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PEOPLE'S BANK OF CHINA RAISES THE DAILY LIMIT ON REMITTANCES FROM MACAU TO MAINLAND ACCOUNTS TO RMB80,000

▲ P4

XI'S SCARING AWAY GAMBLERS: ANALYSTS

▲ P4

CASINO EXECUTIVES BEGIN TO QUESTION WHETHER JAPAN'S \$20 BILLION JACKPOT IS WORTH ALL THE TROUBLE

▲ P6

China Controversy has erupted after a leading Chinese university revised its charter to remove a reference to “free thinking” and adding a new stress on adhering to the leadership of the ruling Communist Party, Marxism and socialist theories of education. The changes at Fudan University in Shanghai were revealed earlier this week and reflect the atmosphere of increasing academic control and conservatism under the administration of party leader and head of state Xi Jinping. [More on p27](#)

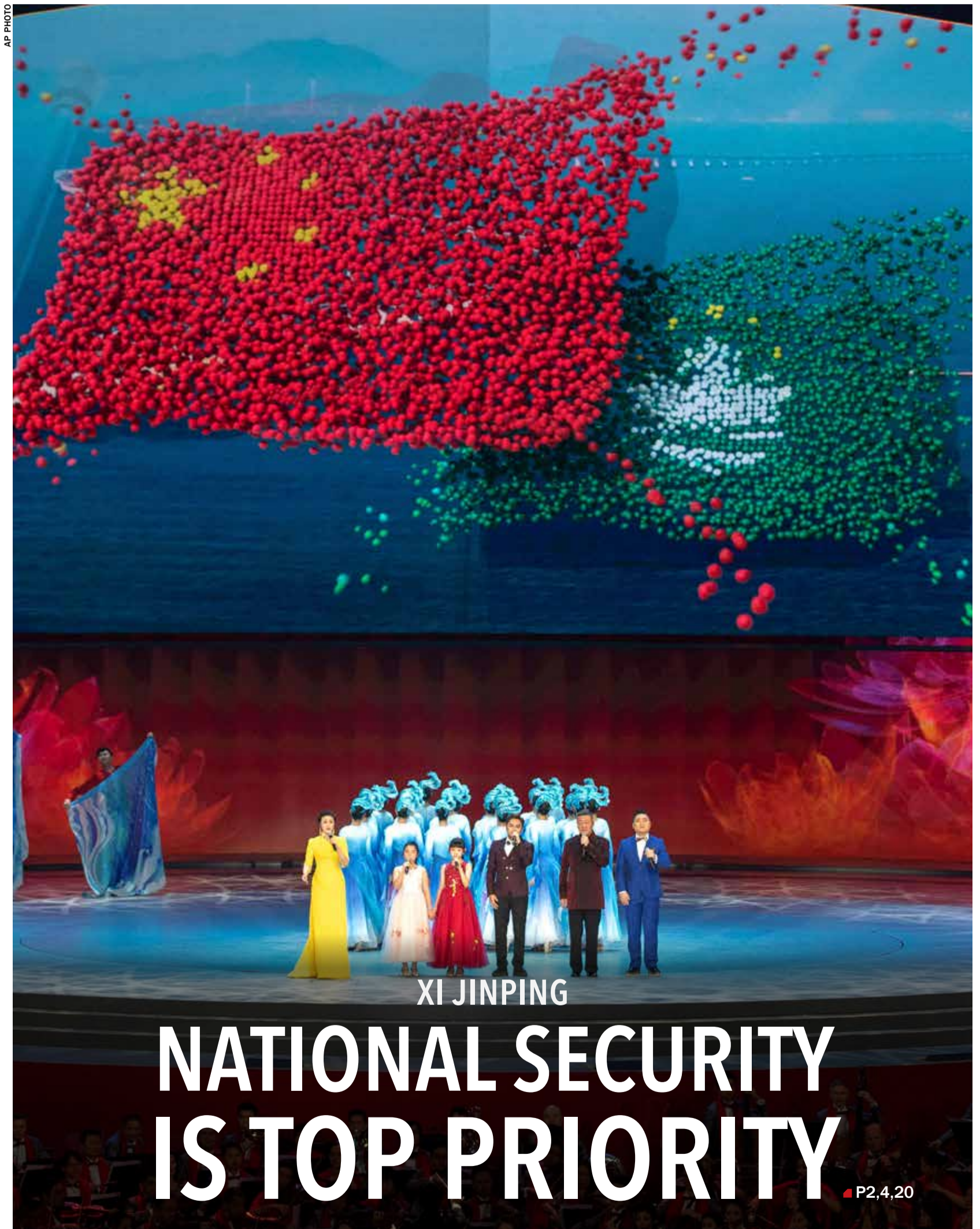


China Chinese tech companies including social media giant Tencent were ordered by regulators yesterday to clean up how their apps handle user information or face possible penalties. The order is the latest in a series of crackdowns by Communist authorities who encourage internet use but are steadily tightening censorship and other controls on operators. Violators in earlier crackdowns have lost licenses or suffered other penalties that cut into revenue or depressed their company's share price.



Indonesia Five Papuan pro-independence students and a rights activist went on trial yesterday on charges of treason after waving morning star flags that are a separatist symbol during a peaceful protest in front of Indonesia's presidential palace. The rally in the capital, Jakarta, in August was part of weeks of protests triggered by videos that circulated widely on the internet showing police, backed by soldiers, calling Papuan students “monkeys” and “dogs.”

More on backpage



XI JINPING

NATIONAL SECURITY IS TOP PRIORITY

▲ P2,4,20

MACAU SEA AREA SURVEY COMPLETED

The China Geological Survey authority has carried out the first systematic marine geological survey of Macau's waters, having compiled the atlas of geological resources and environments in Macau's waters. According to the survey, Macau's sea area and coastal zones are rich in geological resources, including 76 kilometers of coastline resources, about 55 square kilometers of tidal flat resources, unique granite landforms, coastal geological tourism resources, and about 78.5 million cubic meters of prospective sea sand. The Guangzhou Marine Geological Survey Bureau believes that the atlas will provide basic data for the preparation and implementation of Macau's medium and long-term development plans.

MAINLAND RETIREMENT POLICIES CANNOT BE COPIED

It is unsuitable for Macau to copy mainland China's policies on the retirement pension age, according to Chan Pou I, a department head from the Social Security Fund. During a TDM radio program, a listener suggested that Macau should set the age for receiving full retirement pension at 60 years old. Chan responded by saying that mainland retirement policies were based on the relevant mainland laws, and on regulations conducive to the protection of elderly rights and basic pension insurance. According to Chan, in 2008, the SAR government implemented measures allowing residents to claim their retirement pension in advance due to Macau's economic situation. Back then, the eligible age for receiving the retirement pension was 65 years old.

IMPROVEMENTS TO MONG HÁ TRAIL NEEDED

Lawmaker Leong Sun Lok has urged the local government to improve the conditions of the walking trail at Mong Há. In his interpellation to the local government, Leong asked about the Macau government's plan to provide more walking spaces. According to Leong, some residents complained to him that there was not enough accessibility to the Mong Há trail. These residents also wished for a garden to be built at the entrance of the trail. Mong Há aside, Leong also pointed out the lack of leisure spaces in the Fai Chi Kei district, and the areas around Avenida do Almirante Lacerda, Avenida do Coronel Mesquita, and Avenida de Horta e Costa.

National security emerges as President Xi's top message

CHINESE President Xi Jinping yesterday called on security forces in the Macau Special Administrative Region to resolutely prevent and crack down on actions endangering the security of national sovereignty and challenging the authority of the central government and the Basic Law.

His comments come amid a delicate time for Beijing, which has faced increased resistance on the streets of neighboring Hong Kong. Beijing's refusal to respond to the demands of hundreds of thousands of protesters, including direct elections for the chief executive and legislative council, has led to a 7-month standoff, with more anti-government activity expected for this weekend.

In remarks at the airport upon his arrival Wednesday, Xi made what some considered a subtle comparison between Macau's outward stability and the tensions in Hong Kong.

"It is worthwhile to sum up the experience and characteristics of Macau in faithfully implementing 'one country, two systems,'" Xi told an audience of journalists, officials and flower-waving children. "We will join hands to draw the blueprint for Macau's future development," he said.

City leaders have put Macau on a security lock down, including barring political activists and journalists from nearby Hong Kong, which has been wracked by months of often-violent anti-government protests.

Even without the heavy security, Xi would likely have seen little in the way of protests or calls for greater democracy or self-rule. Unlike Hong Kong, whose former British leaders nudged their colony gradually toward greater democratic freedoms, Macau's small size, ineffectual rule by Lisbon and the overriding influence of the tycoons who control gambling and related businesses kept democratic expectations low.

When meeting with representatives of Macau's security forces yesterday, the Chinese President praised the efforts of local security forces in swiftly and thorou-



ghly tackling security problems that existed before Macau's return to the motherland in 1999. Macau is now among the safest cities in the world. Xi said this is a remarkable achievement that deserves full recognition and commendation.

Xi told members of local law enforcement yesterday that they needed to "increase awareness of the nation [...] and be highly vigilant."

The security forces must "resolutely guard against and crack down on any activities that endanger national security, challenge the power of the central government [...] and use Macau to engage in infiltration into and sabotage against the mainland," Xi said.

Xi Jinping also met yesterday with incoming Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng amid celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the handover to Chinese rule. The Chinese President expressed the hope that the security forces will show their full support toward Ho Iat Seng, who will be inaugurated today.

PATRIOTIC TUNES STIR TOP OFFICIALS

President Xi Jinping joined chorus singers in a rendition of "Ode to My Motherland" during a gala performance last night to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland.

President Xi and his wife – together with the Chief Executive, Mr Chui Sai On, and Chief Executive-elect Mr Ho Iat Seng – attended the gala performance, along with approximately 1000 other guests.

The 70-minute gala performance, with the theme "Passion of Macao, Heart of China", was organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau and held in the Macao East Asian Games Dome.

The gala performance opened with a lion dance, an activity that is listed as part of national intangible cultural heritage. The dance was followed by the curtain-raiser song "My Motherland and I".

The show featured various acts by singers, troupes of artists, and community organisations, from – respectively – the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. They presented interpretations – via music, dance and martial arts – of Macau's famous landmarks, culture, festive events and notable people.

A LITTLE HELP FROM EDMUND HO

Earlier in the day, President Xi Jinping met with Edmund Ho, vice chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Xi praised Ho for having laid a sound foundation for the cons-

truction and development of the Macau Special Administrative Region during his work as the first and second-term Chief Executive. "The central government fully acknowledges your work," Xi told Ho.

Xi voiced the hope that Ho could fully support the incoming chief executive and the new SAR government in getting off to a good start, continue to pay close attention to youth work, and guide them to strengthen the sense of national identity and pass down the core value of "loving the motherland, loving Macau" from one generation to the next.

On his turn, Edmund Ho pledged to help guide the young generation to an understanding of the country and a sense of national identity, as well as further consolidate the social and political foundation of "loving the motherland, loving Macau."

President Xi will attend the 20th anniversary celebration of the Macau handover this morning, as well as the inauguration ceremony of the next government.

After those ceremonies, Xi is scheduled to meet with the newly-inaugurated officials representing the public administration, the legislature, and the judiciary of Macau, before he departs the territory later in the afternoon. **DB/AGENCIES**

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Congratulations on the

20th



Anniversary of the Establishment of Macau SAR
and the Inauguration of
the Chief Executive Mr. Ho Iat Seng
and the Fifth Term Government of Macau SAR

 **永利澳門**

 **永利皇宮**





Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Madame Peng Liyuan arrive in Macau on Wednesday

XI VISITS PORTUGUESE- SPEAKING COUNTRIES' TRADE PLATFORM

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping visited different sectors in the SAR yesterday, including the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex and the Government Integrated Services Building in the Northern District.

The aim of the visits was to present the president with aspects of Macau's public services, economic development, education programs and urban planning.

As cited in a statement issued by the Government Information Bureau, the president affirmed the city's functions in serving China and Portuguese-speaking countries, adding that the Portuguese-speaking countries enjoyed "huge potential" in terms of their scope for development.

While at the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex, the president was briefed about the latest progress in the city's developmental, including the effort to boost the SAR's role as a commercial and trade cooperation service platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

President Xi was also shown a video explaining Macau's urban planning, and was briefed by the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, on the progress of the relevant construction work.

While at the Government Integrated Services Building yesterday morning, the president was also seen having brief conversations with those at the service counters.

Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, briefed him about the types of service available at the government center at the site.

President Xi also spoke to 11 college students from different countries covered by the Belt and Road initiative; while his wife, Madame Peng Liyuan, paid a separate visit to the Institute for Tourism Studies. LV

Analysts: Xi's visit already impacting tourism, gaming

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping's official visit has already impacted the city's visitation and gaming results, analysts from Sanford C. Bernstein and JP Morgan said

Last week, brokerage Sanford C. Bernstein predicted that the average daily rate for the first eight days of this month would stand at about 16% lower than in December 2018 and 6% below that of last month.

Yesterday, the brokerage remarked in a note that "President Xi Jinping's arrival [...] has been causing a material disruption to the gaming industry (much more so than prior visits by senior officials and Xi himself in late 2014)."

Last month, Chinese authorities implemented stricter visa controls on visitation into Macau, limiting visits from hi-

gher frequency entrants.

This week, local authorities implemented tighter security measures, banning journalists from the neighboring region from entering, and suspending the newly opened Light Rapid Transit.

The frequency of the Turbojet ferry service between Macau and Hong Kong has also been decreased from every 15 minutes to every 30 minutes.

Sanford C. Bernstein also noted that the way money flows into the city has been tightened, with more security checks on moneychangers in the casinos, echoing recent concerns that ATMs may not be refilled during Xi's visit.

"Additionally, there has been widespread concern (so far unwarranted), that ATMs may run out of cash and may

not be refilled during Xi's visit to Macau," said analysts Vitaly Umansky, Eunice Lee and Kelsey Zhu. They added that, "the Monetary Authority has said that ATMs will run as usual, but rumors have an effect on people in any event."

Earlier in the week, online rumors about cash and fuel withdrawal restrictions led to long queues in town this week at banks and gas stations, as residents hurried to fill their wallets and their cars ahead of the anniversary weekend.

Rumors of the restrictions were circulating online as early as Monday, with claims that there was a shortage of cash in some of Macau's cash machines. The rumors also claimed that gas refueling would be prohibited outside of a six-hour period starting at midnight.

The rumors were quickly

shut down by the relevant authorities, which that the reserves of oil products and cash were ample in the city. The government also said it would pay close attention to the price of gas in response to the uptick in local market activity.

Gaming analysts from Nomura wrote last week that the gaming sector's underperformance was probably "due to a step up in visa restrictions ahead of President's Xi [Jinping]'s visit later this month, which is something we have been flagging since October."

Further into December, the prevailing view is that the impact on visitation this month has been more severe than initially expected. After the weaker than expected gaming results in November, analysts expect December will fare poorly too. LV

China's central bank to raise remittance limits from Macau

RENATO MARQUES

THE Chinese central bank authority, People's Bank of China, announced on Wednesday that it would raise the daily limit on individuals' remittance from Macau to Chinese yuan accounts in the mainland to RMB80,000, Reuters reported.

