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HO IAT SENG PLEDGES FURTHER COOPERATION WITH MACAU'S TALENT SCHOOL: JINAN UNIVERSITY IN NEARBY GUANGDONG PROVINCE P3



India A death warrant was issued yesterday for the four men convicted in the 2012 gang rape and murder of a young woman on a New Delhi bus that galvanized protests across India and brought global attention to the country's sexual violence epidemic. A New Delhi court scheduled the hangings for Jan. 22, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.



South Korea President Moon Jae-in yesterday said he hopes to see North Korean leader Kim Jong Un fulfill a promise to visit the South this year and called for the Koreas to end a prolonged freeze in bilateral relations. In his New Year's speech, Moon also reaffirmed his government's commitment to resume inter-Korean economic activities that have been held back by U.S.-led sanctions imposed on the North over its nuclear weapons and missiles program.



Japan Tokyo prosecutors obtained an arrest warrant yesterday for former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn's wife on suspicion of perjury, adding to the couple's legal troubles in the country where he once was revered as a star executive. More on p13

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LIFTING SMALL BUSINESSES

ECONOMY CHIEF COMMENDS SUPPORT RENDERED TO SMES BY THE MACAO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE P5



'ROUGHLY FLAT' GAMING REVENUE DASHES HOPES FOR JANUARY BOUNCE P7



WUHAN FLU SCARE GIVES CARRIE LAM BREATHING SPACE P9

ELLA LEI ASKS ABOUT URBAN PLANNING

Lawmaker Ella Lei has asked the local government about the urban master plan. Lei accused Macau's urban planning draft process of being slow, specifically accusing the local government of allowing unreasonable projects to be approved in the absence of an urban planning law. She further noted that these projects had damaged the hills, natural views, and living environments of nearby residential communities. The local government has been asked to complete detailed urban planning legislation as soon as possible to determine the land use of each district, coordinate the urban spatial layout and to accomplish other goals for building a liveable city. In addition, Lei asked whether the government would consider building a coastal "green corridor" approximately 17 kilometers long by using recovered lands.

LAWMAKER DEMANDS NO MORE CHANGES TO LRT ROUTE

Lawmaker Lei Chan U has demanded that the Macau SAR government stop changing route plans for the Light Rapid Transit (LRT). In 2003, the local government proposed the introduction of a new urban mass transportation system. In his interpellation to the government, Lei remarked that after 18 years, the former Transportation Infrastructure Office (GIT)'s latest LRT network plan is uncertain. He questioned when the SAR government would formulate clear medium-term and long-term plans for the LRT network so that its routes would no longer be changed so frequently. The former GIT's functions are currently spread across several different departments. Lei asked if this situation would affect the future development of the LRT.

LONG-DELAYED KÁ HÓ PRISON CONSTRUCTION STILL YEARS AWAY

THE director of the Correctional Services Bureau (DSC), Cheng Fong Meng, reported on the progress of the construction of Ká Hó Prison yesterday on the sidelines of a celebration for the upcoming Chinese Lunar New Year.

Currently, the construction company is in the third phase of building the new prison, which is expected to be completed in another 693 working days, or nearly two years.

The construction of Ká Hó Prison started in 2010 and was scheduled to complete in 2014. In 2016, two years after it was initially scheduled to finish, the first phase, which consisted of the watch tower, walls and other facilities, was completed. The second phase of construction started in 2016 and was completed in 2018.

The first, second and the third phases costed 140 million, 1.05 billion, and 739 million patacas respectively.

The fourth phase has not yet gone to public tender and so its budget remains unknown. The fourth phase will consist of the installation of a security system, an internet system and a telecommunications system.



Despite having been under construction for nearly a decade, the prison's completion date is still unclear.

The DSC director explained that construction delays were caused by changes to the design as the result of the unstated geographical features of the land plot where the new prison would be located. These changes, in turn, meant another round of approval procedures was required from the land and public affairs authority.

Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak remarked yesterday that due to the prison's capacity issues, the security authority has

faced added pressure and concerns whenever criminals are arrested.

Wong said that he and his colleagues were deeply concerned with the delays.

"We [Wong's Secretariat] and the Correctional Services Bureau are more anxious than other people," said Wong, as cited by public broadcaster TDM. "Firstly, it is about the environment of the inmates. This environment is important for inmates' daily lives. Secondly, it is important for the workers in the Correctional Services Bureau. Especially when we have to consider if there are [enough] spaces

for the convicts. Although it is not our biggest concern, this factor affects our law enforcement."

Previously, lawmaker Ella Lei had accused the contractor of poor design and accused the government of improper monitoring of the contractor.

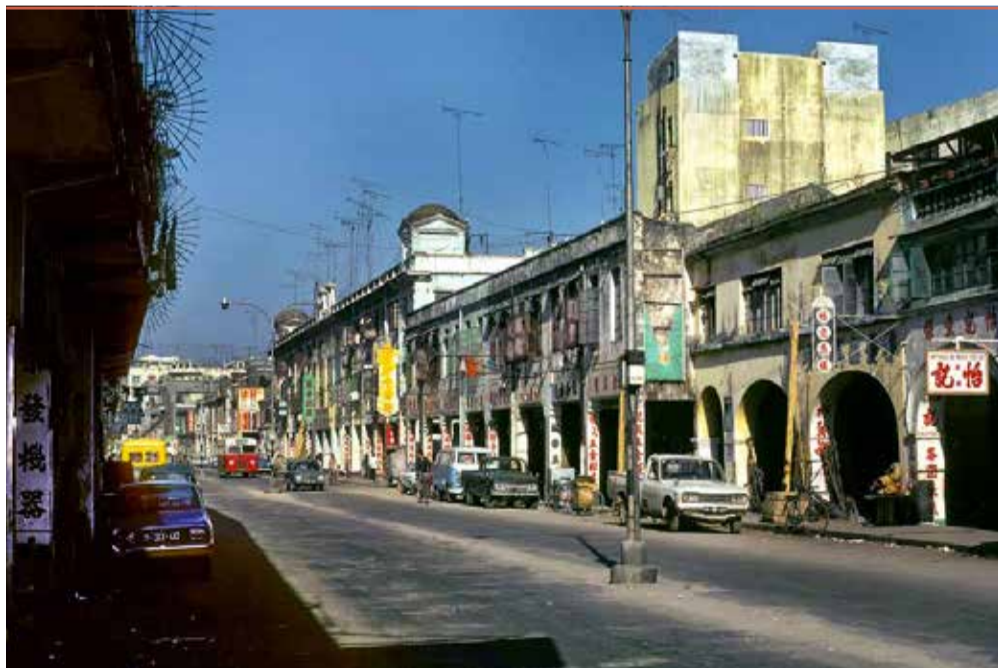
As of December 31, 2019, Coloane prison held 1,636 inmates, 821 of whom were mainlanders and 420 were Macau residents. Some 1,435 were male inmates and 201 were female.

