Horizon development. The difference between both will not exceed 5%, Lam advised.

Lam was also asked about the future renovation of old districts. Chief Executive-elect Ho Iat Seng has stressed the importance of this project.

The government's proposal is to gather all existing residents at a particular building, then offer them temporary accommodation and finally let them return to their newly built residences: taller, brighter, better.

The area of each apartment will be about the same as their existing ones, just that the buildings will be taller, with modern facilities.

In addition, the quantity of rebuilt units will be the same as in the old buildings. The urban renewal company, after all, is not a company for profit.

"The owners should be very happy about it. They get a newer [apartment] with an elevator by forgoing an older one," Lam said, but added that construction costs will be borne by the owners.

ENVIRONMENT

Only half of wastewater discharge receives secondary treatment

THE Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) has said that about half of Macau's residual water is only receiving primary treatment at the water sewage treatment plant at the Macau Peninsula before being discharged.

According to the DSPA director, Raymond Tam, the city's economic development has led to an increase in the wastewater that needs to be treated at the facility, thus failing to treat the rest of the residual waters.

The remaining half of the residual waters, which is about 147,000 cubic meters, undergoes secondary treatment.

On Tuesday this week, Tam spoke about

the conditions of the local coastal waters and residual water treatment.

According to an industry expert who asked not to be identified, the primary treatment is removing a fraction of the pollution, leaving the waters still severely polluted, as pollutants such as oil and grease are not removed.

"This just means that there are tons of polluted waste. [...] The government [has done] nothing for 25 years and is still doing nothing. They're talking about it as if this is not their responsibility and that they have nothing to do with it," the industry expert told the Times.

Although there are

currently five wastewater treatment facilities in the SAR, with each of them designed for a maximum treatment of 356,000 cubic meters of wastewater per day, the industry expert considered the treatment to be almost useless, as no major pollutants are removed.

The expert implied that the city's standards on sewage treatment fall short when compared with international standards.

"If only half of the waters undergo primary treatment, then what is the treatment like for the other half?" said the expert.

Tam said during the press conference that a new water treatment facility is expected to start operating in Seac

Pai Van next year. He added that the Taipa water treatment plant facilities and technology are in the process of undergoing improvement.

The industry expert believes that without an improvement to the treatment facilities and methods, the wastewater coming out of these plants will always be as bad as it went in.

The expert stressed that a very high percentage of untreated wastewater is being dumped on the Macau coastline, disrupting the entire maritime ecosystem, among other problems. The expert stressed that untreated sewage will continue to remain one of the city's major environmental issues. LV

HEALTH

SSM REPORTS CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING OF TWO

THE Health Bureau (SSM) has called on residents to take precautions when using gas water heaters following an incident of carbon monoxide poisoning that occurred last week.

According to the statement released yesterday, a gas water heater installed at the ground floor of the building located at Travessa dos Becos de Macau may have been the cause of two local residents inhaling carbon monoxide.

While they were asleep, the house's external doors and windows were closed, with only the doors of both bedrooms open so that the room's air conditioning was shared.

Upon waking up, both the mother and daughter experienced dizziness, cold sweating and paralysis in their limbs.

According to the SSM, the mother showed the most severe symptoms, especially

after entering the bathroom. The two people were transported to the hospital by the fire department on suspicion of carbon monoxide poisoning.

After an investigation, it was found that the bathroom of a store located on the ground floor of the building was equipped with a gas stove for industrial use without exhaust pipes.

The SSM urges residents not to install gas cookers in sanitary facilities, and further warns that residents of multi-storey buildings should not discharge waste gas from gas stoves into the public exhaust of buildings.

It urged the public to ensure their residential water heater is installed by qualified service personnel.

Last year, the Fire Services recorded a total of 12 incidents of carbon monoxide poisoning caused by improper use of gas water heaters. LV

GAMING

MORGAN STANLEY WARNS 2019 DIP NOT OVER YET



DANIEL BEITLER

THE 2019 dip in gross gaming revenues is not over yet, Morgan Stanley warned in a report earlier this week, as it slashed its growth expectations for the local sector by two percentage points.

Gross gaming revenue in the Macau SAR has declined for the past two consecutive quarters, putting to rest a 10-quarter uninterrupted climb that began in early 2016.

Arguing that casino earnings in the SAR "have not bottomed," analysts at the firm cut their previous growth expectations from -1% year-on-year to -3%.

Gross gaming revenue for the first eight months of the year is down about 1.9% year-on-year at 198.2 billion patacas, after August recorded the sharpest decline of the year to date. Expectations for September are mixed, though the consensus among analysts appears to point to a single-digit rebound,

owing in part to a low base of comparison last year. September 2018 was the worst performing month last year at just MOP21.95 billion.

Morgan Stanley analysts Praveen Choudhary and Thomas Allen are betting on 4% year-on-year growth in September, gaming news website GGRAsia reported, followed by a further contraction in the final months of the year.

"Many macroeconomic indicators are suggesting a VIP recovery between now and December, yet

VIP revenue has deteriorated further in the past three months," the analysts stated, as cited by GGRAsia. "An even bigger concern is mass revenue, which has remained robust (more than 10 percent [growth] year-on-year in the first eight months), but could turn slower in fourth-quarter 2019, to single digits."

Despite the year-on-year contraction in the first eight months, Macau's gaming sector has proven resistant to a perfect storm of economic headwinds this year, led by a slowing Chinese economy amid the ongoing China-U.S. trade war. With Macau's economy reliant on mainland tourism, and its currency indirectly pegged to the U.S. dollar, the SAR is particularly vulnerable to shocks to the world's two largest economies.

Macau gaming is also thought to have come out relatively unscathed by the ongoing protests and travel disruptions in nearby Hong Kong, as well as pressure from the junket business catering to VIPs, which has withdrawn from certain overseas activities following scrutiny from Beijing.

The outlook for 2020 is only marginally better. Morgan Stanley has cut its previous 8% year-on-year growth projection to just 3%. It said that mass revenue growth of about 10% this year would slow to 7% next year, while VIP revenue growth would improve from a 17% contraction this year to a 2% decline in 2020.

DICJ CHIEF GIVEN REGIONAL AWARD

THE director of Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) has been named Regulator of the Year for the Asia/Australasia region by the International Masters of Gaming Law, a non-profit association of experts in casino sector developments and issues worldwide.

Paulo Martins Chan, who has served as DICJ director since December 2015, was presented with the award during the association's Autumn Conference in Munich last week.

To be eligible for the award, contenders had to demonstrate overall excellence in the work, be a person of recognizable high integrity, and have made contributions to the stability of the gaming sector as a whole, as well as its regulatory environment.

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Macau economy expected to shrink 0.8 percent by year-end

JULIE ZHU

THE University of Macau's (UM) Department of Economics and Center for Macau Studies yesterday released their Macroeconomic Forecast for Macau 2019-2020, projecting that the city's gross domestic product will decline by 0.8% across the whole of 2019.

The latest figures released by the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) show that the economy of Macau has entered recession, after contracting by 2.5% in the first half of 2019. Macau's economy contracted by 1.8% year-on-year in the second quarter of 2019, an improvement compared to the 3.2% decline in the first quarter. A technical recession is defined as two consecutive quarters of negative growth.

"Economic uncertainty continues to affect Macau's economic growth in 2019 and 2020," the UM department reported.

"Overall, Macau's GDP is forecast to decline by 0.8% in 2019.



BLOOMBERG

The slowdown is expected to continue in 2020 and Macau's GDP is forecast to decline by 0.9%," the department predicted.

"If favorable outcomes are coming from the China-U.S. trade negotiation and Chinese economic growth stabilizes, Macau's economic growth is expected to be more optimistic. However, if Sino-U.S. trade negotiations break

down and Chinese economic growth continues to deteriorate, Macau's economic growth becomes more pessimistic."

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) issued its own growth forecast in its latest report this month, suggesting that economic growth would return in the second half of this year, but that 2019 would end with a 1% contraction

on balance.

Macau's exports of service are expected to grow at a rate of 1.5% in 2019, while the exports of goods will decline by 15.5%, according to the department. Next year, the exports of goods will fall a further 3%, the department noted, while services exports will remain unchanged. Concomitant with the weak growth in consumption and

investment, imports of goods are expected to rise slower by 0.3% and 1.8% in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Amid the deterioration in exports of services, the imports of services are forecast to decrease by 11.6% and 3.2% in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

As for domestic demand, private consumption spending is expected to grow slower, at rates of 2.6% and 2.5% in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Inflation, as measured by the change in the Composite Consumer Price Index, is expected to mostly hold stable at 2.7% and 2.4% in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

The labor market continues to be tight amid limited labor supply. The unemployment rate is forecast to be 1.8% and 1.9% in 2019 and 2020. Excluding non-resident workers, the unemployment rate of residents is expected to be 2.4% and 2.5% in 2019 and 2020.

Median monthly employment earnings are forecast to be MOP16,575 and MOP16,655 in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

As for domestic demand, the UM department noted that if investment continues to shrink, the modest growth of private and government consumption expenditure may not be enough for Macau's gross domestic product.

AD



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RENATO MARQUES



EXIT: more than a shop - a call to get out of

RENATO MARQUES

OPENED officially three months ago under the slogan #BeBoldToExit, the 'EXIT' shop proposes to offer a different approach to retail, calling on its clientele to "get out their comfort zone" and try new things.

To learn more about this concept and the ideas behind it, the Times interviewed the shop owner, who goes by the single-name of Jolian.

"I called it EXIT as you see in our slogan [Be Bold to Exit], and that means that you need to get out of your comfort zone," said Jolian, adding that is both a call to people in general and a reminder to himself.

"Just like me: how I had been working for a company for over a decade. That's so 'comfy' as you have your salary every month and your concerns are thinking about

how to use your holiday or where to travel to. That's pretty much the mindset of most Macau employees, to save some money to go on vacations and repeat this [process] every year. I was used to that zone too, until I realized how boring it was."