The measure, which does not have a date for commencement yet, was

announced to facilitate trading between the Macau and mainland markets, the Chinese banking regulator said in a statement.

The current limit for such money transfers is currently RMB50,000, meaning that the new ceiling represents a rise of 60% in the amount allowed to be transferred in a single day.

Questioned on the possible reasons for such measures, as well as the conse-

quences, local economist Albano Martins has said that the measure is consistent with the idea of Macau's broader and further integration with China, as well as increasing internal investment.

"I don't know exactly the purpose of this measure, but apparently it is consistent with a higher integration [of Macau] in China and with an increase of investment in the main-

land," Martins said. "It will certainly change, but the extent [of this change] will depend on the size of the current business or business prospects."

Although the measure is aimed at people and not companies, the economist remarked that he does not think that the measure will significantly influence the integration of local families in the mainland, namely in the Greater Bay Area, but

instead, "would gradually increase the influx of money [from Macau to the mainland] depending on the business perspectives of these people or [will] be used to support family members in their process of integration or work in the mainland."

For Martins, "China is extraordinarily overprotected, and highly bureaucratic, and needs to accelerate its opening if wants

to cope with the current [worldwide] trends and directions."

The announcement of the new measure came the day Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived for a three-day visit to Macau to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the handover of Macau and swear in the new Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng. The fifth term of the Macau SAR government officially starts from today.

CONGRATULATIONS ON
THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE MACAO SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION AND
THE INAUGURATION OF MR. HO IAT SENG AS
THE FIFTH TERM CHIEF EXECUTIVE





LISA DU

CASINO executives who have long salivated over Japan as a potential \$20 billion gaming market are beginning to question whether that jackpot is worth all the trouble.

Japan legalized casino gambling in 2016 to great excitement in the industry. Companies including MGM Resorts International and Las Vegas Sands Corp. have spent heavily to get access to a gaming market that could become Asia's second-largest after Macau.

Three years later, some of that enthusiasm is wearing off. A number of casino executives, who declined to speak publicly because of the sensitive nature of the casino approval process, told Bloomberg News that the process in Japan has been more difficult compared with other markets that have built gaming industries. At least one company, Caesars Entertainment Corp., has pulled out.

Gaming operators are becoming frustrated by unclear tax and gaming policies, as well as delays that are likely to push the opening of any casino beyond a 2025 target. A lack of interest among local governments and companies, as well as residents' worries about addiction and crime, is also slowing the process.

COMPLICATING CALCULATIONS

While most casino operators are still pursuing Japan resorts, the difficulties are complicating the calculations for the potential costs and eventual payoff associated with a Japanese integrated resort.

"There's so many different hurdles, it's really called into question

A gambling prize worth \$20 billion is losing its luster in Japan

the feasibility of these projects," said Bloomberg Intelligence contributing analyst David Bonnet. "You have this element where it's 'hey we passed this law,' but no one wants to embrace it, and that's the biggest issue."

Caesars gave up on a Japan casino in August, opting instead to focus on its current businesses and a merger with Eldorado Resorts Inc. Others have seen carefully laid plans suddenly upended, as when Hokkaido said last month it wouldn't pursue a bid in the current round for a license. The region in northern Japan was considered a front-runner to host a casino, with Hard Rock International Inc. actively seeking to establish a resort there.

When Hokkaido announced it was opting out for now, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga declined to comment on the decision, but said he would like to see casinos open quickly so their benefits can be realized.

In the initial stage of the development process, the Japanese national government will award three casino licenses. It will take applications in the first half of 2021 from municipalities that have selected an operator to work with on establishing a resort.

So far, Japan's second-largest metropolitan hub of Osaka has been the furthest in the process

of selecting an operator, hoping to use an integrated resort as part of its efforts in hosting the World Expo in 2025. Yokohama, just south of Tokyo, has also raised its hand, but faces vocal opposition from its residents.

Junkets, which bring in high-rollers and are a key driver of revenue in Macau, won't be allowed in Japan

LUKEWARM SUPPORT

Some municipalities have been slow or reluctant in selecting an operator, and industry watchers have pointed to an apparent lack of coordination between national and local governments. Japanese businesses have also been lukewarm in providing crucial support or financing for the plans.

Operators have estimated it could take \$10 billion or more to build out large integrated resorts with hotel and meeting spaces. In a conference call in October, Las Vegas Sands President Robert Goldstein compared that cost for a single casino in Japan against developing several locations in China for the same price.

"No matter how good you are

at this business, that must give you pause and stop and think, 'is that prudent?'" Goldstein said on the call. "Can you really deploy, can you get the return?"

The estimates have become clouded by a lack of clarity on government policies governing casinos. In the past month, the national government floated and then shelved a proposal to tax foreigner's gaming winnings. Such a practice, which doesn't take place in Macau or Las Vegas, would have created a major burden for casino operators.

ONEROUS CONDITIONS

The uncertainty in regulations adds to conditions some operators have already considered onerous. A 30% tax on gross gaming revenue is viewed as steep, while limits on casino gaming space and a five-year renewal period for the licenses could hinder project financing.

With the majority of Japanese residents opposing casinos, lawmakers have attempted to address gambling addiction and crime. As a result, junkets - which bring in high-rollers and are a key driver of revenue in Macau - won't be allowed in Japan, and operators will have to go through background checks through a casino commission to win a license.

Concerns over the unsavory side of the gambling industry surfaced this week, with reports that

Tokyo prosecutors are looking into ties between a ruling party lawmaker and a Chinese company that was interested in a casino project. Kyodo reported Wednesday the company allegedly brought large amounts of cash into the country without declaring it to customs.

"Japan is a fairly costly market in terms of taxes and government requirements," said Goldman Sachs Group analyst Masaru Sugiyama. "It's essentially a balancing act between that costly government and tax structure versus the potentially attractive market."

It's hard to ignore how lucrative the business could be. Brian Sterz, an investment adviser at Miracle Mile Advisors in Los Angeles, said the opportunity in the island nation is just too big for the major U.S. players to pass up. "When you're talking about a new market like this, there's enterprise value to be had," he said.

But casino operators are willing to go only so far. Executives at Wynn Resorts Ltd., in a November earning conference call, said the company is taking a disciplined approach, looking at the cost structure, return profile and shareholder enthusiasm for the projects.

"We are going to pursue Japan with vigor," said Chief Executive Officer Matt Maddox. "But we will not pursue it if it does not make financial sense." **BLOOMBERG**



CONGRATULATIONS ON

**THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MACAU SAR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE MR HO IAT SENG AND
THE 5TH TERM GOVERNMENT OF MACAU SAR**



GAMING REGULATOR ASKS SEARCH ENGINES TO BLOCK ILLEGAL WEBSITES

IN 2019, the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) reached out to several major mainland search engine operators to block illegal gambling links, according to the DICJ's reply to lawmaker Lam Lon Wai's interpellation.

As of the end of 2017, the Judiciary Police (PJ) had requested that the relevant governments block a total of 636 illegal gambling websites. Four hundred and fifty of these were successfully blocked.

According to the reply written by DICJ director Paulo Martins Chan, the majority of these domains are based in mainland China.

This year, most illegal gambling websites were created to target mainland residents. In light of this situation, the DICJ proactively approached "many major mainland" search engine operators, asking them to not only block the links, but also block all kinds of promotional information



DICJ director Paulo Martins Chan

concerning illegal gambling. The DICJ's requests were agreed to by "most" of the search engine operators.

Since the middle of 2015, the DICJ has received an "abundant" number of reports about illegal gambling websites and apps which had labeled themselves as being

from "Macau," "the DICJ," and "all gaming concession companies."

These websites and apps were established and were being operated from outside of Macau, making it difficult for the Macau gaming regulator to handle the situation.

Previously, the bureau had contacted web hosts in mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, and the United States, among other countries, as well as internet monitoring departments in Macau, Hong Kong and mainland China.

The bureau also contacted two major mobile application platforms, asking them to take down the illegal operations, which was then done accordingly.

Citing the Office for Secretary for Security, Chan said that all illegal gambling websites spotted in Macau are either registered or hosted outside of Macau.

Previously, PJ Director Sit Chong Meng explained that these illegal websites were not running any kind of gambling services; they were mostly sites used for fraud purposes. The police authority had already reported cases where victims claimed to have lost money to gambling website scams. JZ

BUS DRIVER SUFFERS HEART ATTACK BEFORE CRASH

A bus crashed into a lamppost in front of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) earlier this week, after the bus driver had a heart attack.

The accident caused lampshades and hanging flower pots on San Ma Lou to fall. Three passers-by were hit and injured by the debris, but none of passengers inside the vehicle were injured. The bus driver was sent to the hospital after the accident.

According to the bus company, Sociedade de Transportes Colectivos de Macau (TCM), the 63-year-old bus driver had started working in 2015 and had cleared all his physical examinations.

According to a review of the CCTV video, the driver lost control of the vehicle at an intersection shortly after the light turned green. He tried to steer the vehicle with only one hand but still hit the lamppost.

TCM stated that although the driver had failed to fully control the vehicle, he nevertheless tried to responsibly stop the vehicle. TCM is monitoring the situation regarding the injured passers-by and the bus driver.

AD

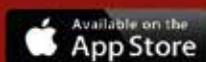
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Congratulations on
the 20th Anniversary of
the Establishment of
Macau SAR

and
the Inauguration of
the Chief Executive of Macau SAR
– Mr. Ho Iat Seng

MELCO

Community's Continued Support Drives GEG's Success in Strengthening National Pride



GEG title-sponsored the roving exhibitions that presented a spectacular line-up of the latest drone models and cutting-edge technologies to a number of local schools

As a patriotic Macau-based corporation, Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) has long supported the government's vision to invest heavily in the development of the city's younger generation and preparing them for a promising future ushered in by the country's meteoric rise. This long-standing commitment to nurturing young people has propelled GEG to launch a variety of multi-faceted educational and outreach initiatives, which saw participants embrace a closer relationship with the local community and the nation.

GEG-SPONSORED DRONE EXHIBITION INCREASES APPRECIATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON CAMPUSES

As part of its drive to inspire burgeoning talent in the field of science and technology, GEG title-sponsored a roving exhibition that presented a spectacular line-up of the latest drone models and cutting-edge technologies from mainland China. During the indoor exhibitions that were held at a number of local schools, the shimmering light show and synchronized performance of the buzzing drones captured the fascination of teachers and students who showed appre-

ciation for the country's technological advancement. After the exhibition, the students got a taste of flying the aerial vehicles under the guidance of professional drone controllers. On a separate occasion, a total of 300 drones were gathered above the skies of Galaxy Macau for the Drone Light Show held at the Grand Resort Deck at Galaxy Macau. Supported by special laser, lighting and sound effect, the Drone Light Show was a well-received stunt that celebrates the 20th anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland and the sportsmanship of the 2019 Galaxy Entertainment Macau International Marathon runners with a series of symbolic patterns associated with the twin anniversaries.

TWO-PRONGED APPROACH TO INSPIRING PATRIOTISM AMONG YOUTH

Since 2008, GEG has joined forces with the National Conditions Education (Macau) Association to organize the annual GEG Macau Cup – Youth National Education Competition. As one of the most important competitions in the school calendar, over the past 11 years, the competition has attracted upwards of 80,000 local students from nearly 30 schools to take part. Considered to be the ideal platform for students to learn about

the country and the Greater Bay Area (GBA), the competition lets participants gain a better understanding of the country's prospects at different levels and in different fields, and for those who performs the best, they are even given the opportunity to join GEG and the Association representatives for eye-opening study tours to different key Chinese provinces and cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Guizhou, Gansu and GBA cities. These study tours and exchanges allow students to visit government organizations, leading companies and key institutions on the mainland.

Another signature youth activity that GEG has been applauded for is the GEG Youth Achievement Program, which GEG has been co-organizing with the Macau Management Association (MMA) since 2011. The initiative, which covers three main areas: self-awareness, community care and career development, aims at helping the city's youth identify and even fulfil their potential, while boosting their confidence for future career development. This year's edition featured trips to a number of Greater Bay Area cities, Shanghai and Hangzhou, which provided a window into some of the most admirable achievements of innovation and entrepreneurship on the mainland.



GEG hosted the Drone Light Show at the Grand Resort Deck at Galaxy Macau. The drones lit up the city's sky with a series of unique graphics representing the city's handover and sports elements.



Since 2011, GEG has cooperated with the Macau Management Association to organize the GEG Youth Achievement Program, providing training opportunities for nearly 3,000 participants.



The winning teams will be awarded to join GEG and the Association representatives for eye-opening study tours to different key Chinese provinces and cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Guizhou, Gansu and GBA cities.



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

JULIE ZHU

MUST LAUNCHES STATE KEY LAB HENGQIN BRANCH

THE Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) opened the Hengqin branch of its State Key Laboratories earlier this week. The unveiling ceremony was held on the afternoon of December 17 in the Hengqin Creative Valley.

Deputy Mayor of Zhuhai City Yan Wu said that, in recent years, Zhuhai and Macau have been cooperating closely and that their industrial cooperation has become more effective.

Cheang Kun Wai, a member of the Macau Science and Technology Development Fund Executive Committee, stated that the Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT) has been actively promoting the development of science and technology in Macau.

As a facilitator of scientific research in Macau, in the new era, FDCT will spare no effort in to continuing to support the construction of high-level scientific research platforms, the implementation of major scientific and technological projects, to increase support for various types of talents, and promote results transformation and cooperation between industry, university, and research.

Liu Liang, rector of MUST, said that the school has actively integrated itself into the national in-



novation and technology system, as well as into the overall national development principles, which dictate that Macau should provide what is needed by the country.

There are four State Key Laboratories in Macau. Two are operated by the University of Macau, namely the State Key Laboratory of Analog and Mixed-Signal VLSI and the State Key Laboratory of Internet of Things for Smart City. A

third, the State Key Laboratory of Lunar and Planetary Sciences, is operated solely by MUST. Macau's fourth State Key Laboratory, the State Key Laboratory for Quality Research in Chinese Medicine, is jointly operated by MUST and the UM, but at separate facilities.

On November 29, MUST reached a "Cooperation Framework Agreement" with the Hengqin New District Management Com-

mittee to jointly build the Hengqin Macau University of Science and Technology Demonstration Base.

The base connects scientific discoveries, and scientific and technological achievements with the industrialization base of Hengqin New Area, provides technical support for the development of Hengqin's high-tech industry, and also provides moderately diversi-

fied and sustainable development for the Macau economy and the Guangdong International Technology Innovation Center.

MUST is also in discussions with the Chinese History Research Academy to establish of a new research center in Macau.

Recently, a delegation from MUST paid a visit to the mainland academy in Beijing to discuss the short- and long-term work required for the opening of the new Chinese History Macau Research Center.

Overall, the center's purpose would be to organize symposiums on the review and prospects of Macau's historical research since the Macau handover. The center will also carry out follow-up research on major social issues in Macau to provide the Chinese Communist Party and the country's decision-making organization with policy recommendations; create a new type of high-end think tank; and promote academic exchanges, cooperation, and interaction in various fields between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

The center will focus on "inheriting Chinese culture, studying the history of Macau, training high-end talented people, sharing academic resources, promoting the development of discipline, [and] building a world-class academic platform."