The prison is close to its maximum capacity. The DSC has temporarily converted some training facilities into prison cells. JZ

MEMORY LANE

Karsten Petersen

MDT/Renato Marques



These two photographs show a snapshot of how Rua do Almirante Sergio, an important road in Macau's Outer Harbor district, has changed over the course of nearly half a century. Its charming and lively appearance in this 1973 historical photo depicts just how focused the area used to be on commerce. Although the half-kilometer street has seen drastic changes, bringing its urban development on par with newer parts of the peninsula, some of its historic architecture has been preserved, as is the case with many streets in this part of town. DB

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Light rail incident reports to be managed by operating firm

JULIE ZHU & ANTHONY LAM

THE operating company behind the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) service will be primarily responsible for releasing incident reports in future, Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak announced yesterday.

Wong's comments come after several public entities were criticized for the manner in which they released information on three minor incidents on the LRT last month.

The Light Rapid Transit began operating on December 10 last year. In that same month, the sys-

tem recorded three minor incidents, with the third one causing the service to be suspended for one and a half hours due to an electricity supply malfunction.

During the service suspension period on December 29, the Fire Services Bureau (HB) was called to assist an elderly passenger.

However, neither the HB nor the LRT company informed the media about this incident.

Wong explained that he was not in Macau that day and that he

had instructed his subordinates to answer the media's questions about the incident.

Future incidents, provided they do not involve injuries, deaths, or large-scale chaos, will be reported solely by the LRT company

After this incident, Wong noted that the HB acknowledged the flaws in how it reported the case and that it had already made im-

provements.

The security authority head added that the HB receives approximately 120 calls daily regarding similar cases. If the HB reported all these cases to the media, it would require much more manpower and material resources, making it not feasible for such reporting to take place.

According to Wong, future LRT incidents involving only the LRT facility - provided they do not involve injuries, deaths, or large-scale chaos - will be reported by the LRT company.

Incidents on the LRT in which the HB participates will be reported by the fire services authority.

However, the plan to have the LRT operating company largely responsible for dispensing such information - as opposed to the HB - will hurt the government's credibility, according to one local commentator.

In his interview with local Chinese newspaper Macao Daily News, local commentator Johnson Ian suggested that a uniform release by the LRT Company would give an implication to the society that government is hiding something. He thinks it is not worth damaging the image of the government.

Ian said that the HB has previously notified the media about less severe problems, such as those occurring in elevators in which nobody was injured.

As the notification mechanism is a symbol of trust between the government and the people, the change to have the HB no longer report such incidents will hurt the government's image.

The most worrying point for Ian is that it can become a widespread practice in the government. He worries that this will set a precedent and that the HB will stop issuing releases about other incidents in future.

Wong reiterated yesterday that the security secretariat attaches great importance to media relations.

The security secretariat will enhance inspections in various locations to ensure safety and security during the holiday season. It will also conduct more promotional campaigns regarding crime prevention aimed at non-local workers and university students.

HIGHER EDUCATION

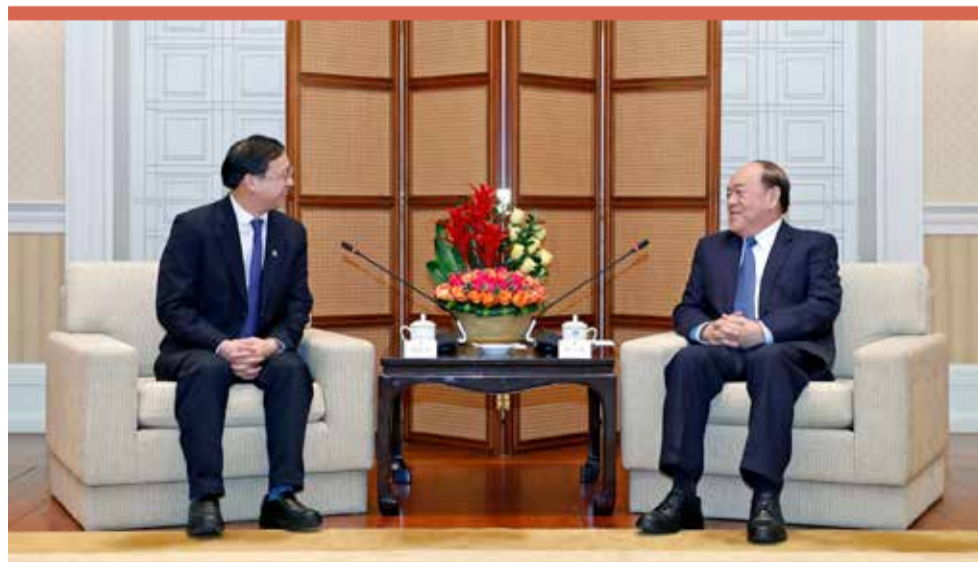
Ho Iat Seng discusses further cooperation with Jinan University

JULIE ZHU

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng met with a delegation from Jinan University on Monday to discuss matters relating to the development of higher education and the training of talented people in Macau.

Ho endorsed the university's reputation and importance in mainland China, remarking that the school has trained many talented people who love Macau and the country.

Ho noted that in 2018, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, Xi Jinping, visited Jinan University and endorsed the university's characteristics and strengths, also setting out a direction for its future development.



Macau's Chief Executive hopes Jinan University alumni will continue to play an important role in the future development of Macau.

Jinan University is a pu-

blic research university based in Tianhe District, Guangzhou, and is one of the oldest such institutions in the country.

During the meeting, both parties agreed that as

the Greater Bay Area continues to develop, Jinan University and Macau's universities will certainly come closer to cooperate.

Currently, Jinan University has 40,000 full-time

students, of which 27,800 are undergraduates and 12,200 are graduate students. 13,700 students come from outside of mainland China, many of whom originate from Taiwan, Macau, and Hong Kong.

The school plans to further expand the enrolment scale of Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and international students. It will also aim to increase the proportion of non-mainland students from the current 33% to 40%.

The university's rector, Song Xianzhong, reported that the university currently has approximately 2,200 Macau students, and over 20,000 Macau residents have graduated from the school.