For Jolian, the secret of enjoying life fully is to "get out of that zone" and take risks. "It is not easy but you have to do it. If you never step out and [take] that first step you won't have any future, you just keep repeating your life year after year."

This applies to his business also in the sense that "trying something new" can be trying ska-

teboarding, an activity that most people can do irrespective of their age or socio-economic conditions. "It is not an expensive thing," he said.

" A formal facility could also be used to train athletes, and this is especially important at this time since skateboarding will be included for the first time at the 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan.

JOLIAN

EXPERIENCE TO CHANGE THE RETAIL SECTOR

Jolian explained that he has been passionate about skateboarding for over a decade and has been skateboarding for over 14 years. When he started to

think about creating a new business, a lot of ideas popped into his mind.

"Some of them were about things that already existed and

were too common and some others were completely new but so hard to achieve. So combining these ideas into a concept and joining with my previous experience of over a decade of working in retail business, I arrived at this new concept of combining that retail experience with something that did not [currently] exist in Macau and something I am passionate about," he said.

"I love street fashion, but there are already so many street

fashion boutiques in Macau, so I thought about skateboarding. At that time, of course, I had a lot of people telling me not to do that and that it would die soon, et cetera. But my feeling was always that maybe [these people] just don't know how to run a business or how to run a retail shop and that is why many people, when starting something, see it immediately fail. But if you know how to run it and how to promote it, I believe that it can be anything. You can sell any product, and it can be a success."

Picking up from the previous skate shop in Macau, which did not do well, Jolian said he wanted to add some unique factors and that quickly led to the idea to add snowboarding gear to street fashion and skateboards as an unique combination that Macau had never seen before.

A fan of the sport for over four



your comfort zone

years, Jolian says that snowboarding, although similar to skateboarding, assumes a very different feeling and mood.

"It is a very good travel experience, not just a sport. It is a whole set of travel experiences. You go to the mountains and you have [broader] views. If you have never tried, you will never know."

SKATEBOARDING WITH A PERSONAL TOUCH

Assuming skateboarding is accountable for the major slice of the business, Jolian notes that his ambitions concerning the sport do not stop at selling its gear.

"We want to invite people to try skateboarding [first]. Most of our clients are not people with great expertise at the sport, they just saw on social media or somewhere else and they see the shop and are willing to give it a try," Jolian said. But this is the

moment when the shop can surpass the service of most other shops.

"We are not just selling stuff – we have service, and we give advice," Jolian said, recalling a time when he was young and went to Hong Kong to buy his first skateboarding gear, and nobody would help him to choose the right gear.

"I remember how nobody cared. How nobody helped to introduce the different products and to choose the right one or the right parts according to your characteristics," adding that retail shops must evolve with time and provide a close and more personalized service to their customers.

"Before there was no competition from online shopping and all that and even if people did not feel welcomed, they had no choice. Nowadays, if a retail shop does not provide more to

its clients than just selling, they face severe competition from online [retailers]."

The shop owner also noted that this is the reason behind the open design of the shelves, where customers can "feel" the product.

Although most of the clientele of EXIT are locals, Jolian noted that about 20% of his customers that are Chinese tourists, noting, "China is very big, but they don't have that many skate shops. Maybe for some, it is easier or convenient to buy here in Macau and take it to China."

GREATER SKATE AMBITIONS

There is only one problem: Macau does not currently possess a skate park where people can freely and safely practice their skills. "This is a very big issue," admitted Jolian. "Without a proper place, it is difficult to progress."

One of the greater ambitions of the shop is also to be able to gather enough people around the sport to create an official organization that can talk to the government about building up a space where skateboarding, as well as other sports, can be performed.

"If the government cannot help to build one, we can try to build it ourselves, but we need to build a skate park. Skateboarding is an everyday sport and it needs a place [in which] to develop."

Jolian also noted that, besides recreational purposes, "a formal facility could also be used to train athletes, and this is especially important at this time since

skateboarding will be included for the first time at the 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan."

Although there is no guarantee that skateboarding – one of the five that will be added to the 2020 program – will continue in later years, Jolian believes that Macau should take advantage of such momentum to develop the

sport, noting that, contrary to many other sports where a large group of people is needed and many years and even generations of training are needed to reach a high competitive level, with skateboarding, a single talent is enough to reach such a level.

"If Hong Kong has, if China has and also other countries have such talents I don't see why Macau can't have them. It's an individual thing and does not depend on quantity."

Jolian believes that if a skate park could be built in Macau now, "maybe in eight years we can have an athlete to represent Macau on such important level competitions."

"This would help us too, not just in business terms, but in the society in general, because nowadays all the kids are just stuck into their phones and that's not what we want – we want them to have a healthy body and healthy mind. They need to raise their heads."

"Although we are a small business, we do aim to make a big influence."



From left: U.S. Representative Jim McGovern, D-Mass., chair of the bipartisan Congressional Executive Commission on China; Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam; singer-activist Denise Ho; and prominent democracy advocate Joshua Wong

US LAWMAKERS RAMP UP PRESSURE ON HONG KONG

DANIEL FLATLEY

U.S. lawmakers say they are moving forward with attempts to pressure Hong Kong's government over its treatment of protesters by threatening the territory's special trading status.

"It is my belief that it is long overdue for the United States and the free world to respond," Senator Marco Rubio, a Florida Republican, said Tuesday at the opening of a hearing of the bipartisan Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

Rubio is sponsor of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019, which would allow sanctions on Chinese officials and require annual assessments of whether the city is sufficiently autonomous from Beijing to continue its special trading status. Similar legislation has been introduced in the House with bipartisan support.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jim Risch said

the bill would get quick review by the committee beginning Wednesday and move onto the Senate floor with the support of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

"The aspiration is everybody wants to move this bill and so we're going to do our best to move it was quickly as we can," said Risch, an Idaho Republican.

Revoking Hong Kong's special trading status could devastate the city's economy, making it a crucial point of leverage. Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam warned on Tuesday that any sanctions would only complicate the problems in the city, which has been wracked by protests since June.

"It is time we put the Chinese government on annual notice that further erosion of autonomy or a crackdown in Hong Kong will cause the city, and by extension, mainland China, to lose its special economic and trade arrangement with the United States," said Representative Jim McGovern, a Massachusetts Democrat, who is

chairman of the commission.

Hong Kong's government expressed "deep regret" Wednesday over remarks made by its citizens at the hearing, saying in a statement that "foreign legislatures should not interfere in any form" in the city's internal affairs.

The government "absolutely respects the public's freedoms and rights of assembly, procession and expression," it said. "The police will continue to fully facilitate the conduct of peaceful and rational public events by members of the public."

McGovern is sponsoring separate legislation, the PROTECT Hong Kong Act, which would prohibit U.S. companies from exporting crowd control equipment and munitions such as tear gas and rubber bullets to Hong Kong. He predicted that Congress would pass his measure as well as the human rights measure.

"I believe, and I can probably give you assurances, that we will do that," McGovern told a panel

of witnesses which included activists from Hong Kong.

China's foreign ministry pushed back Wednesday. "We urge the U.S. and other sides to stop interfering in China's affairs and we would like to warn certain people that any attempts to disrupt Hong Kong by soliciting foreign support will not succeed," ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters in Beijing.

The activists who testified found a receptive audience for their pleas that the U.S. should act to support the pro-democracy movement.

"I hope that historians will celebrate the United States Congress for having stood on the side of Hong Kongers, the side of human rights and democracy," said Joshua Wong, a prominent student leader of the city's 2014 Occupy movement.

Denise Ho, a pro-democracy activist, singer and actress who also testified, said Hong Kong is at the front line of "a global fight for the universal values that we all cherish."

The Hong Kong protests started in opposition to legislation allowing extraditions to mainland China and widened into a broader movement against Beijing's

increasing grip on the city. They show no signs of stopping anytime soon, even after Lam scrapped the bill on Sept. 4.

"I uphold this principle of accountability, but at the moment it is all for us to see that Hong Kong is undergoing a very difficult situation," Lam said Tuesday at a regular media briefing before a meeting of the city's Executive Council. "And sanctions or punishment are not going to help lift Hong Kong out of this very difficult situation."

Representative Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican, said he expected that his Hong Kong measure would get a committee vote on Sept. 25. Representative Eliot Engel, a New York Democrat, said the eventual bill would be some form of the Smith-Rubio legislation. "We are going to do something for sure," Engel added. "We have to do something."

Both the House and Senate bills have bipartisan support. The White House hasn't formally weighed in on the legislation. President Donald Trump has called on the Chinese government to handle the protesters "in a very humane way" but hasn't delivered any extended remarks on the situation. **BLOOMBERG**

HONG KONG

National Day fireworks canceled amid protests

AN annual fireworks display in Hong Kong marking China's National Day on October 1 was called off yesterday as pro-democracy protests show no sign of ending.

The city issued a terse statement saying the show over its famed Victoria Harbour had been canceled "in view of the latest situation

and having regard to public safety."

Major protests are expected on Oct. 1, which will be the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party-governed People's Republic of China.

Hong Kong has experienced often-violent demonstrations all summer as many residents fear

the Chinese government is eroding the rights and freedoms the semi-autonomous territory is supposed to have under a "one country, two systems" framework.

The protests have divided the city. Dozens of supporters of China waved Chinese flags and sang the national anthem in a mall

on Wednesday, while anti-government protesters booed them.

Plainclothes police escorted them out of the mall, and officers formed a human chain to prevent clashes with the other side. At a similar rally at a mall last weekend, what started as heckling turned violent as people traded blows,

some using umbrellas to hit their opponents.

The anthem singing has sought to counter a newly penned protest song sung by democracy supporters in malls.

The protests also led the Hong Kong Jockey Club to cancel horse racing last night. Some protesters had suggested targeting the

club because a horse owned by controversial pro-Beijing lawmaker Junius Ho was due to run, public broadcaster RTHK reported.