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AND THE FIFTH TERM GOVERNMENT OF MACAU SAR**

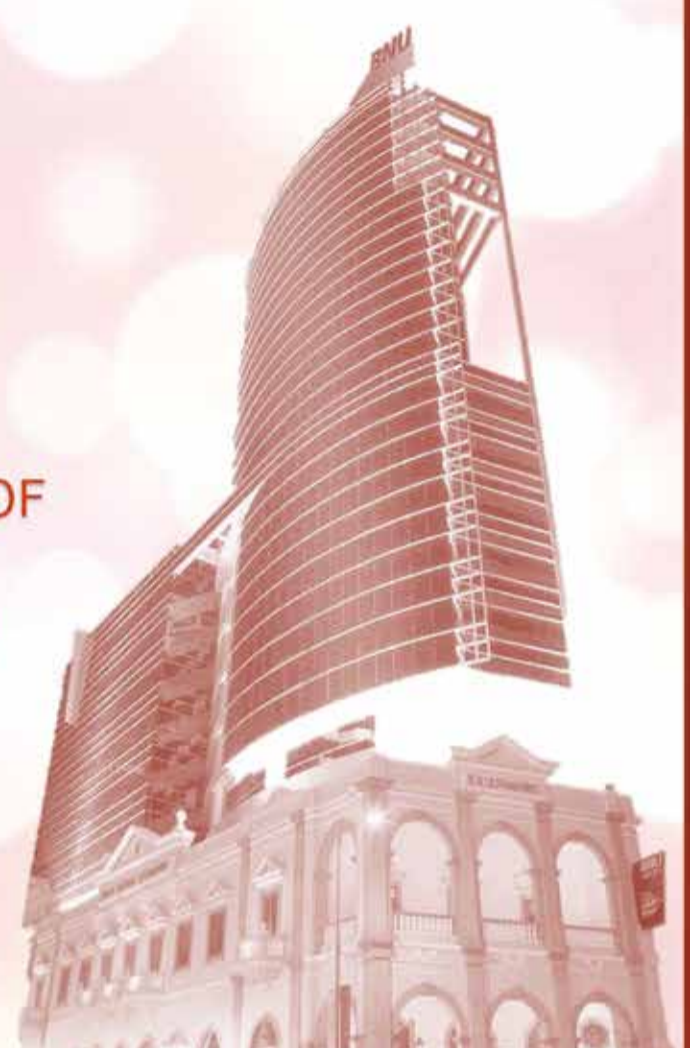
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A very brief twenty-year history of the Macau SAR

RENATO MARQUES



RENATO MARQUES
& ANTHONY LAM

THERE was a sense of trepidation and uncertainty in the five years leading up to the handover of Macau.

People living in the city understood that the changes happening around them actually had little to do with them. And yet, these ordinary people could not rest assured. By being here, they were potentially at risk.

It was a time of triad wars, or gang conflicts, as some might say. Conflict could erupt anywhere in the city; from luxurious chain hotels to working-class establishments such as Dai Pai Dong, street-side stalls that offer down-to-earth food service.

The prevailing thought in Macau is that the modern wave of patriotism can trace its origins back to the 1-2-3 Incident of 1966, after which Lisbon signed an armistice with Beijing and Macau residents, and love for the country grew drastically.

However, the incidents that took place before the handover might have left a deeper mark on the construction of patriotism in Macau than first thought.

In those days, news reports extensively covered the conflict and

violence that occurred near daily. The intensity of the struggle even attracted news coverage from other parts of the world, destabilizing the confidence of tourists in Macau and leading to a 0.7% drop in the still-impressive tally of 7 million tourists in 1998, the earliest year for which reliable data is kept.

Having lived through those days, the older generations in Macau have developed a sense of gratitude. Indeed, at the time of the handover, the majority had the impression that that was the coming of Chinese sovereignty and was the key to the stability which had long been desired; a remedy to the unsettled conditions of the 1990s.

One report from a collection of interviews written by Sharon Cheung Po Wah, an ex-journalist from Hong Kong, is particularly telling. In it, former Macau Chief Executive Edmund Ho explains that the gang conflicts had been resolved using "political means." Ho was quoted as saying that conflicts of this kind were incompatible with stability and effective governance.

Edmund Ho was the first Chief Executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region, before going on to become a national leader as vice president of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

When reflecting on his time in office, Ho cannot be separated from his major market liberalization initiatives - firstly, in the telecom sector, and later, the gaming industry.

Before the handover, Companhia de Telecomunicações de Macau (CTM) was the sole operator of telecom services in Macau, including landline, mobile phone and internet services. Internet services back then ran on a 56k dial-up network, with its iconic screeches. A connection needed to be bridged every time a user wanted to go online.

Inheriting the telecom monopoly, Macau's first CE set out on a path that would bring moderate liberalization of the mobile phone market.

In the early 2000s, the cell phone market was formally and legally opened to an oligopoly. The policy attracted the interest of several companies, mainly from Hong Kong, to bid for a license. The policy also set the bar for the three companies that would operate GSM900/1800 dual-band cell phone services in Macau.

CTM, Hutchison Telecom (Three Macau) and SmarTone won the bid and the cell phone market has remained mostly the same since then.

CONTINUED ON P16

2000

Under the leadership of Macau's first Chief Executive (CE) Edmund Ho, Secretary for Administration and Justice Florinda da Rosa Silva Chan, Secretary for Economy and Finance Francis Tam Pak-yuen, Secretary for Security Cheong Kuoc Vá, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Chui Sai On, and Secretary for Transport and Public Works Ao Man Long, became Macau's first government since its return to China. In March, Ho issued Macau's first policy address. In May, Ho made his first foreign visit and headed for Portugal and France. Also this year, the former Macau branch of Xinhua news agency was officially named as the Central People's Government Liaison Office in Macau.



2001

In August, the Legislative Assembly passed the "Legal Framework for the Operations of Casino Games of Fortune," which stipulated the operational requirements, eligibility of major shareholders and management of the casinos and gaming tax. Upon the expiry of Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau's (STDM) existing monopoly concession on December 31, 2001, the Macau SAR decided to grant three gaming concessions. There was a total of 21 tendering bids received during the period, with bidders holding capital in Macau, Hong Kong, the U.S., Malaysia, Australia, the United Kingdom and Taiwan, among other places. In the same year, lawyer Jorge Neto Valente was kidnapped, and later rescued in a dramatic operation coordinated by top police commissioner Proença Branco.



2002

The Macau government announced the results of the tendering process. The concessions were granted to Sociedade de Jogos de Macau ("SJM"), a subsidiary of STDM, Galaxy Casino, S.A. ("Galaxy"), and Wynn Resorts (Macao) S.A. ("Wynn"). The concession contracts for the operation of casino games of fortune were signed on March 28, and June 24 and 26 respectively. In December of that year, Macau made an alteration to Galaxy's concession contract, which permitted Galaxy to have a sub-concession relationship with the Venetian Macao S.A. ("Venetian"). Following the issuance of this first sub-concession, SJM subsequently signed a sub-concession with MGM Grand Paradise, S.A. ("MGM") on April 20, 2005 and Wynn signed one with Melco PBL Jogos (Macao), S.A. ("Melco PBL") on September 8, 2006.



2003

A SARS epidemic outbreak killed 299 people in Hong Kong, while only one case was recorded in Macau. The outbreak also caused a major negative impact to Macau's economy, but other changes instigated by the mainland were also underway this year. In July, mainland China launched the Individual Visa Scheme for mainland residents to visit Macau and Hong Kong. Zhongshan, Foshan, Jiangmen, and Dongguan were the first four cities included in the scheme. The Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao), also known as Forum Macao, was created in October. The Council of Portuguese Community held an election, with José Maria Pereira Coutinho elected for the first time as a member of this council.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

MSAR 20 YEARS



2004

The sub-concessions model of Macau gaming stirred controversy in town. Sands China's first casino property, Sands Macao, was opened. It was the first ever gaming investment project developed by an American company in Asia. In the same year, Galaxy's first project, Casino Waldo, also commenced operations. Wynn's first casino hotel had its stone-laying ceremony in June. Meanwhile, on December 19, the third Macau-Taipa link, Sai Van Bridge, was officially completed. In politics, Edmund Ho received 296 votes in the second Chief Executive election and was appointed for a second term as the leader of Macau. The then-Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Macau to congratulate Ho.



2005

The U.S. found evidence, in an investigation codenamed Royal Charm and Operation Working Dragon, that the Chinese Communist Party was involved in the illegal smuggling of North Korean-made counterfeit U.S. dollar banknotes, counterfeit cigarettes, drugs and Viagra, and that North Korea was using Macau to launder money. U.S. government officials immediately imposed financial sanctions on Banco Delta Asia. The U.S. investigation also found that in addition to Banco Delta Asia, the Bank of China, Macau branch was also involved in the money laundering scheme. Meanwhile, Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio paid a week-long visit to Macau, becoming the first such official to visit the SAR in the post-handover period. Macau was classified as World Heritage by UNESCO.



2006

Macau's first Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Ao Man Long, was arrested on corruption charges. The Chinese State Council approved the dismissal of Ao on the same night of the arrest. Along with Ao, more than 10 other people, including his relatives, were arrested for their involvement in the corruption case. Ao was the first top official to be indicted and tried for a crime since the handover. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison the following year. Meanwhile, more than 20 people were found guilty of involvement in an election corruption case concerning the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Macau.



2007

The Venetian Macao opened in Cotai, becoming the third largest building in the world and the biggest in Asia. Within one week of its opening, the Venetian Macao had attracted 450,000 visitors, exceeding the number of first week visitors of other properties in the city, including Sands Macao, Wynn Macau, Starworld, and the Grand Lisboa. Venetian Macao's venture into brand new territory was followed by the openings of Melco's City of Dreams (2009) and Galaxy (2011), and they together came to represent the dawn of Cotai development. In another first, on May 1 Labor Day, a police officer fired five warning gunshots during a fierce conflict between demonstrators and police officers.



CONTINUED FROM P15

After the formation of the cell phone market, there was a brief period in which CTM franchised Hong Kong brand One2Free to Macau. The Hong Kong brand had an energetic and youthful image that was designed to appeal to younger generations. Indeed, a billboard posted by CTM's surrogate brand on the outside of the then-Workers' Football Ground employed slang terms and imagery evocative of mahjong, a Chinese game played by four people.

In the lead up to the 2005 East Asian Games in Macau, the government decided that further technological improvements in the telecom market were essential if the city was to adequately serve the needs of athletes and tourists attending the sporting event.

Just before the Games started, a license was awarded to China Unicom, which now operates as China Telecom, to operate certain network services in Macau.

There were also calls for internet services to be improved.

The government attempted to open the market but the initiative did not gather interest. This situation remained unchanged until mid-2013, when a new company, MTel, obtained a license to opera-

te internet services in Macau. Its license remains valid until the end of 2021.

Concurrently, the gaming industry was experiencing a period of growth that would later cement its reputation as the engine of Macau's economic rise for the last 20 years.

In 2002, the Macau government decided it would end the 40-year monopoly held by Stanley Ho's Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau, SA (STDM), and open the market to more gaming operators.

From a total of 10 international bids, the then-Chief Executive Edmund Ho signed a dispatch that settled temporary concessions with three companies: Wynn Resorts Macau, Galaxy Entertainment and Sociedade de Jogos de Macau (SJM). The concessions came into effect on April 1, 2002.

An evolution of the concessions system spawned the so-called sub-concessions, which raised the number of gaming operators to the six present today.

One license went to Las Vegas Sands, which had previously partnered with Galaxy Entertainment in pursuing a license. The other two licenses were divided and sub-designated to Melco and MGM.

Las Vegas Sands did not hesitate to start building its first property, Sands Macao, which opened in 2004, less

than two years after the concession was granted. On opening day, crowds packed the main entrance of the casino complex and, in their excitement to enter the building, inadvertently broke through several glass doors.

It was also reported that the company saw a return on its near quarter billion dollar investment after just one year of operation.

The opening of the gaming industry and the market competition that followed created a need for other attractions and amenities, namely in the entertainment, hospitality, retail, and food and beverage sectors. World-class restaurants, luxurious hotel rooms and delicate spas soon became calling cards for Macau.

The gaming liberalization also created demand for large public works and infrastructure projects to help move gamblers, who were the new economic lifeblood of Macau, into and around the city.

Coinciding with the opening of the first integrated resorts, the Macau SAR government had the idea to build a mass transit system in the city, to be known as the Light Rapid Transit (LRT).

The government commissioned Hong Kong's MTR Corp. to advise on the feasibility of such a system in Macau. The report was positive and work on its details soon commenced, inclu-



ding the routes and whether the system would be located above or below ground. The carriages and systems were tendered to Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

But it would be nearly two decades before the first section of the LRT would complete its first route and begin operating as it did earlier this month.

While they were waiting for the LRT, people in Macau only had one other choice when it came to public transportation – public buses.

This system, which was based on the services provided by the companies involved rather than a public concession, underwent only minor changes over the years.

The most significant changes occurred in 2011, when the government re-tendered the provision of bus services. Licenses were granted to the previous two operators, Transportes Urbanos de Macau S.A.R.L. (Transmac) and Sociedade de Transportes Colectivos de Macau SARL (TCM), as well as a third operator, the Reolian Public Transport Co. (Reolian), for the first time. Reolian was a joint venture owned by France's Veolia Transport RATP Asia and local firm H. Nolasco Group.

At that time, the service was also changed from being a private operation with a fare established by the government to a government-sub-

sided operation. With this new system in force, bus travel for residents became cheaper and more convenient. The trend continued with the introduction of the Macau Pass smartcard, which allowed connections between several bus routes and different operators without having to re-pay fares.

Macau's modernization and rapid development required the city to keep abreast of international standards – or at least try to do so.

Smoking control in defined public areas was one of these standards.

In 2009, the idea of regulating smoking in Macau was put onto the government's agenda. Consensus was difficult to achieve both in- and outside of the legislature because smoking was associated with profitable gambling activities. Casino operators, lawmakers, and even members of the public were worried that a smoking ban on all indoor venues would severely affect Macau's gaming revenue. Other measures to discourage smoking included increasing the tobacco tax.

The actual ban on indoor smoking only came into effect in 2012, with an exception made for the casino floors. The next year, the ban was extended to casinos.

In the first version of the law, vio-

lators were subject to a fine of 600 patacas, but the amount was raised to 1,500 patacas in January of this year.

The use of plastic bags for most purchases is also subject to payment now. The law governing the use of plastic bags was passed by the Legislative Assembly on August 8, 2019, with the "plastic bag charge" taking effect from November 18 onwards.

The law says that plastic bags obtained for all previously packed products shall be subjected to a 1-pataca fee per bag.

In what is perhaps an illustration of the wealth that Macau has amassed, some reports suggest that customers are immune to the deterrent effects of this and instead treat the surcharge as, in the words of one columnist, "regular inflation that has come a little earlier."

Meanwhile, homemakers have been much more enthusiastic, due to either economic or environmental motives.