Song said that Macau students and Macau gra-

duates are "excellent" and are making "important contributions" to the development of Macau.

In 2016, Jinan University drew in the attention of the Macau public when the Macau Foundation announced it was donating 100 million yuan to Jinan University to coincide with the institution's 110th anniversary. The local government explained that the Macau SAR maintains strong links with mainland and wants to give back to the motherland through contributions to its educational development.

The local government said that such donations are an obligation of Macau, as Jinan University has educated a large number of people in the SAR.

GOV'T TO CONSOLIDATE CHARGES FOR NOTARY SERVICES

THE various existing fees and charges for notary services will be compiled into a single charge to be posted on the website of the Legal Affairs Bureau (DSAJ).

This is one of several measures the bureau has proposed to refine and safeguard the quality of notary services in Macau.

Its first action will be to tighten the supervision of the practices of private notaries, particularly with regard to their capabilities and conduct. The bureau will conduct spot checks on private notaries to review their effectiveness and efficiency, and the condition of their facilities and equipment.

In order to staff the additional checks, the DSAJ will need to hire extra people, or "strengthen the human resources in this aspect," as the bureau noted in a statement.

The bureau's second initiative is ensuring that users are able to access a consolidated charge for notary services. A dedicated page will be put up on the bureau's website with a list of all the fees and charges for notary services handled by government registries,



An inauguration ceremony for private notaries

public notary offices and private notaries. By doing this, the bureau believes it will be easier for users to budget for the services they need.

In addition to the disclosure of the proposed policies, 13 private notaries have recently been inaugurated. They join the 77 notaries already practicing, taking the to-

tal number of private notaries in Macau to 90.

Macau started its private notary mechanism in the 1990s. According to the Legal Affairs Bureau, the system is unique to the world. The obligations and duties of private notaries are in no way different from those of a public notary.

It is believed that with the addition of the private notaries, pressure on public notary services will ease.

As a witness at a recent inauguration ceremony for new notaries, DSAJ director Liu Dexue pledged that his bureau would continue to monitor the quality of private notaries. **AL**

EXTERNAL LOANS DROPPED 3.7%

DOMESTIC loans to the private sector grew 0.4% from last month to 516.5 billion patacas, whereas external loans fell 3.7% to 551.5 billion patacas, according to data issued by the Monetary Authority of Macao.

As a result, total loans to the private sector went down by 1.8% from the previous month to 1,067.9 billion patacas.

The shares of total loans denominated in MOP, HKD, RMB and USD were 17.4%, 48.9%, 5.6% and 25.1% respectively.

Meanwhile, resident deposits declined by 0.2% from the preceding month to 656.1 billion patacas, and non-resident deposits dropped 0.5% to MOP241.4 billion.

Public sector deposits in the banking sector decreased 1.2% to 243.8 billion patacas. As a result, total deposits in the banking sector fell 0.4% from a month earlier to 1,141.3 billion patacas.

The shares of total deposits denominated in MOP, HKD, RMB and USD were 19%, 48.2%, 4% and 26.1% respectively. **LV**

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Economy Secretary commends Macao Chamber's SME initiative



SECRETARY for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong has commended the Macao Chamber of Commerce's efforts to cultivate small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Lei made the comment during his first official visit to the Chamber after assuming office.

The Chamber's cooperation with the six gaming concessionaires over their SME procurement programs aligns with the government's policy of developing the economy with the lead of the tourism industry, stressed the secretary.

During the visit, the two parties also discussed topics such as the general business environment, labor relations and human resources. The two sides promised to continue to maintain close ties and work together to better solve problems in the local economy.

Lei emphasized that the

support offered by the government to local SMEs will continue and strengthen when necessary. New policies to support small businesses will require the government to listen to the public in order to better understand their actual needs, said the secretary.

The local government will also closely monitor changes in the global economy, said Lei, and study how they affect SMEs in the city.

Lei's team will strive to prepare for any negative impact on Macau, its economy and its enterprises brought about by fluctuations in the external environment. Special attention should be paid to aspects such as their working capital, which might need to be supported should major fluctuations in the economy occur.

In the meantime, the secretary said that the departments under his purview will work hard to optimize

the business environment, improve relevant laws and regulations, and manage employee-employer relations.

He also pledged to strive toward the diversification of the city's economy. One component of this will be the further economic integration of the territory into the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area.

The secretary expressed his gratitude for the Chamber's valuable input, which will be taken as an important consideration in governance.

Ma Iao Lai, President of the Chamber, noted that Macau's economy began to decline in September 2019. In particular, the gaming, tourism and retail industries have been affected to various degrees. It is thought that the economic contraction will persist for some time.

The Chamber will remain supportive of the SAR government to stabilize the economy and employment situation, strengthen the confidence of investors and business people, and ensure sound economic development. Ma also hopes the government can help to remedy labor shortages in the market, among other pressing issues faced by local businesses. **AL**

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GAMING

Nomura estimates January GGR will be 'roughly flat'

NOMURA banking group's Instinet LLC predicts that the city's casino gross gaming revenue will be "roughly flat" in January, as total revenue for the first five days of the month was down 4% year-on-year, based on the month-to-date comparison with January 2019.

In a note seen by GGRAsia, Nomura analysts Harry Curtis, Daniel Adam and Brian Dobson said that Macau's average daily gross gaming revenue (GGR) for the start of January was around 820 million patacas, against a daily average for December of 737 million patacas – growth of 11%.

"By segment, we estimate that average daily mass reve-

nues are up approximately 5% to 7% year-on-year," the analysts said of 2020 performance so far.

The Nomura team added that VIP volumes for the first five days of this year were tracking "approximately 15% to 20% lower" when compared the same period last year.

The city's GGR per day for the first two months of the year is forecast to improve by 4% to 5% compared to December, according to the analysts.

"However, we expect somewhat better year-on-year performance in January than we do in February this year," the team stated.

Similar to Nomura, brokerage Sanford C. Bernstein Ltd said that their team also estimates

an average daily rate of 820 million patacas for the first five days of the month, with a total estimate of 4.1 billion patacas from January 1 to 5.

The figures were said to be "helped by improved demand," following the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping during the city's handover celebration.

Previously, Sanford C. Bernstein and JP Morgan said that the president's official visit had already affected the city's visitation and gaming results.

Bernstein remarked in a note last month 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)."

Bernstein noted in its estimate that the combined GGR for January and February would be between 1% down and 2% up year-on-year.

"One key driver of the January result will be how the visa constraints that were in place in November and December are being loosened," noted analysts Vitaly Umansky, Eunice Lee and Kelsey Zhu.