"Our concerns are tied to potential social unrest in the vicinity tonight, the very real threat of a disturbance or possible violence at Happy Valley Racecourse, and uncertainty regarding transportation [...] for racegoers, jockeys and employees and horses throughout the evening," the club said in a statement. **AP**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

How virtual streamers became Japan's biggest YouTube attraction

PAVEL ALPEYEV
& YUKI FURUKAWA

KIZUNA Ai, the most popular streamer in Japan, is an anatomically exaggerated, perpetually adolescent girl in frilly thigh-high socks and a pink hair ribbon. She's also an entirely virtual character, given life by the actions and voice of an invisible actress.

In the home of anime and "Ghost in the Shell" futurism, millions now follow Kizuna Ai online, and that success has spawned thousands of copycat acts and a cottage industry catering to so-called virtual YouTubers, or VTubers. Defying the Western streamer blueprint of young male gamers like PewDiePie and Ninja, Japan has invented a new class of streaming star that's equal parts digital avatar and interactive anime.

"What separates VTubers from regular anime characters is that you can believe they actually exist," said Takeshi Osaka, founder of Activ8 Inc., the Tokyo-based company behind Kizuna Ai. "That presence is an important part of what makes them so appealing."

Sidestepping the labor-intensive and time-consuming process of traditional animation - ill-suited to the fast-paced world of YouTube content - Activ8 uses Hollywood-grade motion capture equipment to crank out music videos, skits and game streams just about every day for more than 4 million subscribers.

The technology allows Kizuna to interact with fans in real time at exhibitions, give interviews on live TV and perform in concerts. It's a virtual influencer that can patro-



nize real-world events.

While Activ8 doesn't disclose technical details, its product is an almost seamless combination of lifelike movements, gestures and facial expressions, all of which contribute to the suspension of disbelief.

"The innovation here is in how they combine real-time 3D computer graphics, motion capture and video streaming sites like YouTube to create two-way interactions with audiences," said Eiji Araki, a senior vice president at Gree Inc. who heads a division specializing in VTubers.

Kizuna Ai debuted on YouTube in December 2016 and was responsible for coining the term "VTuber." The technology that opened the door for its many imitators arrived that same year, in the form of the first commercial virtual reality goggles. Designed to do precise head and hand tracking, the VR kits from Facebook

Inc.'s Oculus and HTC Corp.'s Vive turned out to be perfect animation rigs for VTuber aspirants on a budget. With free-to-use animation engines and 3-D models from the likes of Unity Technologies, anyone could create a virtual puppet studio for cheap in their living room.

It's no accident that VTubers found fertile ground in Japan. The country has a long history of user-generated content centered on anime, and performances by virtual idols like Hatsune Miku have drawn real-world crowds for more than a decade. While international audiences may prefer more photorealistic characters - which are more difficult to create and animate - their Japanese counterparts raised on comic book heroes have no problem with cartoonish looks.

The VTuber phenomenon has so far been almost exclusively Japanese, however its underlying

technology and formula of combining popular culture with increased interactivity - and thus believability - are universal. And Activ8 already has ambitions to expand its VTuber portfolio beyond Japan.

While Japan's global tech leadership may have faded since the days of the Walkman, its trendsetting habits remain strong in the gaming realm. Three out of four gaming consoles sold in the world today are made by Nintendo Co. and Sony Corp., while free-to-play mobile games are taking over the globe with monetization techniques pioneered by Japanese companies. And then there are globally beloved game series like Super Mario, Zelda, Monster Hunter and Pokémon. Anime, another major Japanese cultural export, is a \$20 billion industry whose products range from Oscar-winning high-brow works by Hayao Miyazaki to action-packed

light entertainment like "Battle Angel Alita," which recently got a Hollywood remake. VTubers are a cross between these two Japanese pastimes.

Market researcher User Local Inc. estimates there are now over 9,000 VTuber channels. The most popular ones are produced by a handful of professional studios like Activ8, each managing dozens of characters. In the space of less than three years, virtual streamers have morphed from an obscure subculture to a big business. Kizuna Ai can now be found in ads for instant cup noodles and eye drops, appearing at local carrier SoftBank Corp.'s launch event and helping the Japan National Tourism Organization's promo campaigns.

"There is no doubt that this will change the future of entertainment," said Hironao Kunimitsu, the founder of Gumi Inc., an early investor in Activ8 and about 70 other VR startups. He cautions, however, that "for this type of content to resonate outside of Japan, it will have to be adapted to local tastes and sensibilities."

For now, Japanese VTubers are taking the path of least resistance and exporting their characters to China's large and underserved anime market. Activ8 earlier this year introduced a Chinese version of Kizuna Ai, changing its dress and voice, and now it has close to 820,000 followers on the country's Bilibili video-sharing service.

Ultimate success for Activ8's chief means making it into Hollywood, which is already a well-trodden path for Japanese gaming franchises like Resident Evil, Pokémon and Sonic the Hedgehog. Given the world's appetite for Japanese culture, VTubers might not even have to dilute their product very much.

"I started this virtual entertainer business because I believe it can be done worldwide," Osaka said. "Our goal is to become the next-generation Disney."

BLOOMBERG

CORPORATE BITS

MGM celebrates golden, enduring love



MGM has revived its "Love Moments" initiative, celebrating the marriages of 20 elderly couples. It included the couples' first-ever wedding photos taken at the

Spectacle at MGM Cotai. The event was the seventh consecutive MGM Community Care Campaign this year. The couples who were invited hailed from the Wo-

men's General Association of Macau, and Caritas Macau, as well as from the families of MGM employees.

Their average age was over 70 years old with around 50 years of marriage. The oldest couple were 92 and 81 years old, and the longest marriage was 62 years.

"These late wedding photos do not only bring blessings and joy to them, but also everlasting memories," said Pansy Ho, co-chairperson and executive director of MGM China Holdings Limited. The event was held to celebrate the double anniversaries of the mainland and the SAR.

Sands China awarded for HR achievements



Sands China Ltd. has won three awards for its innovative talent development and management initiatives in the HR Awards 2019. The three awards are Best HR Center of Excellence in Greater China 2019, Best HR Shared Servi-

ce Center in Greater China 2019 and Best HR Teams in Greater China 2019.

The HR Awards are some of the most highly regarded human resources (HR) industry awards in the Greater China region. Past award reci-

ipients all feature in the world's top 500 enterprises. Sands China's recognition this year was based on its various accomplishments in each award category.

It is the third time Sands China's human resources department has received the Best HR Teams in Greater China award, having won the award in 2016 and 2018.

The 2018 Best HR Leaders in Greater China award winner, Patrick Wu, who is also director of human resources for Venetian Macau Limited, was invited to speak on Evolutionary Leadership in an Era of Disruption at the HR Awards 2019, where the awards ceremony was held.



GOV'T RELEASES STOCKPILED PORK TO COOL PRICE SURGE

JOE McDONALD, BEIJING

CHINA'S government is releasing pork from stockpiles to help cool surging prices ahead of Oct. 1 celebrations of the Communist Party's 70th anniversary in power.

The price of pork, China's staple meat, has soared almost 50% from a year ago due to a devastating outbreak of African swine fever that killed or prompted authorities to destroy pigs. That has pushed up global pork prices as importers buy foreign supplies.

A government agency that manages the stockpile of frozen pork said yesterday it will auc-

tion off 10,000 tons.

That is equivalent to less than 0.2% of China's 2018 monthly consumption of 4.7 million tons, which suggests the announcement was a signal to consumers and farmers of Beijing's determination to cool prices instead of an attempt to change supply levels.

China produces and consumes two-thirds of the world's pork.

The government keeps reserves of live pigs and frozen pork to guarantee adequate supplies. Details of the frozen pork reserve are secret but industry analysts estimate its size at up to 3 to 5 million metric tons.

Industry analysts say the reserve probably is too small to have an impact on supplies in the market. The last release announced by the government was 9,600 tons in January.

This month, authorities also announced an initiative to revive pork production with support to farmers including subsidies to rebuild pig herds and improve facilities.

The Cabinet planning agency, the National Development and Reform Commission, promised to take "control measures in a timely manner" to keep food prices steady ahead of the Oct. 1 celebrations.

"We will take the lead in for-

mulating plans and measures to ensure a stable supply of pigs," said an NDRC spokeswoman, Meng Wei.

The price surge is a sour political note for the ruling party, which bases its claim to power in part on improved living standards over three decades of market-style economic reform.

Pork output plunged as authorities destroyed herds and blocked shipments to stop African swine fever, which first was reported in August 2018 in China's northeast.

African swine fever doesn't harm humans but is fatal and spreads quickly among pigs.

August's rise in pork prices

pushed food cost inflation to 3.2%, above the ruling party's official target of 3%.

Smaller outbreaks also have been reported in South Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Taiwan and Mongolia.

Forecasts of the decline in this year's Chinese pork production range as high as 35%. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says Chinese imports might rise 41%.

The shortages have given a boost to American pork exports despite tariff hikes imposed by Beijing in a fight with Washington over trade and technology.

U.S. pork sales to China rose 150% in June over a year earlier to 72 million pounds, according to the USDA.

Chinese imports rose 26% in the first half of 2019 to 819,000 metric tons, according to USDA. The European Union supplied 62%, Canada 16% and American farmers 8%. AP

Chinese-born Australian lawmaker fights election challenge

ROD MCGUIRK,
CANBERRA

LAWYERS for the first Chinese-born lawmaker to be appointed to Australia's Parliament and for a senior government minister appeared in a court yesterday to fight challenges to their elections over misleading Chinese-language campaign signs.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg and a Hong Kong-born fellow lawmaker in the conservative government, Gladys Liu, are being challenged over how they were elected to Parliament in the May 18 elections.

Court of Disputed Returns Justice Michelle Gordon ordered that the challenges

to the lawmakers' elections go to trial in the Federal Court at a date to be set.