The eco-friendly population at large has applauded the enactment of the law, hoping that it will help reduce the use of single-use plastic bags. Notably, environmentalists are also calling on the government to go further with similar eco-friendly initiatives.

2008

Edmund Ho announces the introduction of Macau's national security law, which proposed the establishment of Article 23 of the Basic Law. In the first half of the year, energy prices climbed to historic highs and the appreciation of the RMB accelerated. Macau's inflation rose further, measured by a nearly 10% increase in consumer prices. At the same time, gross domestic product growth soared to double-digit rates in the first three quarters of the year, before dipping in the fourth amid Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy. In May, the Macau government introduced the cash hand-out scheme. Pan-democratic lawmakers were refused entry to Macau on December 20, 2008.



2009

Article 23 came into effect in March. Just two months earlier, a South China Morning Post photojournalist was denied entry into Macau. It marked the first recorded case of a journalist being banned from entering Macau. In June, Chinese dissident Wu'erkaixi, a former leader of the Tiananmen protests, flew to Macau to turn himself in to the Liaison Office. However, he was refused entry to the city and then deported to Taiwan. Chui Sai On was elected as second Chief Executive of Macau with 282 votes, keeping all the five cabinet secretaries in place. Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Macau to preside over Chui's appointment ceremony.



2010

On Labor Day, various labor groups held a demonstration expressing their discontent with a series of social problems that had materialized since the handover. The demonstration eventually became violent. The police used specialized crowd management vehicles and demonstrators threw rocks and other items at police officers. In total, 41 people sustained injuries. Approximately 20 journalists were contained by police officers and stopped from reporting the event for nearly two hours. The Macau police authority determined this demonstration to be illegal. In October, lawmakers Ng Kuok Cheong and Au Kam San gathered at the Ruins of St. Paul's to celebrate the late Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, who had recently been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.



2011

In January, Stanley Ho, through his lawyer Gordon Oldham, filed a lawsuit against his children, relatives and their related companies to recover SJM Holdings Limited's equity. Ho sued 11 people, including his wife, Lucina Laam King Ying, and Ina Chan Un Chan to claw back 32% of the shares held in SJM. In the admission statement, Ho indicated that his second and third partners, among other accused parties, inappropriately issued new shares and allocated them to two companies held by his second and third partners. Ho sought an injunction to prevent them from making equity distributions.



MSAR 20 YEARS



2012

The Legislative Assembly passed the amendment of the regime for the election of the body in August. The new provisions proposed the number of directly elected members of the fifth Legislative Assembly be increased from 12 to 14 and the number of indirectly elected members to be increased from 10 to 12. In that year, the Macau SAR government consulted on the development of the political system, but the process was highly controversial, and most residents were not clear about the details of the consultation. The government said that the plan to have two more indirectly elected lawmakers and two appointed lawmakers stemmed from the mainstream consensus. However, the government's claim left the democratic party disillusioned.



2013

Three members of the Macau United Citizens Association, including Chan Meng Kam, Si Ka Lon and Song Pek Kei, were elected as new lawmakers. However, two people in the same team were later found guilty of election corruption. In May, lawyer Jorge Menezes was ambushed in Sintra Square by two mainland assailants. One of the assailants was subsequently sentenced to one year and nine months of imprisonment. The other was found not guilty. In academia, the University of Macau's new campus in Hengqin was handed over to Macau's jurisdiction on July 20.



2014

In May, approximately 20,000 people participated in a mass demonstration against the compensation bill for top-ranking public officials, which proposed lavish retirement welfare for the Chief Executive and other high officials. Chui Sai On eventually withdrew the bill. It also marked the biggest demonstration in Macau since the Tiananmen Square-related protests of 1989. On December 19 and 20, the new Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Macau. Meanwhile, the MSAR officially entered into economic recession due to a steep decline in gross gaming revenue. Chui entirely revamped his cabinet after his second appointment as Chief Executive, and appointed Sonia Chan (SAJ), Lionel Leong (SEF), Wong Sio Chak (SS), Alexis Tam (SASC) and Raimundo do Rosário (STOP). 2014 was also marred by the sacking of two outspoken scholars, Eric Sautedé (USJ) and Bill Chou (UM), which was seen as a major blow to academic freedom.



2015

In November, former director-general of the Customs Service Lai Man Wa allegedly committed suicide by using drugs, a razor blade and a plastic bag inside a public bathroom. A postmortem examination concluded she died from suffocation. In December of that year, over 1,400 pre-sale buyers of the Pearl Horizon complex gathered outside the Polytec Asset's headquarters to protest against the non-development of their apartments and the decision of the administration to reclaim the land from the concession holder.



CONTINUED FROM P17

Macau welcomed more than 36 million visitors last year, a figure that equates to a ratio of about 54 visitors per resident. Last decade, this figure was only 16 visitors per resident.

The astonishing growth of visitors to Macau has fueled concerns in some groups that the territory is nearing its maximum capacity. Despite the cooldown in the local economy, the number of visitors will increase further in 2019 and approach the 40-million mark.

The number of hotels in Macau has grown at a much slower rate after the handover, however. According to figures provided by the Statistics and Census Service, there were a total of 77 hotels and similar units at the time of the handover.

In 2008, the same survey showed that the number of hotels had grown by less than 10% since the handover. The pace of growth quickened in the second decade, when the number of hotels increased by about 50% compared to the handover year.

Another change that has been observed in Macau's tourism industry over the past 20 years is the type of visitor accommodation being built. At the start of this period, the number of hostels slightly exceeded hotels, with many of the latter being regarded as

mid-range properties. In more recent years however, the new accommodation being built is overwhelmingly five-star properties built by gaming operators.

Back in the early days of the handover, before the market liberalization of the telecommunications and gaming sectors, few would have imagined Macau as a possible center for lawful financial activities. Recent developments and initiatives presented during President Xi Jinping's visit have set the region on a new path. One that is designed to assist with the development of diversified economic products and services, and reduce Macau's reliance on casinos.

At the same time, after a long period of resistance, Macau is beginning to adopt electronic payments (e-payments) which are replacing traditional forms of payment.

Besides gaming, Macau is also famous for having a "hermetically sealed" banking system. It is disconnected from the main international banking networks and, in doing so, escapes the surveillance and scrutiny of outside institutions.

If this has in any way contributed to Macau's reputation for discretion, it has also impeded trade and the acquisition of products and services from abroad, namely from companies and large organizations.

Non-traditional forms of payment, such as PayPal, have always encountered difficulties in Macau. Only with the popularization of mainland e-payment systems, such as AliPay from Alibaba Group or WeChat Pay from Tencent, is the local market finally coming to widely accept them.

E-payments have become increasingly popular in only a matter of years. Local variants, such as Mpay which was developed by Macau Pass, have begun sprouting up and are gaining acceptance in Macau fast.

On a related note, in recent years, several restrictive measures have been imposed on the use of cash machines, with the purpose of curbing capital outflows from the mainland.

One measure, which was enforced about two years ago, was the installation of the know-your-customer (KYC) facial recognition technology at over a thousand ATMs in Macau. According to figures provided by the company, there are around 1.5 million UnionPay cards in Macau, including credit cards, debit cards and business cards especially designed for VIPs and enterprise clients.

The use of the KYC facial recognition technology has been credited with causing two phenomena. The first is the increase in cash withdrawals in the neighboring region of Hong Kong. The second is the birth



(or maturation, at least) of so-called “illegal currency exchange” cases, which mostly occur at casino venues. These have been the basis of many fraud and scam reports in Macau in recent months.

KYC technology was installed to monitor cash machine withdrawals by mainland UnionPay cards more effectively, and to prevent users from carrying as many as 50 bank cards to circumvent capital outflows. In many cases, the individuals carrying the bank cards did not match the names on the cards.

The internationalization of Macau's finances has increased dependence on the already-popular Hong Kong Dollar (HKD).

Although Macau's currency – the pataca – is to be retained as local currency as per the Macau Basic Law, the HKD has been equally widespread since the earliest days of the gaming liberalization.

Even so, the use of the two currencies has been relatively stable over the last 20 years, and they have carved out specific uses for themselves. For example, the pataca has found its place in everyday transactions, while the HKD is typically used for larger transactions.

The Chinese yuan (RMB) saw its status remain stable, primarily used for transactions with the mainland. In Macau, it is generally only accep-

ted if received in exchange for a profitable rate for the client of 1:1 by most commercial establishments. The offer results in a loss of about 15% of the value of the currency in favor of the shop at current exchange rates.

Since the days of the handover, the local political system has been ruled according to Article 31 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, which grants the Special Administrative Region the powers and constitutional rights to implement the “One Country, Two Systems” policy, as well as the local “mini-constitution” or the Basic Law. This has granted the region a “high degree of autonomy” in the 50 years leading up to December 2049.

The SAR government is led by the Chief Executive, who wields executive power in the city.

One of the evolutions that has taken place over the last 20 years in Macau is the composition of the committee that elects the Chief Executive. Members of the committee are nominated by sectors of society, associations, and people who hold positions in the central government.

A specially organized 200-member electoral committee was established for Macau's first election, which placed Edmund Ho in the position of Chief Executive in May 1999. Ho was then re-elected for a second term

in 2004, this time by a committee of 300 members.

Although 100 members were added, their origins remained the same in proportion, with many of the members coming from industrial, commercial and financial sectors, followed by those who represent the cultural and educational sectors, as well as labor, social services, religious and other interests.

In 2009, when Chui Sai On succeeded Edmund Ho as Chief Executive, it was decided that the committee would be expanded using the method known as “2+2+100.” The method expanded the electoral committee to the 400 members of today, and added two seats to the composition of the Legislative Assembly for lawmakers elected by both direct suffrage, and another two seats for those who were indirectly elected by the functional constituencies.

Over the past 20 years, criticism of the pace of reform of Macau's political system has been mounting, with those in pro-democracy factions of local politics decrying it as exceptionally slow, or nonexistent even.

Although Chui pledged in his election manifesto to advance the reform of Macau's political system, he later justified his inability to promote such reform by saying it was a matter that “depended on the initiative of the central government.”

2016

Alan Ho was released from prison after having received a sentence of 13 months (served on remand), for one crime of prostitution exploitation. The judicial system found Ho guilty of being aware of the activities and knowingly allowing them to continue to operate in the hotel. An appeal of the sentence was successful in 2019 and the sentence was raised to eight years. Meanwhile, most lawmakers blocked a proposal delivered by lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong that aimed to force the government to initiate political reform for eventual universal suffrage in the election of the Chief Executive. Some accused Ng of trying to make Macau's legislators “hostage” to his private interests.



2017

The most severe typhoon in half a century swept into Macau on August 23 causing unprecedented loss of life and damage to infrastructure throughout the city. The signal No.10 typhoon, the then-highest category in Macau's official storm index, killed 10 people. Less than a month later, pro-democrat Sulu Sou took the Legislative Assembly election by storm to become the city's youngest lawmaker at 26. By the year end, Sou was suspended in order to face criminal investigation accused of “aggravated disobedience”. In the same year, former top prosecutor Ho Chio Meng was sentenced to 21 years in jail and the court ruled Ho should pay around 75 million patacas to public coffers. On February 13, Kim Jong-nam was murdered when he was attacked with VX nerve agent at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia.



2018

Macau's Court of First Instance found Sulu Sou guilty of the crime of unlawful assembly and sentenced him and fellow political activist Scott Chiang to 120 days worth of fines. The penalty was not enough to expel him from the legislature and he resumed his mandate. In another controversy at the Legislative Assembly, two chief legal advisers, Paulo Cardinal and Paulo Taipa were dismissed from service inexplicably in what was seen by many lawyers and observers as a case of political persecution. The Legislative Assembly president at that time, future Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, said that the dismissal was neither due to political reasons, nor due to the advisers' Portuguese ethnicity, but instead to allow them “to pursue other careers.”



2019

In August, Macau security forces deployed at least six police minibuses as well as dozens of officers – some uniformed and others wearing plain clothes – to prevent a planned protest against Hong Kong police officers' violence from going ahead in Macau's Senado Square. In September, Ho Iat Seng was officially recognized in Beijing as the Chief Executive-elect of the Macau SAR for the fifth government term. On December 10, the Macau Light Rapid Transit (LRT) officially opened to the public and was temporarily suspended during the visit of president Xi Jinping. Over a dozen journalists from Hong Kong, coming to cover the event were barred at the border for “security reasons.”



MSAR 20 YEARS



Chui's few achievements summed up in



LYNZY VALLES

THE formal inauguration of Ho Iat Seng as Chief Executive during today's official ceremony offers convenient moment to pause and reflect on the closing of the last chapter in Macau governance: the double-tenure of Chui Sai On.

Given the chance to reflect, political scientists this week told the Times that while the outgoing Chief Executive deserves some praise for overseeing a mostly stable economy and the continuous handouts of annual subsidies, he has not lived up to his earlier promises in other aspects of society.

The exiting top official of the Macau SAR delivered a total of 10 policy addresses during his time in office, most of which failed to impress local political commentators. These very analysts claim that their perception is shared by the general public.

Political commentator António Katchi remarked that, simi-

larly to Edmund Ho, the departing Chief Executive has served well enough the triangle of interests entrenched in the current political and economic system. These include the interests of the local oligarchy, the ruling caste of the Chinese Communist Party and foreign capitalists, including the Americans.

Katchi believes incoming administration led by Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng will entail much of the same. As for the "broad masses," Katchi said they "have no shortage of reasons to be disgruntled and to yearn for a totally different government and regime. Unfortunately, what lies ahead, with Ho Iat Seng and his secretaries, is an even gloomier scenario."

For lawyer and political commentator, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, the past decade represents a missed opportunity for general improvement to the peoples' living standards.

"Ten years were lost in terms of improving the living conditions of residents, the public works program, [and] advancing

the democratization, transparency and accountability of Macau's political system."

Perhaps, the recently inaugurated Macau Light Rapid Transit – which was first proposed in the Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2003 by Edmund Ho – could be considered one of Chui's achievements. But put to Correia, the political commentator disagreed, saying that the transportation system in the SAR in fact remains one of the territory's biggest problems.

"Despite the recent inauguration of the LRT services, no public transportation improvements can make the public forget what happened to the revoked Viva Macau, Reolian and the Nova Era's deadly accidents, or the impunity of local taxi drivers."

When Chui took over the SAR's top position in 2009, Macau's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stood at about \$21.5 billion. The economy rapidly swelled to \$55 billion at the beginning of his second term in

2014, reflecting a double-digit annualized growth rate.

But the growth came to a brief halt in 2015 when the city's GDP dropped 20% as high-roller gamblers stayed away from the city in a bid to avoid the scrutiny of President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign. Although the city's gaming industry entered a period of decline thereafter, its GDP in 2016 was still as high as \$45 billion.

The city's unemployment rate also declined throughout the decade from 3% to the current 1.8%.

In terms of the annual Wealth Partaking Scheme, it was under Chui's governance that the cash subsidies of Macau SAR Permanent and Non-Permanent Resident Identity Card holders increased to 10,000 patacas and 6,000 patacas respectively.

The first cash handout was distributed in 2008, one year before Chui took office, when 5,000 patacas and 3,000 patacas were distributed to each permanent and non-permanent resident, respectively.