"If we see continued tight visa controls in place, the GGR impact will be more negative than we currently forecast," they added.

In December, Macau's GGR slipped for the third straight month, rounding out the year with a 3.4% contraction in the worst annual decline since 2015. LV

HEALTH BUREAU APPROVES MORE CASINO SMOKING LOUNGES

THE Health Bureau (SSM) approved 11 casino smoking lounges in December 2019, increasing the number of new-style smoking lounges in the city's gaming venues to 642.

Last year, the SSM received applications from 35 casinos to license 677 smoking rooms. Of these, 642 smoking rooms in 34 casinos were authorized, according to a report issued by the health authority.

With regard to compliance, the SSM and the Gambling Inspection and Coordination Bureau conducted 1,187 inspections of casinos in Macau.

Following these inspections, 1,375 individuals were prosecuted for smoking in prohibited places, the highest figure among other types of establishments, including parks and leisure areas (876) and shopping centers (602).

In December 2019, the SSM reported the 128 sites which had the highest incidence of offenses. Some 470 inspections were carried out and 108 charges were issued at these sites.

According to the SSM, the bureau has adopted different strategies and carried out over 334,000 inspections of establishments in 2019, an average of 917 inspections daily. This represented a 2.1% reduction in inspections compared to the same period in 2018.

In 2019, there were 5,337 infractions, of which 5,311 were related to people smoking in prohibited areas. Twenty-eight cases were related to the use of electronic cigarettes.

Thirty percent of the fines (1,593) were imposed on Macau residents, while two-thirds (3,524) were imposed on tourists. Meanwhile, 195 offenses were committed by non-resident workers, equal to about 3.7%. LV

ARTS

Second phase of 'The Long Journey' exhibition on display

THE second phase of "The Long Journey" exhibition series, "The Long Journey: The Forbidden City and Maritime Silk Road" and "Cultural and Creative Products from the Palace Museum and Education Area" will be open to the public from this Saturday.

Organized by the Macao Museum of Art (MAM) and the Palace Museum, the

two exhibitions will lead visitors to reflect on the boom in cultural exchange which occurred between the East and the West.

The exhibition, located at the Exhibition Gallery of MAM, is divided into three sections: "Crossing the Oceans," "Bringing Western Influence to the East" and "Eclecticism." The exhibition features nearly 150 exquisite cul-

tural relics from the Palace Museum's collection.

These cultural relics include porcelain, scientific instruments, timepieces, everyday items, enamel pieces, calligraphy, paintings and textiles related to the Maritime Silk Road.

According to a statement issued by the Cultural Affairs Bureau, these cultural relics are mostly tributes presented by fo-

reign envoys.

The gifts and objects were brought by the Western missionaries, while the calligraphy and paintings were produced in the court by these missionaries.

These relics are said to highlight the achievements of the Ming and Qing courts' cultural exchange and their interactions with the outside world, sugges-

ive of Macau's role as a former international entrepot in the Far East.

"The Long Journey" exhibition recalls notable pieces from the Forbidden City series that have been shown over the past two decades since the establishment of the MAM. "A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains 3.0," was the first phase in the series and presented a dynamic

digital scroll.

Aiming to serve public interests in their upcoming exhibitions, MAM is hosting a number of preliminary activities in early January. These include exhibitions such as "The Mystery behind Sundial Timekeeping," "Timepiece Craftsmanship" and "Western Influence on the Qing Dynasty Court Painting." LV



The Singapore Flyer (left) and Marina Bay Sands Hotel stand illuminated in Singapore

HK PARENTS EYE SINGAPORE SCHOOLS AS PROTESTS LINGER

FARIS MOKHTAR &
YOOJUNG LEE

NORTH London Collegiate School has been educating girls in the British capital since the days of Queen Victoria. These days, it's looking further afield - to Singapore. And, as chance would have it, the timing seems impeccable.

The private school is seeing a rush of interest in its new outpost from anxious expats in Hong Kong, who are sizing up options for their children given the running protests in the former British colony. One international school in the city-state said applications from Hong Kong have increased by about one-quarter.

Singapore has plenty of advantages for expats. The city-state's political stability, high education standards, green spaces, low crime and efficient infrastructure make it appealing for those considering a change of scenery.

"Singapore has a sound reputation internationally in terms of livability," said Jason Tan, an associate professor at Nanyang Technological University's National Institute of Education. "With the current situation in Hong Kong, families are looking to move elsewhere."

Months-long pro-democracy protests that show no sign of ending have disrupted the Asian financial center, crippling its

economy and seriously hurting the retail and hospitality sectors. Goldman Sachs Group Inc. estimated in October that as much as \$4 billion may have flowed to Singapore due to the turmoil, while real estate brokers from Canada to Australia say they're seeing a surge in interest from people looking to relocate.

Since August, when the violence intensified, school placement consultancy ITS Education Asia in Hong Kong has received four inquiries a week on average about schools in Singapore.

SCHOOL TALKS

Parents are "worried about their children traveling to school and how safe it is to be traveling on public transport," director Anne Murphy said.

Murphy, who is based in Hong Kong, was invited by four financial companies to conduct talks on Singapore's international schools because employees have been offered the option of relocating.

While she wasn't able to disclose the name the firms, she said the talks focused on the choices of international schools available, admissions process and waiting lists. Each was attended by around 12 to 20 parents, most either lawyers, traders or fund managers. The majority were expats, including American, Indian, British and French nationals.

"Even those without Singapo-

re visas were accepted through our help," Murphy said, adding ITS often recommended schools that could sponsor a student with a guardian visa.

Students need to be formally accepted by a school before they can apply and obtain a student visa. They need not necessarily be accompanied by a working adult. But under Singapore immigration laws, parents accompanying a child studying in the city-state can obtain a visa or what's called a long term visit pass, which is valid for up to two years. The visa can be applied for by either the mother or grandmother of the child.

STUDENT PASS

According to the Ministry of Manpower's website, the guardian isn't allowed to work during their first year in Singapore. That's to encourage them to spend more time helping their child adjust to Singapore's education system.

Murphy said that parents she's worked with were keen on schools that also help to apply for a student pass. This is less of a hassle and means families can move to Singapore quicker, she said. ITS assisted one family get their six-year-old child, who had a Hong Kong passport, accepted into two schools via this method.

"The parents chose a school that had an immediate place for January and the student pass was issued within six weeks after

the offer from the school," she said.