The court challenge is one of the controversies facing Liu, who is under sustained opposition attack in Parliament over her links to the Chinese Communist Party and wealthy Chinese political donors.

The challenges to the election results stem from signs that appeared in Liu and Frydenberg's Melbourne electorates on election day.

The signs were printed in the same colors as Australia's election authority uses for its public information campaigns. The signs said in Chinese that choosing the government's candidate

on the ballot paper was "the right way to vote."

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's grip on power could be threatened if the court rules that the election results in both electorates were invalid and orders two by-elections.

Morrison's coalition was reelected with 77 seats in the 151-seat House of Representatives, where parties need a majority to form government.

Liu has come under media scrutiny over her membership in organizations overseen by the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee that exert influence on important individuals, orga-

nizations and governments outside China. Concern is growing about China's influence in Australia, which last year banned covert foreign interference in domestic politics.

The center-left Labor Party opposition has accused her of making misleading public statements about her past links to "Chinese Communist Party propaganda arms." Labor has also questioned whether Liu is fit to sit in Parliament.

Morrison has stood up for Liu and has accused her critics of smearing the 1.2 million people who make up the Chinese diaspora in Australia.

The prime minister's stance has earned him rare



praise from The Global Times, a Chinese Communist Party-owned nationalistic

tabloid, which congratulated his "decent gesture" in defending Liu. AP

HUAWEI Technologies Co. is offering up its most valuable 5G secrets and \$1.5 billion to software developers, courting the global tech community at a time the U.S. is heightening scrutiny of the Chinese giant.

China's largest technology company aims to ramp up investment in its developer program over the next five years, Deputy Chairman Ken Hu told attendees at an annual conference. That effort is gaining urgency with Huawei in danger of losing access to American circuitry and code, including the Google software it needs to run the world's No. 2 mobile device business.

Huawei is accelerating its outreach after the Trump administration imposed sanctions on the sale of U.S. technology, encouraging allies to cut ties with a Chinese company it accuses of aiding Beijing in espionage. In response, Huawei offered to sell a license to its vaunted fifth-generation wireless technology -- needed to drive future modern economies -- to create a viable competitor and prove its gear is free of security loopholes.

"There are a lot of concerns over Huawei's 5G solutions. We believe those concerns are groundless," Hu told reporters in Shanghai. "By allowing others to acquire these technologies via commercial methods, it will help reduce the concerns."

China's perceived lead in 5G is at the heart of President Donald Trump's campaign to contain the country's rise. Already, Huawei has inked more than 60 commercial contracts to build the wireless standard globally, Hu said. China itself is ready to finish the first phase of its 5G rollout by the middle of next year, he added.

Huawei executives turned out in force in the country's financial capital yesterday, roping in foreign executives - such as the

BLOOMBERG



Huawei woos tech world with \$1.5 billion and 5G secrets

director-general of interstellar research project Square Kilometre Array - to showcase the tech giant's road map for dominating future technologies.

It's developing alternatives to U.S. technology to help safeguard the world's largest networking business. Part of that involves ensuring a thriving community of partners. Huawei established a developer program to encourage external parties to create apps for Huawei services, including its just-unveiled

in-house smartphone platform, HarmonyOS.

The company intends to build its base of partner-developers to 5 million eventually, Hu said. That army of firms and individuals could help craft apps optimized to run on Huawei's Kunpeng and AI chip computing architecture, which will power everything from internet servers to machine learning solutions.

"This work has already started and we've received very good feedback," he told an au-

dience of technology executives in Shanghai. "We have implemented this strategy and we're looking forward to more partners joining us."

Huawei's rapid advances have, however, raised hackles in Washington, for which the Chinese company symbolizes a geopolitical rival's growing technological might. Executives sought to tamp down those fears.

Hu, one of three main people who run Huawei's day-to-day operations, reiterated an offer

first voiced by billionaire founder Ren Zhengfei to share 5G blueprints. While he was vague on how that would work, Hu said Huawei would be willing to open up its tech vaults for a fee, to help another company catch up on a technology that will drive applications from smart homes to self-driving cars.

"Customers and the entire industry will benefit from more competition, which is something that Huawei is willing to see," Hu said. **BLOOMBERG**

A panda is the mascot for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics

SHANSHAN WANG,
BEIJING

A smiling panda and a walking Chinese lantern will be the mascots for the 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics in Beijing.

The mascots were revealed Tuesday at a ceremony at the Shougang Ice Hockey Arena in the Chinese capital.

Beijing Mayor Chen Jining described them as adorable, unique and exquisite.

"In a visually appealing way, they epitomize our aspiration for the Beijing 2022

Games, and extend our warm invitation to friends throughout the world," he said.

The panda, named Bing Dwen Dwen, is the Olympic mascot. Colorful circles around its face symbolize skating tracks and 5G technology, according to the website of the Beijing organizing committee. Bing, the Chinese word for "ice," shows purity and strength, while Dwen Dwen means sincerity, liveliness and health, the website said.

The choice of the iconic animal, considered the national treasure, was not a

surprise to people in China. While many acclaimed Bing Dwen Dwen for its cuteness on social media, some were not impressed by the lack of creativity in choosing a panda.

The giant panda was one of the five mascots for the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics, and it also was the symbol for the Asian Games in Beijing in 1990.

"Today is an important step on a milestone in Beijing's journey to make history as the first ever, in Olympic history, to host both summer and winter editions of the Olympic Ga-

mes," International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach said at the ceremony.

Based on a traditional red lantern, Paralympic mascot Shuey Rhon Rhon creates the cheerful atmosphere of the Chinese Lunar New Year, which will fall around the time of the Winter Games, the organizing committee said.

It sports a yellow scarf, a circle of yellow doves around its head and a traditional Chinese paper cutting. "Shuey" means snow in Chinese and the characters for "Rhon Rhon" mean "in-

AP PHOTO



clusiveness" and "integration," implying the world civilizations communicating among one another and living in harmony, the

committee said.

The two mascots were selected from more than 5,800 submissions from 35 countries. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Participants dance at a gay pride parade in Kathmandu

LGBT

NEPAL'S SEXUAL MINORITIES SAY PROGRESS IN RIGHTS HAS STALLED

BINAJ GURUBACHARYA,
KATHMANDU

NEPAL seized the lead in equal rights for sexual minorities in South Asia four years ago with a new constitution that forbids all discrimination based on sexual orientation. Even citizenship certificates and passports now allow a "non-male, non-female" category.

But same-sex couples such as Niraj Sunwar and Aashik Lama say progress has stalled since the constitution was adopted.

Sunwar, 23, and Lama, 28, are still waiting for the day when they can legally marry. Lama also hopes to adopt a child, which isn't

possible because no laws currently allow it.

"We want to be lawfully wedded in a government office and have a legal certificate so we can openly live the life we want," Lama said. "We want to adopt a baby and start a family life."

Such rights were enshrined in the constitution, which was introduced after the abolition of Nepal's centuries-old monarchy, because of a 2008 Supreme Court ruling that outlawed all discrimination against sexual minorities. LGBT activists, however, say politicians have failed to write new laws that reflect their rights.

Even worse, a Civil Code that

was passed through parliament and came into force last year has moved things backward by clearly stating that marriage is a union between a man and a woman.

"Nepal opened the way and other countries are following, but it has stalled here," said Manisha Dhakal, executive director of the Blue Diamond Society, an LGBT rights group. "Parliament has no commitment; it just doesn't want to do it."

In addition to banning sexual discrimination, the new constitution provides special privileges to minority groups, including a reserved number of government jobs and educational positions.

The LGBT community has been defined as a minority, but receives no such reserved positions.

"Though the constitution says clearly there should be no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, there are no laws to support it," said Pinky Gurung, an LGBT rights activist.

Under a new citizenship bill being prepared in parliament, transgender people seeking to change their status would be required to show medical proof, but the bill does not clarify what kind, Dhakal said.

"A provision requiring us to get examined physically violates our privacy," she said, also noting that

sex change surgery is currently unavailable in Nepal and unaffordable for most transgender people.

She said activists are planning to go to court to demand equal rights, and then take the issue to international rights groups to pressure the government.

Nepal's constitution was ahead of its time not just at home but also in South Asia.

In India, homosexuality wasn't decriminalized until last year when the Supreme Court declared British-era laws unconstitutional. Tiny Bhutan's parliament recently repealed provisions that made "unnatural sex" illegal.

Meanwhile in Bangladesh and Pakistan, both Muslim-majority nations, gay relationships remain illegal, and gay rights activists routinely face discrimination.

If the rights were granted as they appear in the constitution, Nepal would be head of almost every country in all of Asia. Taiwan in May became the first place in the region to legalize same-sex marriage.

There is no accurate number for the size of Nepal's LGBT community. The next census, held every 10 years, is planned for 2021, and Gurung said they are demanding that the number of LGBT people be counted.

Because there is no census data, there are no quotas for jobs, educational positions or health care slots for the LGBT community. And activists say discrimination against the LGBT community in Nepal is still all too common in everyday life.

"Because there is no same-sex marriage provision in Nepal, we have been facing difficulties in society," Sunwar said. "When we walk in the street together, our neighbors always look down on us because two men are living together as a couple."

They have been living together for two years, but only told their parents a few months ago.

For Meghna Lama, who has been running Pink Tiffany, the first LGBT-friendly restaurant in the heart of Kathmandu's tourist district, overcoming challenges has become routine. **AP**

Sri Lankan doctors strike over salary 'injustice'

BHARATHA
MALLAWARACHI,
COLOMBO

DOCTORS at state-run hospitals across Sri Lanka began a 24-hour strike yesterday, demanding that the government resolve what they say is a salary "injustice."

Two years ago, the government gave an unusually high salary increase to legal

officers in the government sector, creating what Dr. Haritha Aluthge, secretary of the Government Medical Officers Association, called "a severe injustice to doctors and other professionals."

"For two years, we have been urging the government to rectify this anomaly, but so far no meaningful measures have been taken to resolve the injustice," he said.

ce," he said.