Not all of Chui's economic policies – or continuation of his predecessor's – have proven equally justified among his critics. One example is the complementary income tax, which currently all six gaming concessionaires are exempted from paying under a specific policy granted by the Chief Executive on a temporary and exceptional basis, for five-year periods at a time.

A separate tax, the special gaming tax, is calculated for gross gaming revenue at the rate of 35% and is paid monthly.

Last year, Chui extended the exemption granted to Galaxy Casino, S.A. and Venetian Macau, S.A. from paying the city's complementary income tax related to casino gaming profits for a period of over three years, which will last until June 26, 2022.

For Katchi, such an exemption should not have been renewed.

"He should have discontinued the complementary income tax exemption shamelessly granted by Edmund Ho to gaming operators. Instead, he renewed it for another five years," he said.

economic stability, cash handouts

When Chui was seeking a second term as Chief Executive, he announced that the public could expect “a relatively radical change” to his team of secretaries. That in fact led to a complete revamp of his team, replacing all of the policy secretaries.

The Secretary for Administration and Justice, Florinda Chan, who had held the post since the handover, was replaced by Sonia Chan.

Florinda Chan had been accused of losing the public's trust due to the long-running burial plots saga. Although the city's highest court had cleared her of the alleged crimes, including the forging of documents, misfeasance and abuse of power, political commentators at the time believed her removal would renew the public's trust in the government.

As a result, installing Sonia Chan in the role was said to be a “political decision.”

“I saw [her appointment] as a reward,” said Correia. “Sonia doesn't have Florinda's connections to the former Portuguese administration and the Catholic Church, I presume. For her, it was easy to implement the recommendations of the Central Government.”

According to the lawyer, choices are always made on the basis of the personal relationship between the Chief Executive and the nominees.

The choice of selecting Wong Sio Chak as the Secretary for Security was said to appease Beijing, since he is one of “Beijing's men” in the SAR.

In Correia's opinion, Beijing is



interested in “the one who controls the security system, and believes, without questioning, in the virtues of the one country, and the perspective of the rule of law according to the Communist Party of Macau.”

For Correia, that idealized secretary is always ready to follow the orders and recommendations coming from the Central Government.

“Wong Sio Chak at that time was groomed to be the new Secretary, not only by the local government but also by the Central Government,” said Larry So, another political commentator. So stressed that it had been widely expected Wong would continue in the role under Ho Iat Seng.

Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo Arrais do Rosário, who is also set to serve another term, was another obvious contender to remain due to the se-

veral projects that still needed to be accomplished under his tenure.

“[Rosário] has to stay,” insisted Correia.

Larry So agreed. “With all the projects that are going on, whoever will come in to replace him will have a [...] hard time. It's a wise choice to have him stay on and finish the projects before he steps down,” said So.

The outgoing Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, succeeded Francis Tam Pak Yuen in the 2014 reshuffle, promising to bring new vigor to the economy if the city utilized the policies handed to it by the Central Government. Prior to that he had sat on the second and third Executive Councils, the advisory body that supports the work of the Chief Executive.

The final of the five policy secretaries, the departing Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis

Tam, began the Chui Sai On era as the Chief of Office for the Chief Executive. According to Larry So, Tam became quite popular while serving in the position, and this helped him to later be appointed as one of Chui's ministers. “During that time, he was quite popular in the community, especially in the civil organization,” So explained.

For Katchi, among all five secretaries, the “Beijing man's” duties are deemed the simplest, as Macau does not have any special security conditions, nor is it prone to any special threat that would hamper the safety of its people. “He just had to concentrate on developing the legal arsenal and securing the technological resources to boost [...] the Chinese totalitarian regime,” said the analyst.

Meanwhile, both Alexis Tam and Sonia Chan played a prominent

role in the government's crack-down on the so-called “civil referendum” held by the New Macau Association in 2014. Back then, Tam kick-started the official verbal campaign based on the alleged unconstitutionality and illegality of the initiative and hinting at possible, but unspecified, consequences for the organizers. Chan provided the police with an apparent legal basis to disperse and detain the survey organizers.

“In all likelihood, this earned them a very strong political [backing] from Xi Jinping and his entourage, and I believe this political confidence overrode any other criteria,” remarked Katchi. “If any of them was technically qualified for the post - as Alexis Tam seemingly was - it was a sheer coincidence.”

CONTINUED ON P22

Xinhua/Wang Yuguo

MEMORY LANE

Xinhua/Lui Siu Wai



Captured from the Guia Fortress, this view of the city skyline shows some of the changes that have occurred in the past two decades. Some of the tallest buildings in this 1999 view are today dwarfed by the Grand Lisboa Hotel, the Bank of China Macau Branch Building, and the Macao Tower.

MSAR 20 YEARS



CONTINUED FROM P21

Chui Sai On should have done more in the pursuit of universal suffrage, argued several experts contacted by the Times this week.

Despite pledging greater democracy for the SAR, many regard Chui to have failed on this matter, suggesting that he deliberately prompted the National People's Congress Standing Committee to intervene "prematurely and impose, totally beyond its powers of interpretation, a normative framework for the amendment of the rules laid down in Annexes I and II of the Basic Law."

Katchi criticized Chui for failing to launch a formal Basic Law revision process intended to push political reform even further. "A parliamentary system should have been introduced in lieu of the current super-presidential system," he said.

The commentator further said that Chui should have submitted a bill to restore the former civil servants' pension system, infamously phased out under Edmund Ho.

Echoing the same sentiments, So remarked that in terms of democratic development of the SAR, "he hasn't done any."

Elements of the local community have been calling on the government to adopt universal suffrage. One such element, the New Macau Association, has been active in organizing online votes to support their call for democratization.

In 2014, prior to the celebration of Macau's 15th anniversary of its return to China, dozens of demonstrators marched in the city's historic center calling for universal suffrage.



Incoming Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng has said that he will not rule out the pursuit or adoption of universal suffrage during his tenure.

Migrant groups have cried foul over the nine-fold fee increase for baby delivery services provided to non-resident parents, describing the move as discriminatory. They consider the bill another piece of legislation that seeks to sideline Macau's migrants.

Chui allowed public hospital Conde de São Januário (CHCSJ) to increase its fees from MOP975

to MOP8,775 – a decision that prompted many migrant mothers to leave temporarily leave Macau to give birth back in their home country.

Another "discriminatory" move that was permitted was the shortening of the number of days allocated for non-resident workers to find new employment once their work contracts had been terminated.

Reduced from 10 days to 8 days, these non-resident workers face an enormous challenge to find new employment within the limited time given to them. This is irrespective of how many years

they have resided within the region.

"He should have pushed for the abolition of the non-resident worker status or, at the very least, for the extension to all non-resident workers the social rights granted to Macau residents," he said.

"Instead, he even aggravated the discrimination against them by increasing dramatically child-birth fees," Katchi criticized.

Echoing the same sentiments, So placed the blame on Chui, remarking that his policies – for the last 10 years – were very much in line with the interests of the

commercial sector, often at the expense of the needs of vulnerable groups.

It was also noted that the so-called distribution of Macau's income benefitted the elderly more, compared to the city's vulnerable groups and low wage earners.

Correia expressed his hope that the incoming Chief Executive will "think more about the welfare of residents than about himself and his family and friends."

"It's a lack of social sensitivity. I believe it was not an imposition from [the] Central Government," he added.

Xinhua/ Wang Yuguo

MEMORY LANE

Xinhua/Cheong Kam Ka



Contestants taking part in the traditional "Tray Race" in front of the Ruins of St. Paul's in Macau, exactly 20 years apart. Held on September 27, the annual Tray Race invites restaurant workers to balance a bottle of beer on a tray whilst running from the Ruins of St. Paul's to Senado Square.



Correia hopes that Ho will contribute to an effective improvement of living conditions and raising the wellbeing of all residents, non-permanent residents and blue card holders in a bid to reduce poverty and the gap between the very rich and the very poor.

In February this year, migrant workers' rights advocates met with the Labour Affairs Bureau to present their request to raise the quality of life of non-resident workers in the region, particularly that of domestic workers.

The groups requested the bureau review several of the local labor policies, including the esta-

ishment of a standard contract with a clear definition of the city's labor standards, as well as the establishment of a minimum wage for domestic workers.

Meeting with government representatives again earlier this month, the Third Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly unexpectedly cut short a planned two-hour meeting with representatives of the city's domestic helpers, allegedly due to a translator's private matter.

Due to such occurrences, these workers agree that they are continuously facing discrimination from the government in the SAR.

"We are just migrant workers, we

do not have the right to protest or disagree with what they do," said one.

"There has been a lot of discrimination against migrant workers with every law that [Chui] allowed to be passed. These include the absence of minimum wages for domestic workers, absence of standard employment contracts, [...] and nothing on democracy for workers' rights," the non-resident added.

Political commentators have not forgotten the government's failure to prepare for deadly typhoon Hato that killed 10 people

in the SAR, as well as its inability to prevent widespread corruption that occurred at the Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) and included even the falsification of documents and breach of secrecy.

Political commentator and professor Sonny Lo remarked that the examples of administrative incapability seen during typhoon Hato and the IPIM corruption scandal have marred the image of the government.

In another example of inefficacy, the scandal involving Ho Chio Meng revealed just how inadequate the internal auditing work

of the Macau government was. Ho Chio Meng faced over 1,500 charges of corruption during his high-profile trial that saw him sentenced to 21 years imprisonment in 2017.

For Correia, the Corruption Against Commission reports were increasingly critical of the administration; lack of leadership and a lack of responsibility-taking were commonly identified issues.

"The arrest and subsequent conviction of the former Macau SAR prosecutor undermined the confidence of the population in the judicial system and Government," Correia remarked.

MEMORY LANE

O.BS Architects

MDT/Renato Marques



This Square, now located between the Macao Cultural Center (CCM), the Handover Gifts Museum of Macao and the Sands Macao Hotel and Casino, was formerly the centerpiece of the handover ceremonies in 1999. Twenty years later the square has changed and there are fewer green spaces. The CCM building has also lost part of its roof, which was severely damaged during typhoon Hato in 2017.

HONG KONG

FOUR ARRESTED FOR MONEY LAUNDERING LINKED TO UNREST

ALFRED LIU

HONG Kong's police arrested four people for suspected money laundering linked to ongoing pro-democracy protests and froze money from a fund that's raised millions to help support the demonstrations.

Police froze HKD70 million (\$9 million) in local bank deposits and personal insurance products related to a fund called Spark Alliance, according to Chan Wai-kei, senior superintendent of the financial investigation branch of the force's Narcotics Bureau. The fund, which is linked to a shell company, has raised HKD80 million since the protests started in June.

Police noticed suspicious activity from the fund, including a large number of cash deposits and significant purchases of personal-insurance products, Chan said at a Thursday press briefing.

"The police attempted,



BLOOMBERG

through false statements, to distort the work of Spark Alliance as money laundering for malicious uses," the fund said in a Facebook post. This is an attempt to defame Spark Alliance and other support channels. Spark Alliance condemns this kind of defamatory action."

The people arrested include a student, two clerks and a human resources manager, aged 17 to 50, he said, without

naming them. All four were affiliated with the fund and shell company, with one being the director and shareholder, Chan said.

Chan said police also seized items including HKD130,000 in cash and HKD160,000 in receipts for supermarket coupons, but didn't specify from whom.

Hong Kong's economy is ending the year wounded, with chances for stabilization

in 2020 hanging on whether future protests are peaceful or violent. Economists forecast a 1.3% contraction for 2019 and predict year-on-year declines will continue in the first two quarters of 2020.

Protests began in June over since-scraped legislation allowing extraditions to mainland China and have expanded into calls for greater democracy in the former British colony. **BLOOMBERG**

SHENZHEN

TECH HUB SIGNS 128 DEALS WITH GLOBAL ENTERPRISES

A total of 128 deals with an investment of over 560 billion yuan (around \$80 billion) were signed Wednesday at a conference as south China's technological powerhouse Shenzhen tries to attract global investors.

The city has allocated 30 square kilometers of industrial land, which is distributed in 36 zones, for global investment, said Wang Youpeng, director of Shenzhen planning and natural resources bureau, at the Shenzhen Global Investment Promotion Conference.

Wang said the zones are designed with various functions including headquarters base, advanced manufacturing, scientific research and education, as well as cultural tourism.

Shenzhen is striving to create a stable, fair and transparent business environment for global companies and offer land for projects that are consistent with the city's industrial direction and meet its need for high-quality development, said Wang Weizhong, secretary of the Shenzhen Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Shenzhen is home to a bevy of Chinese startups and tech heavyweights including Huawei and Tencent. Its GDP rose about 7.5 percent year-on-year to surpass 2.4 trillion yuan in 2018. **XINHUA**

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



Misused Carney broadcast feeds prompt BOE probe

THE Bank of England asked regulators to investigate how an audio broadcast of some of its press conferences was misused to potentially give traders an unfair advantage.

A faster audio could give some traders an edge on words spoken by BOE Governor Mark Carney, which can move the price of the pound or U.K. gilts. Even a few seconds can be enough to get a trade in ahead of a market move.

The discovery of misuse was made after concerns were raised with the bank. It found that a third-party supplier gained access to the BOE's backup audio feed. That third party is now banned from future press conferences. The Financial Conduct Authority is also looking at the issue.

The breach means the BOE may need to revamp the way it broadcasts press conferences. The furor is likely to lead officials to change the way they put live events into the public domain, possibly toward a system where the fastest feed is openly accessible to all, as operated by the European Central Bank.

"This wholly unacceptable use of the audio feed was without the bank's knowledge or consent," the BOE said. "On identifying this, the bank immediately disabled the third party supplier's access."

Central bank announcements are among the most market-sensitive of any news releases, with major monetary authorities employing tight arrangements for how their information is released. The feed issue didn't affect the security of that information.

"The bank operates the highest standards of information security around the release of the market sensitive decisions

of its policy committees," it said. "The issue identified related only to the broadcast of press conferences that follow such statements."

The scandal relates to the BOE's set-piece press conferences after some monetary policy decisions. The events start with a statement from the governor, who then takes questions from assembled journalists. The proceedings are broadcast, with the video managed by Bloomberg and made available to other news providers.

The audio feed involved was intended only as a backup in case the video failed. The BOE said the supplier that sold it on won't play any part in future press conferences.

The central bank didn't name the provider.

Yesterday, Statisma, an Essex-based firm which describes itself as "a technology company specializing in the delivery of publicly available audio content," posted a statement on its website saying "we DO NOT carry embargoed information and we DO NOT release information without it first being made available to the public."

"It is impossible to 'hack' or 'eavesdrop' any live public event or press conference," Statisma said. "Any such suggestion is dismissed out of hand."

The news was reported earlier by the Times of London. In an age of quantitative investing, where billions of dollars are run by black-box algorithms and high frequency traders, a few seconds' lead on market-moving information provides a vital leg up.