A six-day shutdown of schools in November, prompted by fresh levels of violence, is another reason parents are casting their eyes abroad. They're angry their children were unable to travel to school, despite living nearby. Especially when school fees have burnt a small hole in their pockets.

Stamford American School Hong Kong charges about HKD178,000 (\$22,850) a year for students up to grade five. That jumps to almost HKD200,000 for grades six to nine. Hong Kong International School charges around HKD216,000 for younger students and up to HKD245,950 for children in grades six to 12.

These costs are "quite extravagant and significant if your child is unable to attend school," Murphy said.

NOT CHEAP

During the November shutdown, the Singapore American School received inquiries from families wanting to enroll their children as soon as possible, according to director of admissions Treena Casey. Others were inquiring about getting their children in the door from August, the start of the new school year.

But the move isn't always smooth, or cheap.

Most of Singapore's international schools have long wai-

ting lists and prices rival Hong Kong. At the Singapore American School, students who are non-U.S. citizens cost as much as SGD54,800 (\$40,620) a year depending on the grade. The Canadian International School in Singapore charges up to SGD40,900.

Casey said the school had witnessed a 25% jump in applications from Hong Kong but couldn't say how many would be joining in the new year. "We've tried to accommodate where we can. We have an extensive wait list," she said.

The French School of Singapore has seven new students starting this month, according to communications and events director Sebastien Barnard. That's more than the school would normally expect, although it's not considered "a particularly large migration for us," he said.

The Canadian International School's head of communications and marketing, Michelle Sharp, said there's been an increase in both inquiries and applications, but couldn't share figures. Spaces are extremely limited for a January start, with wait lists at most grade levels.

North London Collegiate School in England is opening its branch in August. It started accepting enrollments in October and to date, about 12% of inquiries have come from Hong Kong, said Vandana Rao, director of community relations.

"It's important to find schools that are the right fit and affordability is a factor," Tan said. The high costs in Singapore "could deter Hong Kong parents from relocating." **BLOOMBERG**

BLOOMBERG



SHELLY BANJO &
NATALIE LUNG

HONG KONG

Flu scare gives Carrie Lam a diversion from protests

FEARS of a public health outbreak stemming from a surge of mysterious pneumonia cases in mainland China are giving Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam a chance to shift public attention away from the protests that have beguiled her government for the past seven months.

"We won't be negligent. We have already taken appropriate, comprehensive and relatively strict response measures as soon as possible," Lam said yesterday, spending nearly half of a 33-minute press briefing on the issue ahead of her first Executive Council meeting of the new year.

Lam devoted her opening comments to addressing the government's response measures to the pneumonia outbreak. She didn't use the remarks to address

a mass march that brought hundreds of thousands of protesters onto the streets on New Year's Day.

She said it was her duty as chief executive to set the city on the "right track" and restore order, but focused on what her government was doing to stay ahead of a potentially devastating public health crisis. Lam also warned residents to be cautious of false information spreading on social media about the disease.

"I urge the public not to believe in rumors and not to share social media posts that contain the ru-

mors so as not to misinform more people," she said. "It has been worrying to see the large amount of fake information spread on the Internet, and it's unfavorable to the city's efforts to fight fake news about the epidemic."

When pressed by journalists, Lam stuck to her stance on refusing an independent inquiry into the behavior of her police force during the course of the pro-democracy movement, and called the protests "heart wrenching."

Public hospitals in Hong Kong have reported at least 21 cases of

people who presented with fever, respiratory infection or pneumonia symptoms and had visited the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the lung infection originated, according to its Hospital Authority. Authorities have found no discernible link between these cases and the pneumonia cluster in Wuhan.

Hong Kongers - and their government - have been on high alert regarding communicable diseases since the 2003 outbreak of SARS, the severe acute respiratory disease that originated in China's

Guangdong province in 2002 and ripped through the financial hub the following year. The virus impacted nearly 2,000 people and killed nearly 300 in Hong Kong, crippling the city's tourism and real estate industries and dealing a major blow to the economy.

Hong Kong outlined a plan to deal with the Wuhan pneumonia outbreak last week, raising classification of the response level as "serious" - the second-highest scale of action in its three-tier system.

The city has already been plagued by a steep drop in tourists from mainland China and other parts of the world, stemming from clashes between demonstrators and police that often turned violent.

Visitors to Hong Kong fell 36% in the second half of 2019 from the year before, tourism board Chairman Pang Yiu-Kai told Bloomberg Television yesterday. **BLOOMBERG**

HONG KONG

Landlords face tough year as protests dent rents

SHAWNA KWAN

LANDLORDS in Hong Kong, a city with some of the highest commercial rents in the world, are staring down the barrel of a tough year.

Anti-government protests that started in mid-2019 have taken their toll on shop and office owners. Large-scale protests in popular shopping districts and a slump in tourists have made it increasingly difficult for retailers.

According to the Hong Kong Retail Management Association, more than 5,600 jobs could be lost and thousands of stores may shut over the coming six months. That's already impacted the value of retail-leasing transactions,

which dropped 26% in the second half versus the same period of 2018, data from Centaline Property Agency Ltd. show.

"Retailers have become very cautious," said Marcos Chan, head of research for Hong Kong at CBRE Group Inc. "There won't be many expansions in the coming year."

International brands have been scaling back their operations since the protests began in June. Luxury fashion label Prada SpA decided not to renew its largest store in the Causeway Bay area in August, the South China Morning Post reported. The landlord later slashed the rent by 44% to entice tenants.

Folli Follie, a brand of Greek firm FF Group,

closed one of its shops in Central in December ahead of the lease's expiration and the asking price has since been chopped by 40%. LVMH, the world's largest luxury conglomerate, plans to close a Times Square mall store in Causeway Bay after its request for lower rent was refused.

A slump in shop rents could threaten the city's status as the world's priciest retail-rental market. Causeway Bay had the highest rents in the world in the third quarter, at \$2,544 per square foot a year, figures from Cushman & Wakefield Plc show.

Knight Frank LLP estimates rental costs for street shops in prime shopping areas will decline by 15% or more in 2020 as

a result of ongoing social unrest.

The possible outbreak of a mysterious pneumonia may also weigh on the retail industry. Public hospitals have reported at least 21 cases of people who presented with fever, respiratory infection or pneumonia symptoms and had visited the city of Wuhan in China, where the lung infection originated.

Some see the nadir as an opportunity. Citigroup Inc. said in a Jan. 2 note that it's now bullish on Hong Kong retail landlords.