The strike caused hardships to the thousands of patients who arrived at state-run hospitals, where doctors were providing only emergency treatment. Government hospitals provide free services, making them very popular with most Sri Lankans.

Due to the strike — which began yesterday morning and is scheduled to

end Thursday morning — all routine surgeries and other medical services were not performed.

Samantha Perera, 49, who was to undergo a minor abdominal operation yesterday at the government hospital in Ragama, on the outskirts of the capital, Colombo, said hospital authorities asked him to go home and come back later this week to get a new date

for his surgery.

"It's really frustrating and now I have to come back on another day. Patients have to pay for the tussle between the government and doctors," he said.

Aluthge said the doctors' union resorted to a strike as the last option, and that the government should take responsibility for the hardships faced by the public.

The union did not con-

duct the strike at the country's main cancer or children's hospital, maternity hospitals and the specialized hospital that treats kidney patients.

There was no immediate comment from the government.

Aluthge urged the government to rectify the anomaly within a week by offering a solution acceptable to all concerned parties. He said if no solution is reached, "an island-wide continuous strike" would take place starting Sept. 25. **AP**

Filipino coast guard men convicted in Taiwan fisherman death

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

A Philippine court found eight Filipino coast guard personnel guilty yesterday of conspiring to shoot and kill a Taiwanese fisherman in a 2013 incident at sea that strained ties between the neighboring nations.

Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Eduardo Ramon Reyes said in a decision that the coast guard men failed to prove that their action of opening fire on the Taiwanese boat that killed Hong Shi Cheng on May 9, 2013, off the northern Philippines was legally justified. The coast guard men, who remain free on bail, will appeal.

Reyes said in his 32-page decision that the accused conspired "with intent to kill, killed victim Hoh Shi Cheng with no legal justification duly proven." The coast guard men were sentenced to jail terms of up to 14 years and ordered to pay for damages.

Taiwan's government welcomed the ruling, saying in a statement that the shooting happened in the two sides' overlapping



exclusive economic zones and that the Philippine government vessel "chased and attacked" the unarmed Taiwanese fishing boat, causing its 65-year-old skipper's death.

Philippine coast guard spokesman Armand Balilo said the agency's personnel were saddened by the ruling but would continue patrolling the country's waters. "We believe that they just did

their duty defending our territorial integrity. But the court has spoken and we will respect that and we will continue to support them," Balilo told reporters. The coast guard men argued

during the trial that the Taiwanese boat, Guang Da Xing No. 28, illegally entered Philippine waters in the Balintang Channel and sped away instead of stopping when they were about to board it.

During a chase, the Taiwanese changed course and almost hit the Philippine coast guard vessel before speeding away again, prompting a coast guard officer to order his men to "fire for effect to the engine." The Taiwanese crewmen were on their way back to port after fishing in the high seas and sped away to avoid the gunfire coming from the Philippine coast guard vessel, according to the decision.

The Taiwanese boat was hit by gunfire at least 45 times. Hoh Shi Cheng was hit once in the neck near the entrance to the boat's engine room while the other crewmen took cover, the court said.

Taiwanese officials protested the killing and the use of excessive force, prompting Philippine officials to issue an apology and order an investigation of the coast guard personnel involved in the incident.

Relations have since normalized between the Philippines and Taiwan, where thousands of Filipinos live and work. Aside from a number of territorial spats along their sea border, the two governments have overlapping territorial claims in the volatile South China Sea. AP

AD

THE ROADHOUSE MACAU

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BREXIT

UK gov't insists suspension of Parliament was not illegal

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

THE British government was back at the country's Supreme Court yesterday, arguing that Prime Minister Boris Johnson's decision to suspend Parliament just weeks before the country is set to leave the European Union was neither improper nor illegal.

It's the second day of a historic three-day hearing that pits the powers of Britain's legislature against those of its executive as the country's scheduled Brexit date of Oct. 31 looms over its political landscape and its economy.

Government lawyer James Eadie argued that a lower court was right to rule that Johnson's suspension of Parliament was a matter of "high policy" and politics, not law. Eadie called the decision to shut down Parliament "inherently and fundamentally political in nature."

He said if the court intervened it would violate the "fundamental constitutional principle" of the separation of powers between courts and the government.

"This is, we submit, the territory of political judgment, not legal standards," Eadie said.

The government's opponents argue that Johnson illegally shut down Parliament just weeks before the country is due to leave



the 28-nation bloc for the "improper purpose" of dodging lawmakers' scrutiny of his Brexit plans. They also accuse Johnson of misleading Queen Elizabeth II, whose formal approval was needed to suspend the legislature.

Johnson sent lawmakers home on Sept. 9 until Oct. 14, which is barely two weeks before Britain's Oct. 31 departure from the EU. He claims the shutdown was a routine measure to enable

his Conservative government to launch a fresh legislative agenda and was not related to Brexit.

Eadie rejected claims that the prime minister was trying to prevent lawmakers from blocking his Brexit plans.

He said "Parliament has had, and has taken, the opportunity to legislate" against the government, and would have more time between Oct. 14 and Brexit day. He said even if Parliament didn't

come back until Oct. 31, "there is time" for it to act on Brexit.

The prime minister says Britain must leave the EU on Oct. 31 with or without a divorce deal. But many economists and U.K. lawmakers believe a no-deal Brexit would be economically devastating and socially destabilizing. Members of Parliament have put obstacles in Johnson's way, including a law compelling the government to seek a delay to

Brexit if it can't get a divorce deal with the EU.

Parliament's suspension spared Johnson further meddling by the House of Commons but sparked legal challenges, to which lower courts gave contradictory rulings. England's High Court said the move was a political rather than legal matter but Scottish court judges ruled Johnson acted illegally "to avoid democratic scrutiny."

The Supreme Court is being asked to decide who was right. The justices will give their judgment sometime after the hearing ends on Thursday.

A ruling against the government by the 11 Supreme Court judges could force Johnson to recall Parliament.

European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker, meanwhile, said that the risk of Britain leaving the EU without a divorce deal remained "very real" because Britain had not produced workable alternatives to the deal agreed upon with the EU by ex-British Prime Minister Theresa May. That deal was repeatedly rejected by Britain's Parliament, prompting May to resign and bringing Johnson to power in July.

Any further delay to Britain's exit — which has already been postponed twice — needs the approval of the 27 other EU nations.

Johnson has said he won't delay Brexit under any circumstances — but also says he will respect the law, which orders the government to seek an extension if there is no deal by Oct. 19. He has not explained how that would be done. AP

RUSSIA

Moscow court rules to release anti-government protester

NATALIYA VASILYEVA, MOSCOW

AMoscow court yesterday ruled to release a protester, who was facing years in prison for assaulting police, following a mounting public campaign in support of anti-government activists and even bystanders caught up in an opposition rally.

Following their own pleas to keep the man in jail, prosecutors at a hearing yesterday asked the court to release Aidar Gubaidulin on recognizance and review the case to clarify the charges. The court ruled in favor, and the man was allowed out of the glass cage in the courtroom that defendants are kept in. Gubaidulin was one of a dozen Russians facing a prison sentence for his role in the July 27 oppo-



sition protest.

Public discontent has been rising against what has been perceived as the Kremlin's vengeance against the opposition following verdicts this month sentencing four people to prison terms ranging from two to 3 1/2 years.

In a rare sign of dissent,

more than 50 Russian Orthodox priests signed a public petition late Tuesday, condemning a series of recent trials and prison sentences for the protesters.

"We would like to express our concern about the fact that the verdicts come across as an attempt to intimidate Russian citi-

zens rather than deliver a fair ruling in the case of the defendants," the letter said.

The priests' letter also quoted the Bible, pointing out that perjury is a sin.

Most of the convictions against the protesters were based on testimony of riot police officers that didn't correspond to what can be

seen in the footage showing the defendants at the rally.

Dozens of Russian celebrities and entertainers have taken social media this week to show solidarity with little-known actor Pavel Ustinov who was tried and sentenced to 3 1/2 years in prison for assaulting police at the July 27 rally. Footage from the scene showed several officers tackling Ustinov as looked at his phone while standing on the sidelines of the protest. The judge refused the defense's plea even to review the video.

More than 100 people, including well-known film and theater actors, came out to the Kremlin administration compound in central Moscow to protest the verdict in Ustinov's case. The protesters formed a lined alongside the building,

waiting their turn to stand with a poster in Ustinov's support outside the entrance to the presidential administration.

Protests erupted in Moscow in July after election officials refused to allow a dozen independent and opposition candidates to run for the Moscow city legislature in the Sept. 8 vote.

Some of the rallies were not authorized by the police, and authorities deployed a formidable police force to disperse the crowds. In the July 27 rally, riot police were seen beating and detaining peaceful protesters. Nearly 1,400 people were briefly detained.

Shortly after the protests, dozens of people were rounded up and charged with assaulting police and rioting. AP

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



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Connect • Share • Grow

FMCC Breakfast Meeting
Wednesday, 25th September 2019



Lionsgate Entertainment World - Where Movies Come Alive!
Speaker: Mr. Rick Zeng, Deputy General Manager & Marketing and Sales Director, Lionsgate Entertainment World*



FMCC Networking Event
Cheese Master Class and Tasting with Master of Cheese, Mr. Patrice Marchand

Introduction:

Introduction of the making of Lionsgate Entertainment World, a fascinating experience in Hengqin. Deep insights on how it represents the new trend of developing urban social entertainment projects riding on movie IPs, and how to turn movie stories into location-based entertainment facilities.