While information breaches are rare for central banks, they are treated seriously when they occur. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

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British menswear brand Kent & Curwen has launched its first Christmas capsule collection featuring a selection of its classic sweatshirts, tees and shirts complete with a reworked patch featuring a heraldic reindeer. Kent & Curwen makes dressing stylishly for the festive season easier than ever.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

TIFFANY EXPECTS DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH IN CHINA DESPITE WEAK ECONOMY

TOM MACKENZIE
& JEFF SUTHERLAND

TIFFANY & Co. expects double-digit growth in China next year despite a weaker economy, as consumers curb their overseas luxury purchases and spend more at home.

The U.S. retailer, which last month agreed to be acquired by LVMH for \$16 billion, sees momentum continuing in 2020 following "very high" double-digit growth in mainland China over the past two years, according to Tiffany Chief Executive Officer Alessandro Bogliolo. Sales are benefiting from Tiffany's increased commitment to the world's largest consumer market, as well as China's moves to boost domestic spending, he said.

"All the efforts the Chinese government has done to increase local consumption, like the decrease of the sales tax, of course is an incentive for Chinese customers to purchase locally instead of flying to Japan, the U.S.

and Europe to do their purchases," Bogliolo said in an interview with Bloomberg Television.

Sectors ranging from tourism to luxury goods that relied heavily on Chinese spending abroad are having to rethink their strategies as the yuan depreciates and

Sectors ranging from tourism to luxury goods are having to rethink their strategies as the yuan depreciates

mainland visitors avoid protest-stricken cities like Hong Kong and Paris. Luxury companies in particular are aggressively expanding within the mainland to court Chinese spenders who account for a third of global demand.

Kering SA is planning 14 new outlets across six Chinese cities for its brands like Gucci and Bottega Veneta, while other brands under Tiffany's new owner,

LVMH, also plan to enter new Chinese cities.

Tiffany is planning to add "very few" stores in China during the new year, Bogliolo said. Instead, the company's strategy is to expand existing locations. The CEO was in China for the opening of Tiffany's redesigned flagship store in Shanghai, which nearly doubled in size to 10,000 square feet, making it the biggest Tiffany's location in Asia.

The U.S. luxury retailer is also counting on the launch of its website in China to help it reach customers in less-developed cities where it currently doesn't have stores.

Bogliolo said Tiffany has seen a double-digit decline in sales in Hong Kong because of the pro-democracy protests. But the company isn't changing its strategy there. The city has gone through other difficult moments and bounced back, he said, "so I'm really confident about Hong Kong, on its future role in the luxury world."



A Tiffany store in Shanghai

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Chinese national arrested for illegally entering Mar-a-Lago

TERRY SPENCER,
FORT LAUDERDALE

A Chinese national trespassed at President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago club yesterday [Macau time] and was arrested when she refused to leave, police said, the second time this year a woman from that country has been charged with illicitly entering the Florida resort.

Jing Lu, 56, was confronted by the private club's security officers and told to leave, but she returned to take photos, Palm Beach police spokesman Michael Ogrodnick said in an email. Palm Beach officers were called and arrested her. It was determined she had an expired visa, Ogrodnick said.

Lu was charged with loitering and prowling and was being held later at the Palm Beach County jail.

The president and his family were not at the club — he held a rally in Michigan as the U.S. House voted to impeach him. The



Trumps are expected to arrive at Mar-a-Lago by the weekend and spend the holidays there.

Lu's arrest is reminiscent of the March arrest of Yujing Zhang, a 33-year-old Shanghai businesswoman, who gained access to Mar-a-Lago while carrying a laptop, phones and other electronic gear. That led to initial speculation

that she might be a spy, but she was never charged with espionage and text messages she exchanged with a trip organizer indicated she was a fan of the president and wanted to meet him or his family to discuss possible deals.

Zhang was found guilty in September of trespassing and lying to Secret Service agents and was sen-

tenced last month to time served. She is being held for deportation.

In another Mar-a-Lago trespassing case, a University of Wisconsin student was arrested in November 2018 after he mixed in with guests being admitted to the club. He pleaded guilty in May and received probation.

In both of those cases, Trump

and his family were staying at the resort, but none were ever threatened.

With the Atlantic Ocean to the east and Florida's Intracoastal Waterway to the west, Mar-a-Lago sits on the Palm Beach barrier island, a 128-room, 62,500-square-foot (5,8000-square-meter) symbol of opulence and power. The Trump family business doubled the initiation fee to \$200,000 after the president was elected in 2016. He spends many weekends between November and April there, mingling with the club's 500 members, who pay \$14,000 in annual dues to belong.

Trump purchased Mar-a-Lago from the foundation of the late socialite and cereal heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post in 1985. He and first lady Melania Trump held their 2005 wedding reception inside the 20,000-square-foot (1,860-square-meter) ballroom shortly after its completion.

Federal agencies spent about \$3.4 million per Trump visit, much of it on security, according to an analysis of four 2017 trips by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. The Secret Service doesn't decide who is invited or welcome at the resort; that responsibility belongs to the club. Agents do screen guests outside the perimeter before they're screened again inside. AP

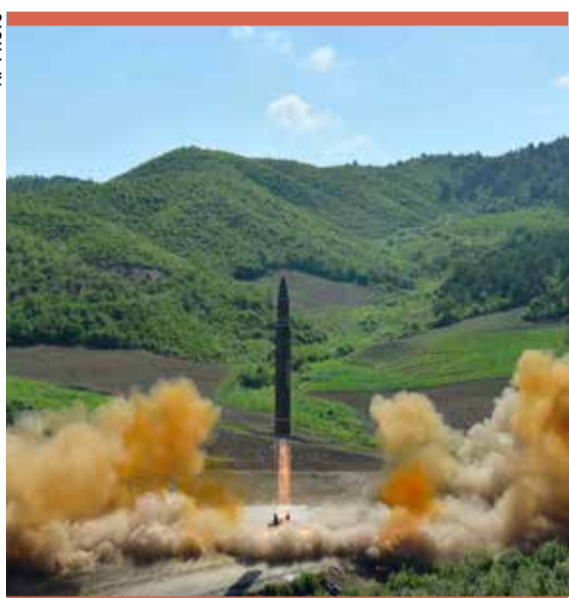
China seeks to spur North Korea talks during US envoy's visit

CHINA is urging dialogue between the U.S. and North Korea during a visit to Beijing by Washington's special representative for Pyongyang affairs.

Vice Foreign Minister Luo Zhaohui told reporters that despite tensions, the situation on the Korean Peninsula "had not left the track of dialogue and negotiation" and that "opportunities and challenges" remained.

Luo's comments came shortly before the arrival of Stephen Biegun in Beijing yesterday during a swing through the region.

Biegun had offered to meet with North Korean officials during a stop in South Korea but received no public response from Pyongyang. Some in the South have speculated that a secret meeting could happen in Beijing although Ameri-



can diplomats have said nothing to indicate that would happen.

China, North Korea's most important diplomatic ally and biggest source of investment and financial support, has long pushed for both bilateral discussions between Washington and Pyongyang and the restarting of six-nation nuclear disarmament talks that

have been stalled for a decade.

On Sunday, Pyongyang said it successfully performed another "crucial test" at its long-range rocket launch site that will further strengthen its nuclear deterrent.

The test possibly involved technologies to improve intercontinental ballistic missiles that could potentially

reach the continental United States.

In Washington, meanwhile, top Senate Democrats issued a letter to Trump expressing their growing concern that the administration's efforts to advance toward a lasting peace and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula appear to be stalled and on the brink of failure.

"While we understand that significant gaps remain between the two sides — and that North Korea has yet to take sufficient steps to meet its stated commitment to diplomacy and denuclearization — we are disturbed that almost two years after the Singapore Summit your administration has yet to develop a workable diplomatic process to structure real, serious and sustainable negotiations with North Korea," the letter said. AP

UNIVERSITY REVISES CHARTER BOOSTING COMMUNIST CONTROL

CONTROVERSY has erupted after a leading Chinese university revised its charter to remove a reference to "free thinking" and adding a new stress on adhering to the leadership of the ruling Communist Party, Marxism and socialist theories of education.

The changes at Fudan University in Shanghai were revealed earlier this week and reflect the atmosphere of increasing academic control and conservatism under the administration of party leader and head of state Xi Jinping.

Online criticism of the move was quickly scrubbed by censors, but reports said some students and at least one professor had come out against the decision, actions that could have a serious impact on their future academic prospects and careers.

Since assuming control of the party in 2012, Xi has emphasized the need to guard against Western liberal democratic theories such as freedom of speech and academic inquiry, asserting that all power and authority accrue to the party.

That has resulted in the purging or imprisoning of academics who advocated for political reform or minority rights. Texts have also been revised to emphasize the party's leading role and some local governments have even reported burning books considered politically unacceptable.

People who answered phones at Fudan's office of propaganda yesterday said no one was immediately available to comment on the revision or incidents on campus.

However, the changes to the charter were widely disseminated on social media sites including Twitter, which is blocked in China.

In a tweet, Fudan professor of modern Chinese history Sun Peidong said the move was in line with enduring party attempts to assert control over academia.

"As a professor of the PRC history at Fudan University, I am surprised by people's astonishment towards the bylaws' amendment by deleting 'academic independence and freedom of thought' and pledging the loyalty to (Chinese Communist Party) leadership," he wrote. AP

INDIA

GOV'T BANS PUBLIC PROTESTS TO QUELL RISING ANGER AGAINST CITIZENSHIP LAW

ARCHANA CHAUDHARY

INDIAN authorities have imposed curfew-like restrictions across vast swathes of the country and shut down internet services in parts of the capital New Delhi as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government tries to quell nationwide protests against his controversial religion-based citizenship law.

The entire state of Uttar Pradesh - with a population of 200 million it's about the size of Brazil - has been placed under a law banning gatherings of more than four people as has the tech-hub of Bengaluru as well as parts of the capital New Delhi. Protests have begun again this afternoon in 13 major cities around the country - the eighth day of unrest that's posing the biggest challenge to Modi's government since he was elected in 2014.

At least two major service providers confirmed on Twitter the internet block was implemented "as per instructions from the government." India recorded the world's highest number of in-



ternet shutdowns, with services cut 134 times overall and 93 times so far this year, according to the Delhi-based Software Freedom Law Center. The longest shutdown has been recorded in Kashmir, the country's only Muslim-majority territory, where the block has been in place since August when the government scrapped the state's decades-old autonomy.

Police in the neighboring

state of Haryana tweeted an advisory to avoid "non-essential" travel to New Delhi, saying the capital's borders have been sealed, while 18 metro stations were also shut. The police chief in Uttar Pradesh, ruled by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, recorded a video telling parents to stop their kids from joining protests.

Marches are expected to take place across a dozen Indian ci-

ties and towns against the Citizenship Amendment Act that bars undocumented Muslims from neighboring Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan from seeking citizenship while allowing in migrants from other religions.

About 100 police personnel in bullet-proof jackets, holding sticks, stood at the Red Fort and another main square in central Delhi to stop people from marching toward the Parliament. At least two buses were loaded with protesters who were dropped off on the city's outskirts to prevent the marches. Many roads were closed to stop the demonstrations, leading to traffic chaos.

"I saw many protesters being taken away in buses," said Sanaul Zaidi, 54-year-old chartered accountant who'd traveled more than 20 kilometers to join the demonstrations. "But it's heartening to see so many turn up to raise their voices. We can't let people with ulterior motives to carry away our country in the wrong direction."

At Jantar Mantar, not far from the Parliament, a crowd of

about 800 students and citizens sang songs and chanted slogans against Modi and his Home Minister Amit Shah. Srishti Parihar, a 19-year-old student at Delhi's Miranda House college, said she was angry. "I will convert to Islam if that's what it takes to protect fellow Muslim citizens," she said. "We will stand with each other and sink with each other."

Since the law was passed on Dec. 11, protests have spread across the nation, raising fears it would damage India's traditional secular ethos enshrined in its Constitution that treats all religions on par.

The new law is seen as a precursor to the government's plan to implement a nationwide citizens register to weed out illegal migrants. Demonstrations first began in the eastern state of Assam where there are fears the new law will allow an influx of migrants from neighboring Bangladesh. Some 1.9 million people in Assam - many of them Muslims - risk losing their Indian citizenship after the state enforced the citizens register in August. **BLOOMBERG**

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PHILIPPINES

Ex-politicians found guilty in 2009 massacre

RUTH POLLARD
& ANDREO CALONZO

TWO senior members of one of southern Philippines' most powerful political clans have been found guilty of the world's single deadliest attack on journalists, 10 years after 58 people, including 32 members of the media, were shot to death and buried in a shallow grave.

Nearly 30 suspects, including the two main accused -- former mayor Andal "Datu Unsay" Ampatuan Jr and his brother, Zaldy -- were sentenced by a local court to up to 40 years in prison for having "acted as principals" in the crime, according to a copy of the decision posted on the Supreme Court website. Fifteen others were sentenced to up to 10 years in jail for being accessories to the crime.

More than 50 defendants were acquitted, as their alleged involvement in the crime were not proven beyond reasonable doubt, according to the decision. The court also ordered that damages be paid to the victims' families.

The Ampatuan brothers pleaded not guilty to the murder char-



ges when the trial began in 2010, with their defense focusing on the supposed lack of evidence directly linking them to the massacre.

Prosecutors say the massacre, allegedly carried out by the Ampatuan's private army on a convoy that included opposition politician Esmael Mangudadatu's wife and sisters, was connected to provincial elections.

One of the worst incidents

of election violence in the Philippines' history, the Nov. 23 2009 massacre followed decades of escalating clan violence, entrenched corruption and political kickbacks. Key members of the Ampatuan family, including Andal Ampatuan Jr and his father, the Maguindanao Governor, Andal Ampatuan Sr, who has since died, were charged and removed from their posts.

President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman Salvador Panelo said the ruling should be respected, and that the government will work for the protection of journalists. "While the promulgation of judgment in the case is done, the narrative on the protection of media workers is far from over."

The guilty verdict will have a "dampening effect" on clan feuds in southern Philippines, said

Francisco Lara, sociology lecturer at the University of the Philippines who specializes in political economy of conflict and has written about the Maguindanao massacre. "This is going to be a critical juncture in our history," he said.

It will also have an impact on the dynamics between the state and clans, Lara said. "The clans will see that there's a possibility of getting justice from the center, so it weakens them. They will realize that justice can be rendered not just by clans, but by the state."

Still, 80 suspects are still at large, and at least 50 of those were close security detail for Andal Ampatuan Jr, Human Rights Watch said in a statement. Since the trial started in 2010, victims' families and media groups have reported harassment and threats, forcing the family of one of the journalist victims to seek asylum abroad.

"This verdict should prompt the country's political leaders to finally act to end state support for "private armies" and militias that promotes the political warlordism that gave rise to the Ampatuans," Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director of Human Rights Watch said in a statement yesterday. **BLOOMBERG**

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Trump impeached on charges of abuse of

LISA MASCARO & MARY CLARE JALONICK, WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Donald Trump was impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming only the third American chief executive to be formally charged under the Constitution's ultimate remedy for high crimes and misdemeanors.

The historic vote split along party lines early yesterday [Macau time], much the way it has divided the nation, over a charge that the 45th president abused the power of his office by enlisting a foreign government to investigate a political rival ahead of the 2020 election. The House then approved a second charge, that he obstructed Congress in its investigation.