"Hong Kong retail sales have already seen the worst year-on-year performance in August to November, driven by es-

calating social unrest together with a weakening yuan during the period," analysts led by Ken Yeung wrote. "With the situation now stabilizing, we expect sequential improvements on retail sales from January onwards."

The investment bank isn't so bullish on Hong Kong's office sector, saying that segment of the market is "just at the early stage of what seems to be a two-year downcycle." Its top sell is Hongkong Land Holdings Ltd. while it downgraded Champion REIT to neutral from buy.

Rents in Central, an area of Hong Kong that's home to many international businesses, are most vulnerable due to a slide in demand from Chinese

companies and competition from other office hubs like Singapore, Tokyo and Shanghai.

"We expect Central office rentals will be down by 10% per annum over the next two years," Yeung said.

Chinese firms with office space in Hong Kong have also been reluctant to expand in the face of U.S.-China trade tensions, and that's weighed on rents since at least late 2018, according to Chris Currie, head of Hong Kong office services at Colliers International Group Inc.

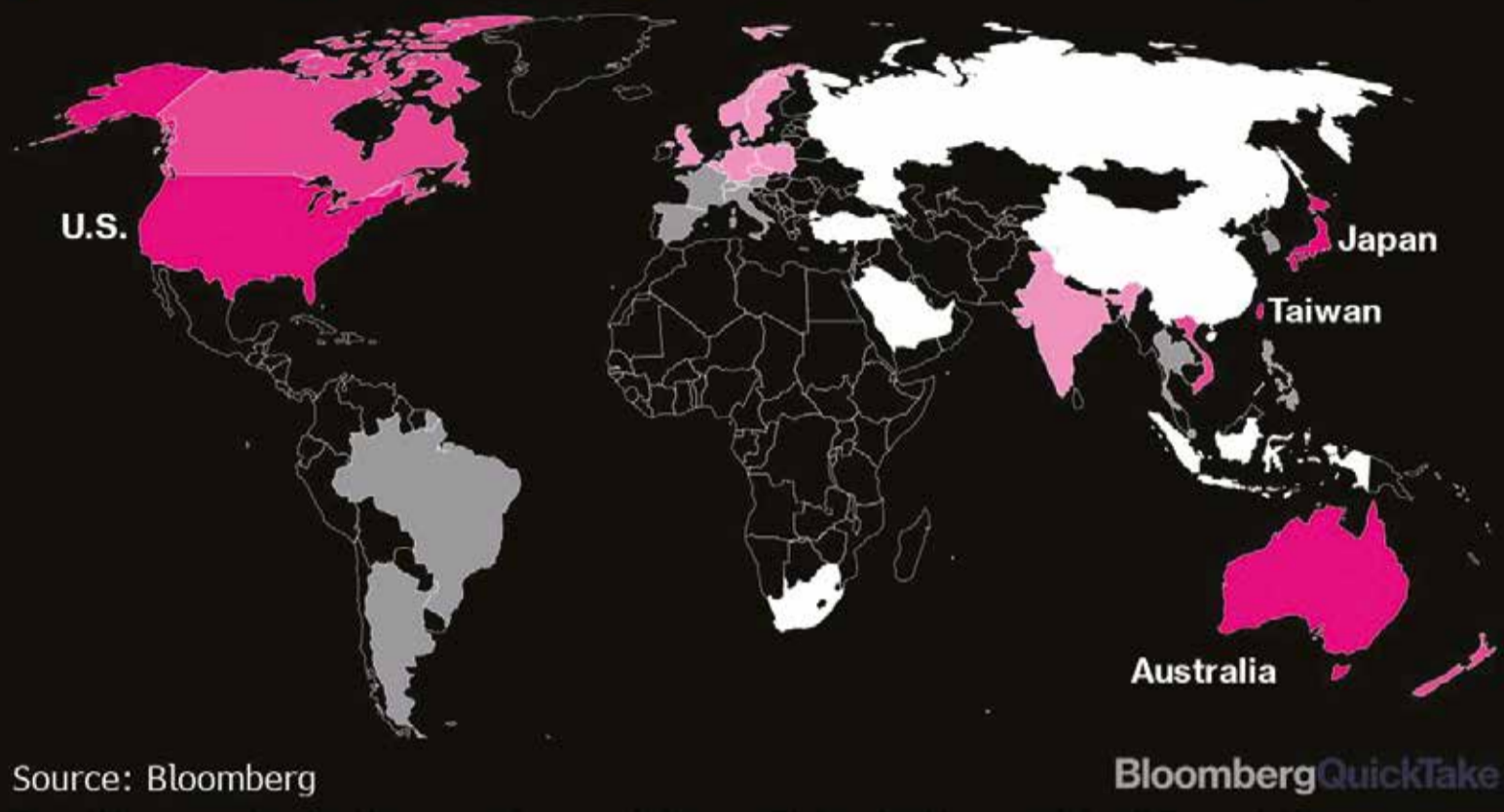
Colliers expects grade A office rents in Central, the world's most expensive prime office market, to drop by 13% in 2020.

"Companies are hesitant to commit," said Currie, adding that if the protests continue, the first six months of 2020 will be even more difficult. **BLOOMBERG**

Technology Gets Political

Position on including equipment from China's Huawei in 5G mobile networks, as of Dec. 17, 2019

■ Ban in effect ■ Unlikely to use ■ On the fence ■ Unlikely to ban ■ Using Huawei



TRUMP'S BLACKLISTING OF HUAWEI IS FAILING TO HALT ITS GROWTH

IN the days after the U.S. government said it would bar Huawei Technologies Co. from buying vital American components, the Chinese company's founder, Ren Zhengfei, pulled together an emergency meeting of his top lieutenants at headquarters in Shenzhen. In a large conference room, the billionaire asked for a report from the head of each business unit on how they would be affected by the Trump administration's ban, which blocks U.S. companies from supplying everything from semiconductors to software. Their assessments were dire. "We thought we had lost the world," said Will Zhang, who attended as president of corporate strategy.

It turns out they were far too pessimistic. Huawei recorded an 18% rise in sales to a new high of 850 billion yuan (\$122 billion) last year, although that was down from about 23% in the first half and missed its own internal targets. Company projections for 2020 are similar. Huawei holds the enviable position of being the world's largest supplier of communications equipment to telecom operators and the largest smartphone maker globally after Samsung Electronics Co.

Huawei isn't just surviving; it's actually thriving in some areas. The question is for how long. Last week, executives warned in a New Year's memo that sur-

vival itself is a priority, urging employees to brace for a difficult 2020. Inventories stockpiled months in advance of the May blacklisting are drying up. The company can no longer count on momentum alone to drive the business, Rotating Chairman Eric Xu warned.