RSVP before 2p.m. on 23rd September
info@francemacau.com or Tel: (853) 8798 9699

Date: Wednesday, 25th September, 2019
Time: 9:00a.m. - 10:30a.m. (Reception: 8:45am)
Venue: Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16
6th floor, Promenade Meeting Room

- 2019 FMCC members join free-of-charge*
- Guests and non-members @ MOP188*

* Breakfast included

www.francemacau.com



Introduction:

FMCC has the great honour to invite Mr. Patrice Marchand, Maitre Affineur de France (Master Cheesemaker and Ripener), holder of the Guinness world record for the largest cheese display of cheese varieties, and one of the three celebrated Marchand brothers from one of the oldest families of French cheesemakers. Marchand cheese is found on the most renowned gastronomic tables across the globe. This is a unique opportunity to learn from the Master while tasting amazing cheese with great wines in a unique venue, the ABA wine cellar at MGM MACAU.

RSVP before 2 p.m. on 24th September
info@francemacau.com or Tel: (853) 8798 9699

Date: Friday, 27th September, 2019
Time: 6:30p.m. - 8:30p.m.
Venue: ABA Bar, MGM MACAU
Ground Floor, ABA wine cellar

- 2019 FMCC members join @ MOP280*
- Guests and non-members @ MOP350*

* Price includes cheeses and free flow of wine. Strict No-Show/ Late Cancellation policy applies for this event.

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what's ON



WYNN PRESENTS: GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

TIME: 10am-10pm

UNTIL: October 6, 2019

VENUE: Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 6882 2839

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

TIME: 24 hours

UNTIL: October 9, 2019

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

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 8888

MANDARIN'S HOUSE

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (Last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Wednesdays, open on public holidays)

ADDRESS: No. 10, Travessa de António da Silva

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 8820

JAPANESE CULTURE AND PERFORMING ARTS POSTER EXHIBIT – GRAPHIC TRIAL POSTER EXHIBIT MACAU EDITION

TIME: 10am-9pm (Sundays to Thursdays)

UNTIL: September 22, 2019

VENUE: Tap Seac Gallery

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699

PROSPEROUS YEARS

TIME: 10am-8pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: September 25, 2019

VENUE: Old Court Building

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699

ONENESS: CALLIGRAPHY BY PROFESSOR JAO TSUNG-I

TIME: 10am-6pm (No admission after 5:30pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: September 30, 2019

VENUE: Jao Tsung-I Academy

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRY: (853) 8598 6718

Offbeat

PIGEON POOPS ON LAWMAKER DISCUSSING PIGEON POOP PROBLEM

A pigeon apparently didn't think much of a lawmaker's ideas to address a messy situation at a Chicago Transit Authority stop known by some as "pigeon poop station."

WBBM-TV reports that one of the birds did its business on the head of Democratic state Rep. Jaime Andrade as he was discussing the problem with a reporter outside of the Irving Park Blue Line station.

During the interview, Andrade rubbed the top of his head and said, "I think they just got me." They did.

The sidewalks outside of the station are covered in bird waste and feathers.

Andrade has been trying to fix the problem. One of his ideas is to ask the CTA to install a hose line for power washing when it constructs new escalators at the stop.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Agua de Mar
15:30	Zig Zag
15:30	Os Ursos Boonie e o Fantástico Outono
16:00	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
16:55	Geoparque Açores - Fim
17:50	Amor Maior (Repetição)
18:35	Semana Internacional (Repetição)
19:10	Resumo Liga dos Campeões 2019/2020
19:30	Ouro Verde Sr.1
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
22:00	Todas as Palavras
22:25	Amor Maior
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Justiça de Chicago
00:55	Liga Europa: PSV Eindhoven - Sporting (Directo)
03:00	Liga Europa: Porto - Young Boys (Directo)
05:00	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

19 - 25 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, 9:30pm

Director: Aleksandr Boguslavskiy

Starring: Tinatin Dalakishvili, Eddie Marsan, Rinal Mukhametov

Language: English (Chinese)

UNDERCOVER PUNCH AND GUN

ROOM2

7:30pm

Director: Koon-Nam Lui, Frankie Tam

Starring: Shuai Chi, Joyce Wenjuan Feng, Luxia Jiang

Language: Cantonese (Chinese)

FAGARA

ROOM3

2:30, 9:30pm

Director: Heiward Mak

Starring: Kenny Bee, Vicky Chen, Sammi Cheng

Language: Chinese (English)

Duration: 120min

SOUND! EUPHONIUM THE MOVIE -

OUR PROMISE: A BRAND NEW DAY

ROOM3

4:45, 7:30pm

Director: Tatsuya Ishihara

Starring: Robbie Daymond, Erica Mendez, Lucien Dodge

Language: Japanese (Chinese)

Duration: 110min

this day in history



1972 PARCEL BOMB ATTACK ON ISRAELI EMBASSY

A diplomat at the Israeli embassy in London has been killed by a letter bomb.

Dr Ami Sachori received severe chest and stomach injuries when the device exploded at 0930 GMT and died on the way to hospital.

Eight bombs were addressed to diplomats at the embassy, but three were detected in the consulate post room and four others were intercepted at a sorting office in Earl's Court.

Palestinian extremist group Black September is thought to have posted the letters. Some were also sent to the Israeli embassy in Paris, sparking a worldwide security alert.

Scotland Yard said the devices - contained in manila envelopes only a little bulkier than normal letters - all originated in Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

A note in one of the packages appeared to implicate the Arab faction which murdered nine Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games two weeks ago.

Dr Sachori, who was due to return to Israel in a fortnight's time, was the agricultural counsel at the embassy.

An embassy spokesman, Eli Tabori, said he was a "soft target".

"This man had nothing to do with the political side of the embassy - he was here to promote Israeli agricultural exports and because of the unsuspecting nature of his job he was probably singled out," he said.

The Israeli Ambassador, Michael Comay, told the BBC it was much easier for extremist groups to attack in Europe.

"They take advantage of the free and democratic traditions of your open society and your hospitality to carry out their deeds," he said.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Fifty-one letter bombs in total were sent on 16 September from Amsterdam to Israeli embassies all over the world, but Dr Sachori was the only fatality.

On 20 September a group calling itself the Central Committee of the Palestinian Revolution said it had posted the devices but many of the bombs were signed by Black September.

There were further waves of letter bomb attacks in 1972 - most of them posted from India - including one addressed to the US President, but only one person was injured. Reprisal parcel bombs were also sent by Israeli groups to Palestinian Liberation Organisation officials, injuring six.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
If others are misinterpreting what you say, you must accept part of the blame. Giving an unclear explanation of what you are feeling - and then getting annoyed when they don't understand you is not productive.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
If someone you care about needs to get a reality check, you should be the one to give it to them. You'll know how to deliver the news with the compassion and sensitivity they deserve.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Be very careful about how friendly you get with new people - they could easily assume you want more from them than you do, and this type of misunderstanding is simply not acceptable right now.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Try to keep a handle on your curiosity today. Given the unpredictable nature of the people around you right now, it's not wise to go exploring in unknown territory.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Remember that things are essentially subjective in life - where one person sees graffiti, another person can see artwork. When one person hears noise, another person hears riveting music.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Your newest scheduled activities might have a more confusing effect on your life than you expected - but clarity is just a matter of getting a handle on all the details!

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Stick a toe into the waters of variation today, and try something new - just one little thing. You'll like it! Whether it's a new coffee drink, a different route home, or a different radio station, a deviation is advised.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Good energy is extremely contagious today, so if you are not feeling as revved up as you usually do, get with the people who have the biggest smiles on their faces.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
While your focus has been on other people in your life lately, thinking completely about your current relationships is not going to be possible today. But that is a good thing...

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You'll only feel anxious the entire time - not to mention the fact that you'll meet people who like what you don't like. Where you go and what you do is an extension of your personality.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Ask a few more obvious questions, and soon enough you'll get the sneaking suspicion that there are facts or imperfections that are being hidden from you. And when you get that feeling, run for the hills!

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Social hound friends will be thrilled by this attitude, and will be all too happy to help you figure out how to lavish good stuff on yourself. Figure out what you want, and they will help you get it!

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	27	35	cloudy
Harbin	20	25	thundershower
Tianjin	27	35	thundershower
Urumqi	21	28	shower
Xi'an	24	35	cloudy
Lhasa	11	24	shower
Chengdu	24	34	shower
Chongqing	26	34	cloudy
Kunming	18	24	shower
Nanjing	29	36	cloudy
Shanghai	29	36	cloudy
Wuhan	28	37	clear
Hangzhou	28	38	cloudy
Taipei	26	30	overcast
Guangzhou	26	35	thundershower
Hong Kong	28	33	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	17	22	moderate rain
Frankfurt	21	33	clear
Paris	22	32	clear
London	16	24	clear
New York	18	27	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Aromatic herb; 6- Comply with; 10- Boot bottom; 14- Home ____; Culkin movie; 15- Soccer legend; 16- Ripe for drafting; 17- Fires; 18- Building additions; 19- Classic cars; 20- Cinque follower; 21- Somewhat, informally; 23- Dried plum; 24- Amphitheater; 26- Take the honey and run; 27- She's a Dahl; 29- Large parrot; 31- Chow ____; 32- Wed; 33- Actor Danson; 36- Think about; 40- Her partner would be a buck; 41- Brit's bottle measure; 42- Monster; 43- Lover of Juliet; 44- Accident; 46- Bye!; 48- Surrealist Max; 49- Stand in good ____; 50- The opposition; 52- URL ending; 55- Contented cat sound; 56- Ark builder; 57- ____ Dei; 59- Singer Brickell; 60- Chip in; 61- Has to have; 62- Not natural, in a way; 63- Juror; 64- Church official;

DOWN: 1- Low in pitch; 2- Winglike parts; 3- Debutante; 4- Writing fluid; 5- Reduce; 6- Musical drama; 7- Waist band; 8- Scat queen Fitzgerald; 9- Toady's response; 10- Grief; 11- Outdo; 12- Sierra ____; 13- Freedom from need, labor, or pain; 22- Washington's bill; 23- Beach, in Baja; 25- Russo of "Get Shorty"; 26- Hosiery shade; 27- During; 28- Gambling mecca; 29- Computer shortcut; 30- Comic Johnson; 32- Parcel (out); 33- Made tighter; 34- Pound of poetry; 35- Abstruse; 37- Christopher of "Back to the Future"; 38- Capital city of Peru; 39- Election defeat; 43- Raised; 44- Hosp. picture; 45- Certifiable; 46- Investigate closely; 47- Causing goose bumps; 48- Old anesthetic; 49- Went over the limit; 50- Top of the line; 51- ____ Dagg; 53- Type of ranch; 54- The Beatles' "Back in the ____"; 56- Siesta; 58- Do goo;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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BENETTON MAKES A SPLASH ON THE EVE OF MILAN FASHION WEEK

BENETTON has long made waves off the runway with its provocative advertising campaigns. But the storied family-owned knitwear brand is seeking to make waves inside the world of Italian fashion under the artistic guidance of French designer Jean-Charles de Castelbajac.