The articles of impeachment, the political equivalent of an indictment, now go to the Senate for trial. If Trump is acquitted by the Republican-led chamber, as expected, he still would have to run for reelection carrying the enduring stain of impeachment on his purposely disruptive presidency.

"The president is impeached,"

Pelosi declared after the vote. She called it "great day for the Constitution of the United States, a sad one for America that the president's reckless activities necessitated us having to introduce articles of impeachment."

Trump, who began tweeting his anger at the proceedings, pumped his fist before an evening rally in Battle Creek, Michigan, boasting of "tremendous support" in the Republican Party and saying, "By the way it doesn't feel like I'm being impeached."

The votes for impeachment were 230-197-1 on the first charge, 229-198-1 on the second.

Democrats led the voting, framed in what many said was their duty to protect the Constitution and uphold the nation's system of checks and balances. Republicans stood by their party's leader, who has frequently tested the bounds of civic norms. Trump called the whole affair a "witch hunt," a "hoax" and a "sham," and sometimes all three.

The trial is expected to begin in January in the Senate, where a vote of two-thirds is necessary for con-

AP PHOTO



viction. While Democrats had the majority in the House to impeach Trump, Republicans control the Senate and few are expected to diverge from plans to acquit the president ahead of early state election-year primary voting.

Pelosi, once reluctant to lead Democrats into a partisan impeachment, gaveled both votes closed, risking her majority and speaker-

ship to follow the effort to its House conclusion.

No Republicans voted for impeachment, and Democrats had only slight defections on their side. Voting was conducted manually with ballots, to mark the moment.

On the first article, abuse of power, two Democrats, Jeff Van Drew of New Jersey, who is considering switching parties to become

a Republican, and Collin Peterson of Minnesota voted against impeaching Trump. On the second article, obstruction, those two and freshman Rep. Jared Golden of Maine voted against. Democratic Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii, who is running for president, voted "present" on both.

What Pelosi called a sad and solemn moment for the country,

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power, obstruction

coming in the first year after Democrats swept control of the House, unfolded in a caustic daylong session that showcased the nation's divisions.

The House impeachment resolution laid out in stark terms the articles of impeachment against Trump stemming from his July phone call when he asked the Ukrainian president for a "favor" — to announce he was investigating Democrats including potential 2020 rival Joe Biden.

At the time, Zelenskyy, new to politics and government, was seeking a coveted White House visit to show backing from the U.S. as he confronted a hostile Russia at his border. He was also counting on \$391 million in military aid already approved by Congress. The White House delayed the funds, but Trump eventually released the money once Congress intervened.

Narrow in scope but broad in its charges, the impeachment resolution said the president "betrayed the nation by abusing his high office to enlist a foreign power in corrupting democratic elections," and then obstructing Congress'

oversight like "no president" in U.S. history.

"President Trump, by such conduct, has demonstrated that he will remain a threat to national security and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office," it said.

Republicans argued that Democrats were impeaching Trump because they can't beat him in 2020.

Said Rep. Chris Stewart of Utah: "They want to take away my vote and throw it in the trash."

But Democrats warned the country cannot wait for the next election to decide whether Trump should remain in office because he has shown a pattern of behavior, particularly toward Russia, and will try to corrupt U.S. elections again.

"The president and his men plot on," said Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., of the Intelligence Committee that led the inquiry. "The danger persists. The risk is real."

The outcome brings the Trump presidency to a milestone moment that has been building almost from the time the New York businessman-turned-reality-TV host unexpectedly won the White House in 2016 amid questions about Russian

interference in the U.S. election.

Democrats drew from history, the founders and their own experiences, as minorities, women and some immigrants to the U.S. spoke of seeking to honor their oath of office to uphold the Constitution. Rep. Lou Correa of California spoke in Spanish asking God to unite the nation. "In America," said Hakeem Jeffries of New York, "no one is above the law."

Republicans aired Trump-style grievances about what Arizona Rep. Debbie Lesko called a "rigged" process.

"We face this horror because of this map," said Rep. Clay Higgins of Alabama before a poster of red and blue states. "They call this Republican map flyover country, they call us deplorables, they fear our faith, they fear our strength, they fear our unity, they fear our vote, and they fear our president."

The political fallout from the vote will reverberate across an already polarized country with divergent views of Trump's July phone call when he asked Zelenskyy to investigate Democrats in the 2016 election, Biden and Biden's son

Hunter, who worked on the board of a gas company in Ukraine while his father was the vice president.

Trump has repeatedly implored Americans to read the transcript of the call he said was "perfect." But the facts it revealed, and those in an anonymous whistleblower's complaint that sparked the probe, are largely undisputed.

More than a dozen current and former White House officials and diplomats testified for hours in impeachment hearings. The open and closed sessions under oath revealed what one called the "irregular channel" of foreign policy run by Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, which focused on investigating the Bidens and alternative theories of 2016 election interference.

The question for lawmakers was whether the revelations amounted to impeachable offenses.

Few lawmakers crossed party lines.

Van Drew, who is considering changing parties over his opposition to impeachment, sat with Republicans. Rep. Justin Amash, the Michigan conservative who left the Republican party and became an independent over impeachment, said: "I come to this floor, not as a Republican, not as a Democrat, but as an American."

Beyond the impeachments of Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton, this first impeachment of the 21st century is as much about what the president might do in the future as what he did in the past. The investigation of Richard Nixon ended when he resigned rather than face the House vote over Watergate.

Rank and file Democrats said they were willing to lose their jobs to protect the democracy from Trump. Some newly elected freshmen remained in the chamber for hours during the debate.

Top Republicans, including Rep. Devin Nunes on the Intelligence Committee, called the Ukraine probe little more than a poor sequel to special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Mueller spent two years investigating the potential links between Moscow and the Trump campaign but testified in July that his team could not establish that Trump conspired or coordinated with Russia to throw the election. Mueller did say he could not exonerate Trump of trying to obstruct the investigation, but he left that for Congress to decide.

The next day, Trump called Ukraine. Not quite four months later, a week before Christmas, Trump was impeached. AP

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08:20	RTPi Directo
09:45	Cerimónia da Celebração do 20º Aniversário do Retorno de Macau à Pátria e da Tomada de Posse do Quinto Governo da RAEM (Directo)
12:00	RTPi Directo
13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Uma Família no Sapatinho
16:30	Um Porto Para o Mundo
17:50	Tec Net
18:00	Império (Repetição)
18:50	TDM Talk Show (Repetição)
19:25	Livros com João Guedes (Repetição)
19:30	Ouro Verde Sr.1
20:30	Telejornal
21:10	Macau 20 Anos - Fim
21:35	Viagens em Série
22:00	Solteira e Boa Rapariga
22:25	Império
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Filme da Treta
01:25	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:15	RTPi Directo

Offbeat

POLICE: MARIJUANA CHRISTMAS GIFTS SNIFFED OUT AT AIRPORT



A man who may have been dreaming of a "green" Christmas found himself inside the gray walls of a Tennessee jail. According to court documents, state police caught Somphone Temmeraj, 57, with more than 80 pounds of marijuana disguised as Christmas gifts at Nashville International Airport this week, news outlets reported.

Officers and a K-9 smelled a strong odor of marijuana coming from three bags, according to the documents. The officers said they saw Temmeraj pick up the bags and load them onto a cart.

Temmeraj allowed officers to search the bags, which were filled with what appeared to be wrapped Christmas gifts. The items were actually filled with vacuum-sealed bags of marijuana weighing 84 pounds (38 kilograms), authorities said.

Temmeraj had flown to Nashville from Seattle, the documents state. He was booked into jail and bonded out Tuesday morning, according to online records. It's unclear whether he had an attorney who could comment on his behalf.

cinema

CINETEATRO

19 - 25 Dec



STAR WARS: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER

ROOM 1
2:15, 7:00, 9:45pm
Room 2
4:30

Director: J. J. Abrams
Starring: Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill, Adam Driver, Daisy Ridley
Language: English
Duration: 141min



MY TYRANO: TOGETHER FOREVER

ROOM 1
5:00
Director: Kobun Shizumo
Starring: Kaori Ishihara, Shin'ichirō Miki, Aoi Yūki
Language: Cantonese
Duration: 108min



BOMBSHELL
ROOM 2
2:30, 7:30, 9:30 pm
Director: Jay Roach
Starring: Charlize Theron, Nicole Kidman, Margot Robbie
Language: English
Duration: 108min



JUMANJI, THE NEXT LEVEL
ROOM 3
2:30, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30pm
Director: Jake Kasdan
Starring: Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black, Kevin Hart, Karen Gillan
Language: English
Duration: 123min

this day in history



1995 'DIVORCE': QUEEN TO CHARLES AND DIANA

The Queen has urged the Prince and Princess of Wales to seek "an early divorce".

Buckingham Palace said the Queen called for an end to the marriage in a letter to each of them earlier this week.

It is understood the prince has replied in agreement with his mother but the princess has yet to respond, according to a Palace spokesman.

"After considering the present situation the Queen wrote to both the prince and princess earlier this week and gave them her view, supported by the Duke of Edinburgh, that an early divorce is desirable," the spokesman said.

"The Prince of Wales also takes this view and has made this known to the Princess of Wales since the letter.

"The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will continue to do all they can to help and support the Prince and Princess of Wales, and most particularly their children, in this difficult period."

The Queen's action comes just weeks after the princess's interview on Panorama which sparked a national debate on the future of the monarchy.

In it she said she did not want a divorce and claimed there were "three people" in their marriage because of Charles' friendship with Camilla Parker Bowles.

Diana was also repeatedly critical of her husband's ability to become king, his family, and their advisers and also admitted committing adultery herself.

Constitutional experts have said divorce would mean the Princess of Wales could never become queen.

The prime minister and senior Privy Councillors have backed the Queen's decision after prolonged private talks over the last two weeks.

Buckingham Palace's announcement followed discussions between the Queen and the Prime Minister.

Mr Major, who announced the couple's original separation in the Commons in 1992, will make a further statement to MPs once divorce proceedings are under way.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The "fairytale" marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales ended with a "decree nisi" on 28 August 1996.

It was a far cry from their lavish wedding at St Paul's Cathedral 15 years earlier, witnessed by a television audience of millions.

As part of the divorce settlement Diana was stripped of her royal title - HRH - and instead became known as Diana, Princess of Wales.

It is understood she was awarded a £17m lump sum and £350,000 a year to run her private office, while Diana and Charles agreed to share custody of their sons.

Almost exactly a year later Diana died in a car crash with her companion Dodi Fayed in Paris.

Prince Charles married Camilla Parker Bowles in April 2005.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

<p>ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19</p> <p>Have no fear! The best way to get a lot done today is by asking other people for help. Sure, it seems like an obvious idea, but reaching out for a helping hand is not exactly something you enjoy doing.</p>	<p>TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20</p> <p>Right now, the colorful cast of characters in your life is incredibly entertaining—so why not put together some sort of fun social event? Put together a group picnic or a dinner out.</p>
<p>GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21</p> <p>Rather than letting yourself get nervous about your money situation, just play it safe and stay tight with your cash—just in case. It's a good idea to get in the habit of tightening your belt.</p>	<p>CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22</p> <p>You know more than you think you know, so don't let anyone keep you from saying what you think about a certain political situation today. They can't intimidate you anymore.</p>
<p>LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22</p> <p>You'll get into a nice rhythm and be able to get in some quality time with a couple of your favorite people before the sun goes down. There are a few new developments in a loved one's life.</p>	<p>VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22</p> <p>Striving to attain a perfect balance in your life is a good idea, but in the end, it may be futile. Certain things will always come before certain other things, and there is no getting around that.</p>
<p>LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22</p> <p>Small but numerous scheduling conflicts will push you very close to the edge today—but not over it. Your flexibility will come to the rescue yet again, enabling you to roll with all the punches.</p>	<p>SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21</p> <p>Today is a very good day for you to get the results you try to achieve—whatever they may be. So, early this morning, you should pick a goal and stick to it throughout the day.</p>
<p>SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21</p> <p>When did you get the idea that having doubt in your life was a bad thing? Sure, it might cause you to pause your progress, but questioning where you are going is always a healthy thing to do.</p>	<p>CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19</p> <p>Before the late afternoon, a rather shocking announcement will stop everyone in their tracks. And while other people may be overreacting to the situation, you might be under-reacting.</p>
<p>AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18</p> <p>Getting more exercise is a lot easier than you might think—and it can be a lot of fun. All you have to do is get started, and then keep on going! The universe is sending some motivation your way.</p>	<p>PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20</p> <p>Highbrow types of art and literature are much more accessible to you right now, and your mind is intrigued by the idea of flowery prose and intricate poetry.</p>

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY					EASY+				
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MEDIUM					HARD				
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	1	7							
			5			6			
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2	6								
		3	1						
4									

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	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	9	clear
Harbin	-17	-4	clear
Tianjin	2	11	clear
Urumqi	-3	7	clear
Xi'an	5	17	clear
Lhasa	0	19	cloudy
Chengdu	10	16	clear
Chongqing	12	20	cloudy
Kunming	9	21	clear
Nanjing	7	23	cloudy
Shanghai	12	20	cloudy
Wuhan	8	24	clear
Hangzhou	9	22	clear
Taipei	17	21	cloudy
Guangzhou	14	27	clear
Hong Kong	20	25	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-1	4	clear
Frankfurt	0	6	drizzle
Paris	2	9	moderate rain
London	7	9	drizzle
New York	-3	1	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1-Mitch Miller's instrument; 5- Sonny boy; 8- Eye problem; 12- Some donations; 13- Cheroot, e.g.; 15- Stuck in ___; 16- Gather, harvest; 17- Alley Oop's girlfriend; 18- DEA agent; 19- Encircling; 22- Utmost degree; 23- Hostelry; 24- Places of refuge; 26- Up-to-the-minute; 29- Without delay; 31- Joplin piece; 32- Toledo title; 34- Alerts; 36- Frozen waffle brand; 38- Unfettered; 40- Compassion; 41- Plants with fronds; 43- Implements; 45- Pickup truck feature; 46- Ebb; 48- Less messy; 50- Shrivelled, without moisture; 51- Struggle; 52- Distress signal; 54- Magical incantation; 61- Coloured part of the eye; 63- Fortune-telling cards; 64- Authenticating mark; 65- Tough soap; 66- Grocery, e.g.; 67- "The ___ Dead", classic horror movie; 68- Margarine; 69- Baa maid?; 70- Dict. entries;

DOWN: 1- Rowing implements; 2- Cordon ___; 3- General Bradley; 4- Lively wit; 5- Large cat; 6- Yes, there is ___; 7- Limp watch painter; 8- Japanese honorific; 9- Make a written copy; 10- Mongol tent; 11- Draw with acid; 13- Advice; 14- Charged toward; 20- Till stack; 21- Increase in size; 25- Sack starter; 26- Pilsner; 27- Boldly assertive; 28- Govt. security; 29- Bad lighting?; 30- Step inside; 31- Flag thrower; 33- "Hollywood Squares" win; 35- Barrett of Pink Floyd; 37- Measure twice, cut ___; 39- Lift up; 42- Word repeated in a Doris Day song; 44- Aforementioned; 47- Sums owing; 49- Rides; 52- Missile housing; 53- Tough test; 55- Appraise, charge per unit; 56- In ranks; 57- Apple throwaway; 58- Group of birds; 59- Drops from the sky; 60- ___ well...; 62- ___ Paulo, Brazil;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	



<p>FOR SALE</p> <p>Man Fai, Taipa HK\$5,580,000 1,390 ft² 3 1/2 2 1/2</p>	<p>FOR RENT</p> <p>Nova Grand, Taipa \$17,800/mth 935 ft² 2 1/2 1 1/2</p>	<p>FOR SALE</p> <p>[Taipa] 2 connected apartment 4 1/2 2 1/2 1,404 ft² \$8,680,000 (ref: 19096006)</p> <p>[Taipa] Nova City 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,515 ft² \$11,750,000 (ref: 19106001)</p> <p>[Taipa] Manhattan 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,720 ft² \$12,980,000 (ref: 19096006)</p> <p>[Coloane] Large apartment 2 1/2 3 1/2 2 1/2 2,530 ft² \$13,800,000 (ref: 19096000)</p>	<p>FOR RENT</p> <p>[Taipa] Studio (new building) 1 470 ft² \$9,500/mth (ref: 19101002)</p> <p>[Taipa] Nam Long 2 1/2 1 1/2 645 ft² \$11,800/mth (ref: 19111001)</p> <p>[Taipa] Nova Grand 2 1/2 1 1/2 935 ft² \$17,800/mth (ref: 19091005)</p> <p>[Taipa] Manhattan 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,720 ft² \$23,800/mth (ref: 19091006)</p>
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Warmly Welcome
**President of the People's Republic of China
 Mr. Xi Jinping**
 on His Official Visit to Macao SAR

**Congratulations on the 20th Anniversary of
 the Establishment of Macao SAR**

Chief Executive **Mr. Ho Iat Seng**
 and the 5th Term Government of Macao SAR

With compliments of Mazarine Asia Pacific
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Puerto Rico cockfighters go to ring in federal ban defiance

DÁNICA COTO, TOA BAJA

FELIPE Espinal walked into his cockfighting establishment yesterday [Macau time] in the northern town of Toa Baja and held up a white pen in triumph as he recorded the moment with his cellphone.