How Huawei survived the U.S. blacklisting could prove a case study in unintended consequences and a vast shift underway in global IT production. Huawei is a big customer for all of its suppliers, and a few actually cut ties after the blacklisting. Others lost out to rivals in Japan and South Korea. But American companies with extensive global operations, including Microsoft Corp. and chipmaker Micron Technology Inc., found legal ways around the ban, leaning on production outside the U.S. so Huawei-destined products wouldn't be hit. Huawei itself put armies of engineers to work redesigning products to reduce its reliance on American parts.

Trump's attack also had surprising implications for Huawei's brand. A few countries, like Australia, agreed with the U.S. president's assessment and barred its equipment from their networks. But in the rest of the world, Huawei's name recognition soared. After laboring in obscurity for decades, the maker of digital piping was suddenly front-page

news everywhere. Beyond the U.S. and its close allies, telecom operators wanted to find out what all the fuss was about. In China, consumers and carriers rallied to Huawei's side in response to what they saw as unfair persecution, driving a sales boom.

The Trump sanctions in some ways validated Huawei's ability to develop cutting-edge technology, from fifth-generation networking gear to AI chips. Yesterday, the new head of Canada's biggest telecom firm, BCE Inc., became the latest to publicly endorse the Chinese company's gear.

"It's quite a stupid thing the U.S. is doing," Zhang said, a key architect of Huawei's global ambitions and efforts to mitigate the impact of American sanctions. "They are confused about how this business works."

Huawei's a global goliath with revenues more than General Electric Co. or Boeing Co. In just three decades it's grown from an obscure re-seller of switchboards into one of the world's biggest private companies, with businesses from telecom to cloud computing to cybersecurity. After plowing billions into research, the company is now among China's top recipients of international patents, edging out rivals Nokia Oyj and Ericsson AB in a technology that underpins appli-

cations from robotics to AI.

Huawei started to tap overseas markets in the late 1990s, dispatching sales representatives to Russia, Southeast Asia and Africa, where competition was less intense than in developed arenas. It used lower pricing as a wedge to gain entry, then tried to one-up its rivals on round-the-clock customer service. One of its earliest markets was Malaysia, where it wielded that formula to great effect.

Huawei executives like to trumpet instances where employees go above and beyond to get the job done. Sometimes, they also seize the initiative. In 2003, without Ren's blessing, some Huawei executives decided to venture into mobile phones. It wasn't until the early 2010s that Huawei made its first smartphone, and early models were no-frills, basic affairs that competed on price - much as its networking gear once did. But within a half-decade, Huawei had used a combination of savvy marketing (partnering with Leica in 2016 on cameras was a master-stroke) and research to move up the value chain and challenge Apple Inc. and Samsung.

It's in smartphones that evidence of Huawei's diversification efforts emerge. Launched last fall, the marquee Huawei Mate 30 Pro handset uses communications modules from Japanese

supplier Murata Manufacturing Co. Ltd. and contains a number in-house components. This contrasts with the Mate 20 Pro released a year earlier that relied on components from U.S. wireless semiconductor manufacturer Skyworks Solutions Inc.

Huawei's smartphone business is now the world's No. 2, growing shipments 16.5% to a record 240 million units in 2019. Much of that growth came from China, where Trump's sanctions have little effect since the Google apps it's shut out of can't be used anyway. Even some senior Huawei executives hadn't expected the smartphone business, which today contributes about half of revenue, to survive the sanctions, not to mention expand.

But this year may not be so rosy. "Huawei faces strong challenges in 2020, especially on the smartphone business," said IDC analyst Will Wong. "Its retail channel will face immense pressure as some buyers may turn to Samsung or another brand since the latest Huawei phones lack support from Google Mobile Services."

Still, the real battle from 2020 onward will be in 5G. The company started initial research on the standard as early as 2009, when even 4G was years from commercialization. It assigned more than \$600 million to the project in the following five years, according to the company's website. That surged to \$1.4 billion between 2017 and 2018.

The U.S. government has long worried Huawei's 5G capabilities pose a threat to national security. It warned in 2018 that Huawei owned 10% of worldwide essential 5G patents and deep involvement in international standards-setting could weaken U.S. companies' negotiating power. Huawei has inked more than 60 5G contracts globally, Deputy Chairman Ken Hu said in September. Washington continues to try and persuade allies to boycott Huawei gear in core networks - if successful, that could severely crimp its future prospects in a swath of technologies and hamper efforts to grab a slice of hundreds of billions of dollars in projected network spending.

There's also the chance that Washington will tighten the screws. The U.S. government is said to be weighing new limits on sales of chips and other vital components to Huawei. Zhang said the company has decided to tune out the noise of U.S.-Chinese relations. "This blacklisting has changed the whole perception of globalization," said Zhang. "The world is not flat anymore, everybody agrees and will try to adopt that approach. The suppliers and Huawei ourselves will try to adapt to the new geopolitical complex." **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

Taiwan's blowout 5G auction shows carriers willing to pay big

DEBBY WU

BIDS in Taiwan's auction of fifth-generation networking airwaves have exceeded NT\$100 billion (\$3.3 billion), a sign of robust demand as carriers race to deploy new wireless networks for applications including smart manufacturing and autonomous cars.

Chunghwa Telecom Co., Far EasTone Telecommunications Co., Taiwan Mobile Co. and two other rivals are bidding for preliminary licenses to the spectrum they need to operate their future 5G networks. Bidding continued yesterday after the total on Monday surpassed NT\$100 billion, 98% of which was for rights to use the 3.5GHz band.

The rising costs for licenses shows carriers expect the faster networks -- due later this year in Taiwan -- will provide a market advantage over competitors. The auction results so far are "blowing away expectations," New Street Research analysts said in a note dated Jan. 6.

"There is no sign that the bidding will end soon," Sheih Chi-mau, chairman and chief executive officer of the island's biggest carrier Chunghwa Telecom, said



BLOOMBERG

Monday night in remarks at a company event. "It may take a few more days. The competition is fierce."

While some other sales of 5G spectrum in similar bands have drawn bigger totals, Taiwan's is

the richest relative to population, according to New Street.

The Taiwanese bids set a new bar of \$0.51 per megahertz pop - an industry term that takes into account both the bandwidth and population that the carrier is

paying for - which New Street Research analyst Vivek Stalam says is \$0.10 above the previous high reached during Italy's mid-band spectrum sale in 2018.