United Colors of Benetton made a splash with its new collection showcasing experimental textiles and ecological materials that was presented yesterday [Macau time] — on the eve of Milan Fashion Week — inside a 1930s-era swimming hall.

In his second season with the brand, Castelbajac said he is aiming to create a balance between Benetton's every-man and every-woman image while elevating its styling and innovation.

"This is a big step for us," Castelbajac said. "We are combining ideas, fashion and styling while experimenting in new directions."

A trench coat made out of paper and recycled fibers was the apex of innovation in the Spring/Summer 2020 runway show, which took place along the perimeter of the pool as swimmers in Undercolors of Benetton suits did laps.

Castelbajac said the tailored trench in paper-bag brown with

green stitching was impermeable to rain. He also created a papery cropped top paired with a white skirt that bore a devilish silhouette in the same material.

Other standout pieces included a handkerchief skirt featuring a stylized postcard print on the front that can be worn with a flowing silhouette, or tied in the front or back for a straight look in two different prints. And selections covered with tiny sweaters or mini T-shirts bearing images from Oliverio Toscanini's advertising campaigns were meant to inspire playfulness.

The co-ed collection was anchored by the brand's famous colors and denim, epitomized by a check denim kilt with multi-colored pleated inserts that was paired with a rainbow-striped knit top and striped color-sheer hosiery for her and multi-colored pockets on white garments for him.

The offerings mostly hewed to a watery theme. The show opened with neoprene rompers, tops and mini-dresses with oversized plastic zippers followed by a series of bold nautical looks with anchor motifs. But there were also preppy outfits in clashing patterns of pink and green and a garden club series of striped embroidered eyelet

layered with florals.

Footwear included platform sandals inspired by surfboards and sneakers with florals or streaks of color. Sailor caps or plastic visors topped the looks.

As he relaunches UCB, Castelbajac is combing accessible items like socks that start at 6 euros (\$6.50) with high-fashion options like an oversized rainbow-colored jacket of wooly sheep shapes that sold out at 1,200 euros (\$1,325) each.

"My problem is they never say no to me," the designer said.

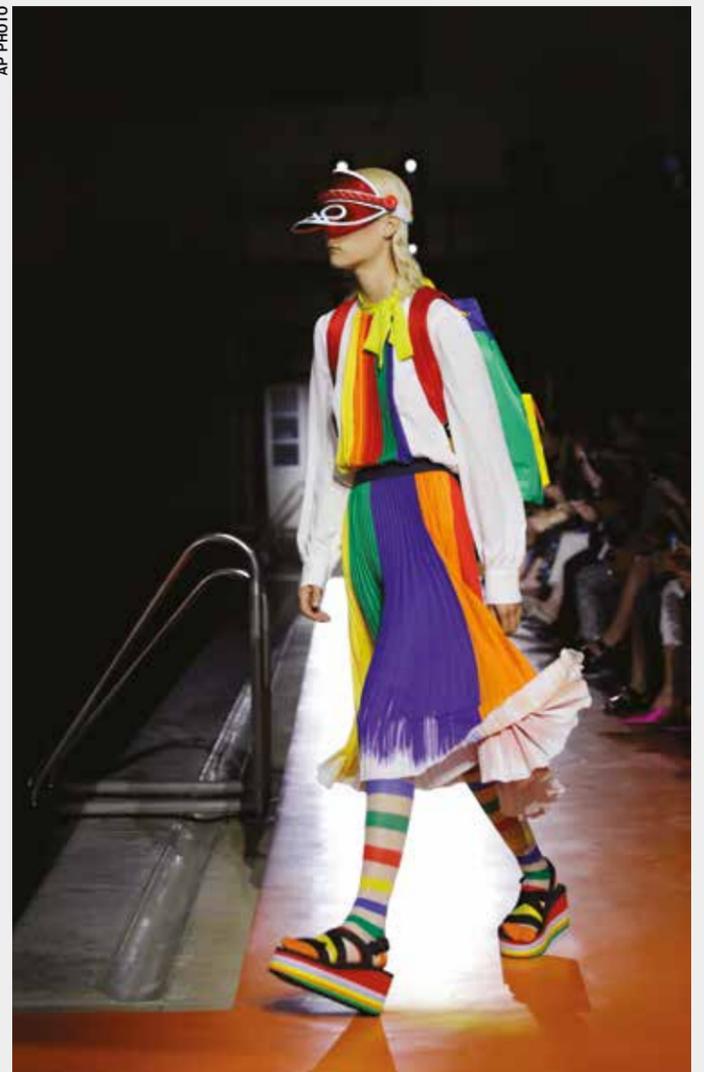
Luciano Benetton said the design shift had boosted sales and also "sympathy" for the brand, which has taken steps to improve its quality by moving some production back to Italy and Europe.

"This is a goal of the company but also an expectation of the market," Benetton said. "Not to buy a lot of things that cost a little, but somewhat fewer things that cost a bit more and create more emotion."

Benetton said the brand is studying a move to open stores again in the United States, noting strong sales on e-commerce there.

"We know the brand is still very fresh and well-known," he said.

AP PHOTO



AD



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RUGBY

Pressure on Japan in World Cup opener against Russia

JEROME PUGMIRE, TOKYO

Friday, 18:45pm
Japan v Russia
H 1.02, D 126, A 41

THE Rugby World Cup opener has been four years in the making for Michael Leitch and his Japan squad.

The hype has been steadily growing, and now Leitch's lineup will have its first genuine taste of the expectation which comes with being host when it plays Russia tomorrow in the opening match of the first Rugby World Cup to be held in Asia.

An upset win over South Africa at the 2015 World Cup swelled Japan's fan-base at home and abroad and has added to the expectation that they may be the giant-killers of this year's tournament.

Backrower Leitch was one of eight players selected yesterday in Japan's match-day 23 who were involved in that game four years ago.

He says the atmosphere has intensified in practice, but "it's great having all eyes on rugby."

Yu Tamara was picked by coach Jamie Joseph to start at flyhalf and Luke Thompson was included on the bench. At 38, Thompson could become the oldest player to represent Japan in the competition and the first to play in four World Cups.

Leitch says his players are happy to live with heightened pressure and have their sights firmly set on making the quarterfinals for the first time. An emphatic win by 10th-ranked Japan over 20th-



-ranked Russia might help quiet the players' nerves and those of their fans while launching the tournament on a high note.

Japan will have to be quickly into stride as it needs not only to beat Russia but to do so by a large margin if it is to have a chance of progressing to the knockout rounds. Points differential could come into play in deciding the top two teams in what seems to be an even pool.

Japan shares the group with top-ranked Ireland, Scotland, Russia and former quarterfinalist Samoa. After Russia it plays Ireland, then Samoa, making its last pool match against Scotland

a possibly decisive contest for second place if Ireland tops the pool as expected.

"It's going to be a big occasion, not just for our team but for the country, but you can't really replicate what coming up for the players," Joseph said. "Our team wants to make the top eight. The last World Cup Japan did very, very well, but still didn't make the top eight so that's been the target all along."

A 41-7 loss to South Africa in a recent warmup game was not in any way indicative of Japan's comparative standing with Tier One nations or of any decline in its ability since the last World Cup. Jose-

ph used the match for experimentation and to adapt a game plan to those of its pool opponents.

"The biggest lesson for us is that when we make a small mistake against a Tier One team they will punish us and score points," Joseph said. "We are a well-prepared team both physically and mentally. We understand what our roles are — We want to make everyone proud."

One of the men under most pressure is Tamura, a bench player at the last World Cup but now has the task of guiding Japan's attacking game.

"This is a game with 15 players," Tamura said. "It's the same for any country. Everyone has to do a good job and it's difficult to deal with it all alone. The stage is all set with the home fans behind us."

Russia may still be startled to find itself at the center of the spectacle of the World Cup's opening match. The Russians were lucky to qualify, doing so only after Romania was disqualified for fielding ineligible players.

Russia's warm-up form has not been impressive: it conceded 162 points including 24 tries in its last three matches. But captain Vasily Artyemyev said those games allowed Russia to overcome some rustiness and promised his team would be better at the World Cup.

Artyemyev and Vladimir Ostroshko are in the starting lineup after playing in all four matches in Russia's last appearance at the World Cup in 2011. Victor Gresev is on the bench. **AP**

LINEUPS

JAPAN: William Tupou, Kotaro Matsushima, Timothy Lafaele, Ryoto Nakamura, Lomano Lava Lemeki, Yu Tamura, Yutaka Nagare; Kazuki Himeno, Pieter Labuschagne, Michael Leitch (captain), James Moore, Wimpie van der Walt, Asaeli Ai Valu, Shota Horie, Keita Inagaki. Reserves: Atsushi Sakate, Isileli Nakajima, Jiwon Koo, Luke Thompson, Hendrik Tui, Fumiaki Tanaka, Rikiya Matsuda, Ryohei Yamanaka.