The crowd hushed as he cried out: "This is the pen that said we can keep fighting gamecocks!"

Hours earlier, Puerto Rico Gov. Wanda Vázquez signed a bill authorizing cockfighting in defiance of a federal ban that goes into effect Friday. She was surrounded by Espinal and other cockfighters who cheered the decision, some even crying, relieved, if only temporarily, that the island's 400-year-old tradition was still alive.

"We can now live in peace," said Tony Rojas, who takes cares of 100 gamecocks for a living. "I'm 65 years old. Who's going to hire me? Nobody wants me even for cleaning floors. I couldn't sleep wondering what was going to happen."

The U.S. territory of 3.2 million people has 71 cockfighting establishments in 45 municipalities licensed by the island's Department of Sports and Recreation. Officials estimate the industry generates \$18 million a year and employs some 27,000 people such as Rojas, noting that jobs range from judges to technicians who clean gamecocks and feed them papaya after fights to those who secure plastic spurs on cocks before every fight.

Many of them feared for their livelihoods when Congress appro-

AP PHOTO



ved the 2018 Farm Bill last December. It contained the Parity in Animal Cruelty Enforcement Act that aimed to end cockfighting in U.S. territories, giving them one year to comply. The practice was already illegal in all 50 U.S. states but is still widely practiced in other U.S. jurisdictions including Puerto Rico.

The move made many officials in Puerto Rico bristle at what they viewed as another intrusion by the federal government. After all, cockfighting was legalized in 1933 by a Puerto Rico governor from Kentucky who sought to attract U.S. tourists to the island. That move ended 34 years of underground fighting that began when the U.S. government banned the practice in May 1899 after it defeated Spain and occupied Puerto Rico.

It was the Spanish conquistadors who brought cockfighting to Puerto Rico, where it cut through race and social classes, according to documents that local historian Juan Llanes filed in 2014 with the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

"Through their birds, in the arena, slaves could defeat their masters, blacks could defeat whites, Criollos could defeat Peninsulares," he wrote.

Cockfighting grew so popular it even prompted a Roman Catholic bishop in 1750 to prohibit cockfights at certain times because church attendance had dropped, Llanes says.

"The gamecock sport in Puerto Rico is not going to disappear," said Gerardo Mora, executive director

of Puerto Rico's Cockfighting Commission, a part of the island's Department of Recreation and Sports.

Mora was among the roughly 50 people attending cockfights at Espinal's establishment in Toa Baja, a town whose first cockfighting arena was founded in 1786.

Cheers filled the air every time a cock gouged its opponent's eyes out or stepped on its head in triumph after it collapsed and died following intense battles that lasted less than two minutes. Those that died were thrown into a black plastic bag to be doused with gasoline, set on fire and later buried.

Sitting in the crowd was Yeadealeaucks Báez, a teacher and only one of three women at the event. She works in the kitchen of a nearby cockfighting establish-

ment with her husband, a job she said has allowed them to send their daughter to college in Florida and paid for the education of their son, who is now an engineer.

They feared the federal ban would sink them financially, especially given that Puerto Rico is mired in a 13-year recession as it struggles to recover from Hurricane Maria and tries to restructure a portion of its more than \$70 billion public debt load.

"I told my husband we would have to sell water at stoplights," Báez said.

While cockfighters and government officials in Puerto Rico celebrated the defiance of the federal ban, animal activists like Wayne Pacelle, founder of the Washington-based Animal Wellness Action, lamented the move.

Pacelle said he believes the estimate of cockfighting's economic impact for Puerto Rico is inflated and dismisses arguments that the activity is a tradition for the island.

"Just because people are enthusiastic about their sport does not mean it's part of their culture," he said. "There is something gratuitous about cockfighting that offends the sensibilities of people."

PETA Latino also rejected the governor's move, saying it defied modern standards of ethics and compassion. The group accused local government officials of protecting a "cruel industry."

Some Puerto Rico legislators believe the fight over the island's effort to avoid the federal ban will end up in court.

And many cockfighting enthusiasts insist a ban would only drive events underground again.

Cockfighters like Sigfredo Rivera vowed to keep participating as much as possible.

"You have no idea how depressed we were," he said of the federal ban. "I didn't quit, and I won't quit." AP

SAILING

Aussie Blair to share message on Climate Action Now

LISA Blair thought nature had thrown just about everything at her as she sailed the high seas.

That was until, somewhere between Australia and Indonesia, "I saw a kitchen sink float past."

She's been angered by the sheer volume of plastic and debris she's seen in the ocean at other times while standing watch, or at the helm.

"It's just disgusting to see," the 35-year-old Australian skipper said.

"At one point, in the middle of the Southern Ocean, with no land anywhere close by, the nearest piece of humanity was about 3,000

nautical miles away, there was a Styrofoam box floating past with a bird sitting on it," she added. "This is like one of the most raw, untouched environments on the planet, and there's rubbish."

Raising more awareness of environmental issues and encouraging more women to get into sailing will be two of Blair's main goals when she joins Jackie Parry aboard the d'Albora Climate Action Now to be the first all-female, two-person team to race in the 49th edition of the Melbourne to Hobart yacht race.

The race starts Dec. 27, the day after the traditional

Boxing Day start of the annual Sydney to Hobart blue water classic.

"It was really heart-breaking to see that," Blair said of the pollution. "I wanted to utilize the platform that I'd get through my sailing to encourage people to make positive change. Inspire the next generation to think about what we can do as individuals."

The 680-mile Sydney-Hobart tracks down the east coast of Australia and the southern island state of Tasmania. The 435-mile Melbourne-Hobart goes down the west coast of Tasmania, dips into the Southern Ocean, before win-

ding back up to the finish in the Derwent River.

Blair was the first woman to sail solo around Antarctica, and the first woman to sail solo and non-stop around Australia.

Blair was a latecomer to sailing, having grown up near the hinterland town of Nambour on Australia's Sunshine Coast, living on an off-grid property nestled into rain forest.

In her 20s, during university holidays, she got a job as the cook and cleaner on a charter yacht. She ended up doing the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race and after that she was hooked. AP

AP PHOTO



OPINION

Editorial

Paulo Coutinho



'POSTER BOY' TURNS 20

"Patriotic education lays a solid social and political foundation for Macau to implement the 'one country, two systems' principle and guides its practice to always proceed in the correct direction."

Xi Jinping, yesterday

Xi Jinping is in Macau for the 20th anniversary celebrations of the Macau Special Administrative Region, the "serious student" when compared to her sister SAR. The question is, what are we celebrating?

Mostly, economic achievements.

Macau is the world champion of gaming, of GDP per capita (almost top), and it is integrating quickly into the Greater Bay Area. A dream come true when it comes to Xinhua's perspective of the "one country, two systems" formula. "Macau has been transformed into a prosperous cosmopolis with a rapidly developing economy, modern infrastructures and a promising social welfare system."

The numbers are, indeed, staggering.

In two decades, GDP grew nine-fold from MOP55 billion to MOP444.7 billion, mean salary went from roughly 4,000 to 18,000 patacas, unemployment is down from 6.5% in the year 2000 to the most current 1.8% - a number, economists deem to be full employment. GDP per capita, in 2018, reached USD83,000, second only to Qatar.

However, economic indicators are far from being the ultimate measure of a healthy and happy society.

The late Robert Kennedy puts it better: "[GDP] measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile ... Measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country."

Probably - that might be a point of contention - prosperity and wealth matter more in Macau than anywhere else. In casinoland greed commands life. In business, in politics, even in crime.

We can see it in the rampant speculation on property prices. We can see it when lawmakers contest a minimum wage for domestic helpers and, some, propose a higher bus fare for working immigrants because they "occupy the locals' space." We can see it in the Polytec and Dore scandals.

Greed is Macau's 'middle name,' or to sweeten the pill, Macau is "interest-oriented."

The MSAR does have other attributes to show. Like the recent results of the PISA, school students' literacy assessment. Macau ranked third in the world. That's the bright side. If we look at the dark side, our students of that age group, 15-year olds, are among the unhappiest in the world, according to the same report. And PISA success is inversely related to the capacity for critical thinking, as most schools are "interest-oriented" and promote blind obedience instead of curious minds.

The "good student" identity of the MSAR stems from here and goes all the way to the dominant class and to the establishment, which usually shows a culture of reverence to higher powers.

What I fail to understand is why all those journalists from Hong Kong or abroad were barred at the border - in arrivals or departures halls. What do we have to hide, if it is all so rosy?

That is to say, I fail to understand that they pose a "security threat." What authorities here and in the mainland really fear is a change of narrative from the official and officious line. Because there are many that are discontented. To name a few reasons, the rising cost of living, the erosion of autonomy and of the rule of law, the increasing democratic deficit in daily life that is now worse than when colonial Portugal was in power; which is a historical contradiction.

WHEN XI MET LAM IN MACAU

Chinese President Xi Jinping met yesterday with Carrie Lam, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, amid the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the handover of Macau. The content of the discussion between Xi and Lam was not disclosed yesterday.

The embattled Hong Kong leader also joined a dinner last night where Xi Jinping delivered a speech stressing the importance of national se-



curity and the 'One Country, Two Systems' policy framework.

At the start of the week, Lam had traveled to Beijing to update Xi and other senior mainland officials on the situation in Hong Kong. Last weekend, Lam told the press in Hong Kong that the purpose of her visit was to "give a full account of what has happened in Hong Kong over the past year."

NEW SOUTH WALES

AUSTRALIA'S MOST POPULOUS STATE DECLARES WILDFIRE EMERGENCY



TRISTAN LAVALETTE, AP

AUSTRALIA'S most populous state of New South Wales declared a seven-day state of emergency Thursday as oppressive conditions fanned around 100 wildfires.

Around 2,000 firefighters were battling the blazes, half of which remain uncontrolled, with the support of U.S. and Canadian backup teams and personnel from the Australian Defence Force.

The last state of emergency ran for seven days in mid-November amid "catastrophic" fire risk and was the first implemented in New South Wales since 2013. Central Sydney reached a maximum of 39 degrees Celsius today, while outer suburbs scorched at 42 Celsius.

A statewide total fire ban announced on Tuesday will remain in place until midnight on Saturday.

Around 3 million hectares of land has burnt nationwide during a torrid past few months, with six people killed and more than 800 homes destroyed.

The annual Australian fire season, which peaks during the Southern Hemisphere summer, started early after an unusually warm and dry winter.

New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian said

authorities were concerned with the unpredictable conditions.

"With extreme wind conditions, extreme hot temperatures, we have a good idea, a good sense, of where the most concerning areas are, but again when you've got those turbulent conditions, embers and spot fires can occur very unpredictably," she told reporters.

Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimons said five 100-member "strike teams" were on standby to deploy to the most dangerous fires.

3 million hectares of land burnt nationwide in the past few months, with 6 people killed and more than 800 homes destroyed

Sydney's air pollution levels on Thursday ranged from poor to hazardous. During the past month, hazardous smoke has often blanketed Australia's most populous city and made its iconic skyline barely visible.

Hospitals have recorded a 10% increase in visits from patients with respiratory conditions during the past week.

The Australian Medical Association has recommended people keep hydrated, cool and out of the sun.

Wildfires are also burning in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

The Bureau of Meteorology said Tuesday was the hottest day on record in Australia with an average of 40.9 Celsius nationwide.

Perth, the capital on the west coast, is experiencing its hottest December with average temperatures for the month at 36 Celsius and seven degrees above the mean.

Adelaide, in the southeast, is currently experiencing a four-day heatwave culminating in a sizzling 45 Celsius yesterday.

The unprecedented conditions has reignited debate on whether Australia's conservative government has taken enough action on climate change. Australia is the world's largest exporter of coal and liquefied natural gas.

Protesters on Thursday camped outside Prime Minister Scott Morrison's Sydney residence demanding urgent action on climate change.

Morrison, who is currently on holidays, conceded last week that "climate change along with many other factors" contributed to the wildfires.

Cooler temperatures are forecast today before conditions worsen Saturday. AP

Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said yesterday that he has become the victim in the alleged abduction of a Swiss Embassy employee who was reportedly threatened and sexually abused to disclose embassy-related information. Rajapaksa said reports of the alleged abduction appeared in foreign media before the facts were established, and critics accused his government of carrying it out.

Sudan Amnesty International yesterday urged Sudan's new transitional government to deliver on popular demands for sweeping change as the country marked the first anniversary of mass protests that led to the ouster of former president and longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir.



Algeria's new president pledged yesterday to introduce presidential term limits and bring more young people into politics, as he tries to win over a pro-democracy movement that boycotted his election and forced out his long-serving predecessor. The gas-rich North African nation inaugurated Abdelmadjid Tebboune as president yesterday in a pomp-filled ceremony.



Russia President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that U.S. President Donald Trump was impeached for "far-fetched" reasons, calling the move by Democrats a continuation of their fight against the Republican leader. "The party that lost the (2016) election, the Democratic Party, is trying to achieve results by other means," Putin said at his annual news conference in Moscow.

HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Tuesday December 24. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.