RUSSIA: Vasily Artyemyev (captain), German Davydov, Vladimir Ostroshko, Dmitry Gerasimov, Kirill Golosnitskiy, Yury Kushnarev, Vasily Dorofeev; Nikita Vavilin, Tagir Gadzhiev, Vitaly Zhivatov, Bogdan Fedotko, Andrey Ostrikov, Kirill Gotovtsev, Stanislav Selskii, Valery Morozov. Reserves: Evgeny Matveev, Andrei Polivalov, Azamat Bitiev, Andrey Garbuzov, Anton Sychev, Dmitry Perov, Ramil Gaisin, Vladislav Sozonov.

TENNIS

Osaka reaches quarterfinals at Pan Pacific Open

TOP-SEEDED Naomi Osaka reached the quarterfinals at the Pan Pacific Open by beating qualifier Viktoriya Tomova 7-5, 6-3 yesterday.

Osaka, who was broken twice early in the match, is looking to win her first title in her hometown after finishing runner-up in 2016 and 2018.

She will next meet either Yulia Putintseva or Russian qualifier Varvara Flink.

Also, fourth-seeded Angelique Kerber won her first match since Wimbledon, beating American qualifier

Nicole Gibbs 6-2, 6-4.

"The goal now is to finish the year as well as I can, to put all the energy which I have into this run in Asia and to play well in the next few weeks," Kerber said.

Kerber will next face Madison Keys, who defeated Zarina Diyas 5-7, 6-0, 6-4.

"I know Madison really well, so I know what to expect," Kerber said. "It will be interesting. We both know we have to play our best against each other."

Elise Mertens also advanced, beating Hsieh Su-Wei 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 win.

At the Korea Open in Seoul, second-seeded Ekaterina Alexandrova recovered well to beat Kristyna Pliskova 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 and reach the quarterfinals.

Alexandrova will next play Kristie Ahn. The American advanced by beating Ana Bogdan of Romania 0-6, 6-4, 7-6 (2).

Magda Linette also reached the quarterfinals, defeating Anastasia Potapova 7-5, 7-6 (4). The fourth-seeded Linette will next meet Kirsten Flipkens, who upset seventh-seed Margarita Gasparyan 6-3, 7-5. **AP**



Ekaterina Alexandrova of Russia

OPINION

World Views

Michael R. Strain, Bloomberg

POPULISM WILL PROBABLY JUST GO AWAY SOON, SO RELAX

Populism has become a defining feature of public life. It embraces a narrative of victimhood and grievance, pitting “people” against “elites.” U.S. President Donald Trump’s protectionism and hostility toward immigrants are fueled by populist frustration on the political right. On the left, populism appears as resentment of the wealthy, and the Democratic Party’s presidential primary field is marked by proposals to penalize the rich. Compromise has become a dirty word. Political engagement with the other side is scorned. Taking half a loaf is worse than failure; it is betrayal.

How much longer will this last? Economics has something to say on that question. In a 2016 paper, the German economists Manuel Funke, Moritz Schularick and Christoph Trebesch studied the political ramifications of financial crises. They built and analyzed a data set covering more than 800 elections in 20 advanced economies (including the U.S.) running from 1870 to 2014.

They found that far-right parties see a 30% increase in their vote share in the five years following a financial crisis. The parties that gain are characterized by nationalist and xenophobic oratory. The most recent financial crisis fit this pattern, with right-wing populist parties more than doubling their vote share after 2008 in France, the U.K., Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Japan.

In contrast, recessions that are not caused by financial crises see relatively little of this. The economists suggest that non-financial downturns — think of an oil-price shock — may be seen by voters as excusable, out of the control of elites. Financial recessions, on the other hand, may be perceived as the result of policy failures and other elite decisions.

The good news from the economists’ paper is that the political upheaval caused by a financial crisis is temporary. Ten years after a crisis, nearly all the variables they study are back to their pre-crisis levels.

The U.S. is about a decade removed from the 2008 crisis. If the U.S. fits the pattern of the past century and a half, then its politics should be back to normal. Of course, they aren’t. Why? It may be that the crisis a decade ago was so severe that political normalization needs more time.

Indeed, the Great Recession ended sooner for some people than for others. It took nearly eight years after the recession began for the unemployment rate to reach its pre-recession level.

When the recession began, 1.3 million workers had been actively looking for a job for six months or longer without success. At its peak, there were a shocking 6.8 million long-term unemployed workers. As recently as 2015, there were still twice as many long-term unemployed as there were on the eve of the recession.

Another argument for populism’s looming expiration date is the failure of its policies to deliver for the American people. Take Trump’s trade war with China, which has not led to a rapid resurgence of U.S. manufacturing jobs. It hasn’t even reduced the trade deficit. Average monthly trade deficits were higher in 2018 and 2019 than in the recent preceding years. And as its critics predicted, the trade war has lowered national income and increased the prices consumers face. (If a Democrat takes the White House in the 2020 election, a similar dynamic is likely to present itself. It’s hard to imagine, for example, that abolishing private medical insurance would deliver the health-care improvements that its advocates promise.)

Economic reality is a powerful factor in politics, and given enough time the failure of populist policies will not be an exception to this rule. Indeed, such policies are already increasingly unpopular. In a new ABC News/Washington Post poll, 56% of respondents disapproved of the president’s handling of trade negotiations with China. Only 35% approved. Forty-three percent believed that his trade and economic policies would increase the chance of a recession, and less than half approved of his handling of the economy. Sixty percent worried that the trade war with China would raise prices.

So don’t panic about of populism. And don’t overreact. The left shouldn’t weaponize the tax code to punish the rich. The right shouldn’t retreat from its long-held commitments to free trade, free markets, personal responsibility and openness to the world. The populist threat just requires a more mundane response: patience.

[Abridged]

Hong Kong’s government is to investigate whether the MTR East Rail line was sabotaged, the South China Morning Post reported late last night.

“As the mystery over the cause of the accident deepened, one line of inquiry turned to whether disgruntled MTR Corporation employees were behind the incident,” the SCMP said.

“Many possibilities have already been ruled out after further checks, so the Hong Kong government will look into whether the derailment was an inside job,” a source quoted by the newspaper said.

“So far, the MTR Corporation still has no clues about the probable cause of the incident.”

The SCMP added that the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department said “it would examine various factors, including the mechanical parts of the train, the track and associated devices, as well as the possibility of obstruction by foreign objects.”

It also emerged yesterday that a fourth crack had been found on the tracks. The rail accident was the city’s most serious in more than two decades. Five people were injured.

JIMMY CARTER SAYS HE COULDN’T HAVE MANAGED PRESIDENCY AT 80



BILL BARROW, ATLANTA

WEEKS shy of his 95th birthday, former President Jimmy Carter said he doesn’t believe he could have managed the most powerful office in the world at 80 years old.

Carter, who earlier this year became the longest-lived chief executive in American history, didn’t tie his comments to any of his fellow Democrats running for president in 2020, but two leading candidates, Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders, would turn 80 during their terms if elected.

Biden is 76. Sanders is 78. “I hope there’s an age limit,” Carter said with a laugh as he answered audience questions yesterday [Macau time] during his annual report at the Carter Center in Atlanta. “If I were just 80 years old, if I was 15 years younger, I don’t believe I could undertake the duties I experienced when I was president.”

Carter’s observation came in response to a jovial inquiry about whether he had considered running in 2020 since he’s still constitutionally allowed another term. The 39th president left office in 1981 at the age of 56 after losing his reelection bid to Ronald Reagan, who served two terms and left of-

ice as the oldest sitting president in history, at 77.

Either Biden or Sanders would be older upon their inauguration than Reagan was on his final day in the Oval Office. At 73, President Donald Trump is a record setter, as well. He eclipsed Reagan’s mark as the oldest newly elected president in

“I hope there’s an age limit.”

CARTER

history and would become the oldest president to be reelected. Age has been a flashpoint for some critics of Trump, Sanders and Biden.

Carter, who turns 95 on Oct. 1, said the Oval Office requires a president “to be very flexible with your mind,” particularly on foreign affairs. He was speaking on the 41st anniversary of the Camp David Accords, a peace agreement he negotiated with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

“You have to be able to go from one subject to another and concentrate on each one adequately and then put them together in a comprehensive way, like I did between Begin and Sadat

with the peace agreement,” Carter said.

“The things I faced in foreign affairs, I don’t think I could undertake them at 80 years old,” he continued, before adding with a smile: “At 95, it’s out of the question. I’m having a hard time walking.”

Carter said he remains undecided in the 2020 primary.

“I’m going to keep an open mind,” he said, explaining that he wants to vote for a candidate who pledges to make the U.S. the world’s leading champion for peace, human rights and equality. “One of the major factors I will have in my mind is who can beat Trump,” he added, noting that he’ll vote for the Democratic nominee in the general election regardless.

Still, Carter’s assessments on age could leave him with few easy choices in the primary.

Carter repeated his previous disclosure that he voted for Sanders over Hillary Clinton in 2016, siding with the democratic socialist over the party establishment favorite. But Carter has since warned Democrats not to go too far left, lest they risk alienating independents and moderate Republicans who can help the party defeat Trump. **AP**

India The government yesterday decided to ban e-cigarettes, expressing concern at the alarming rate at which vaping is becoming popular among the country’s youth and causing breathing illnesses.

Pakistan’s prime minister says he will urge U.S. President Donald Trump to resume peace talks with the Taliban when he meets with him next week on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly.



Zimbabwe Local doctors protesting the alleged abduction of a union leader were met by a line of baton-wielding police in the capital yesterday as fears grow about government repression.



EU European Parliament lawmakers yesterday voted overwhelmingly in favor of another Brexit delay if Britain requests one and certain conditions are met, after European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker told the chamber that a no-deal scenario remains “very real.”

Bosnia Prosecutors have opened an organized crime investigation into the unresolved death of a student that has sparked street protests and criticism from the European Union.

Denmark Police say they have arrested a 23-year-old man as a suspect in an explosion that damaged the headquarters of the Danish Tax Agency and slightly injured a bystander last month.

Spain’s air force says that a student pilot and her instructor have both died when their plane crashed into the Mediterranean Sea.