An airwaves sale in Italy last year drew \$7.6 billion, the most

after Germany's \$7.4 billion sale. Taiwan's population of 24 million is less than half of Italy's 60 million and Germany's 83 million.

Stalam said Taiwan's bidding war suggests strong demand for mid-spectrum airwaves like the 3.5GHz band in other markets, including for a U.S. sale of the so-called C-Band that could bring about \$50 billion.

The final spectrum fee total in Taiwan is expected to reach NT\$114.9 billion, Credit Suisse analysts wrote in a Jan. 2 note. That amount would fall slightly shy of the NT\$118.7 billion Taiwan raised from its 4G auction in 2013.

Taiwan has about 29 million mobile phone accounts, an average of more than one per person, but its neighbor China has more than a billion. What makes Taiwanese subscribers especially attractive is that they're the biggest consumers of data in Asia, according to researcher Tefficient. Average per-user data consumption at Taiwan's carriers reached as high as 17.6GB per month, compared with 7.6GB in China and 8.5GB in South Korea.

South Korean carriers established the world's first full commercial 5G services last April. They are expected to have reached 5 million subscribers by the end of 2019. Operators in other countries including the U.S., U.K., Japan and Australia have also offered limited services to the public with plans to introduce wider networks this year. **BLOOMBERG**

Judge mulls fate of US researcher who denies Chinese work

MARGARET STAFFORD,
KANSAS CITY

A federal judge said Monday she will delay ruling on a motion to dismiss an indictment against a University of Kansas associate professor accused of secretly working for a Chinese university while performing federally-funded research at Kansas.

Government attorneys said during Monday's hearing that they plan to file a superseding indictment Jan. 15 in the case of Feng "Franklin" Tao, who they allege failed to report on a conflict-of-interest form that he was working with Fuzhou University in China while also doing research in Kansas. Robinson said the new indictment could make some issues raised in the dismissal motion moot.

Tao's attorneys argued he didn't accept an offer for a teaching position in China



Franklin Feng Tao

and he was not obligated to disclose it to Kansas. In their motion, they accused a visiting graduate student at Kansas of fabricating the allegations after unsuccessfully trying to extort their client because she was an-

gry at Tao after he refused to give her more credit for certain research manuscripts. Tao's attorneys said the woman demanded that he pay her \$300,000 or else she would falsely accuse him of economic espionage

and their motion included emails that they say the graduate student sent to their client, and to the FBI accusing.

The defense contends the graduate student also used aliases to make false complaints to the university and the FBI.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony Mattivi accused Tao's attorneys of filing the motion, which contained the graduate student's name, in order to garner publicity. He noted the woman's name was used in some national media stories. The Associated Press has not named her because she is not charged with a crime.

"The only inference you can draw is this was an attempt by the defense to get their argument out to the public, even though [the alleged extortion] is not relevant to the motion to dismiss," Mattivi said.

Tao's attorneys offered to file another motion with the name redacted but Mattivi said the damage had already been done.

One of Tao's attorneys, Peter Zeiderberg, acknowledged the woman should not have been named in the motion, saying it was "an unforced error" on his part.

"There was no ulterior agenda in doing that," he said. "If I had thought of it at the time, that is something I normally would not have done. But this is the process we are in now."

Tao's attorneys told the court that she hacked into his email account to obtain a copy of an unsigned job offer from China that she provided to the FBI, sparking an investigation.

Tao has asked the court to dismiss the federal indictment charging him with one count of wire fraud and three counts of program fraud.

The government's response to the motion to dismiss is unclear because the judge has sealed not only the initial defense motion but also all subsequent court filings over the issue. Monday's hearing did not shed light on the government's underlying case against Tao.

The visiting scholar, did not respond to an email seeking comment about Tao's allegations. It is unclear whether she is still in the United States.

Tau, an associate professor of engineering at the University of Kansas, was born in China and moved to the United States in 2002. He has been employed since August 2014 at the Kansas university's Center for Environmentally Beneficial Catalysis in Lawrence. The center conducts research on sustainable technology to conserve natural resources and energy. **AP**

WHY CHINA WON'T JOIN ANY IRAN-RUSSIA COALITION AGAINST TRUMP

BEIJING'S muted response to the U.S.'s killing of top Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani suggests China still isn't ready to join Russia in taking a more direct role in the Middle East's entrenched conflicts.

While Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China was "highly concerned" by the action and called it "unacceptable," he didn't use words like "condemn" or "denounce" like his Iranian and Russian counterparts, Javad Zarif and Sergei Lavrov. Instead, he told Zarif that China would "play a constructive role" to help safeguard regional security and said on a call with Lavrov that "all parties" must uphold international law.

The comments were consistent with China's past efforts to avoid commitments in a region where it could clash with the U.S. and its allies. Beijing has so far done little to counter President Donald Trump's effort to ratchet up pressure on Tehran, beyond defending the Iran nuclear deal and criticizing the U.S.'s unilateral sanctions.

On Monday, the U.S. accused China of siding with Russia at the United Nations to block a Security Council resolution condemning the attack on the American embassy in Baghdad that precipitated Trump's decision to order the strike at Soleimani. The U.S. mission to the UN said the move "calls the council's credibility into question."

There's little to indicate that Soleimani's death will spur China to stray far from its past balancing act, especially as President Xi Jinping seeks to wrap up preliminary trade negotiations with Trump this month. While China has stepped up military cooperation with Russia and expanded ties with Tehran, it also relies on Iran's rival Saudi Arabia as its top supplier of foreign oil.



AP PHOTO

"China is caught up in a dilemma where it doesn't want to provoke the Trump administration, has a deepening strategic partnership with Russia while has its own interest at stake in Iran," said Shi Yinhong, an adviser to China's cabinet and also a professor of international relations at Renmin University in Beijing. "I expect the Chinese government to stick to a mild tone, calling on both sides to exercise restraint and refrain from escalating tensions."

China and Russia have enhanced military ties in recent years, conducting joint naval drills annually and coordinating security policies across Asia through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Xi and Vladimir Putin have met more than 30 times since 2013, with the Chinese leader

calling his Russian counterpart his "closest foreign colleague." Putin has said Russia-China cooperation reached an "unprecedentedly high level."

Beijing has so far done little to counter President Donald Trump's effort to ratchet up pressure on Tehran

Still, they are unlikely to team up in a Middle East conflict. Although Chinese officials have repeatedly blasted U.S. actions against its own trade and security interests, they have opted for a lower-key response to Washington's disputes with Beijing's diplomatic partners. China avoided

moves to stop American efforts to oust its long-time diplomatic patron Nicolas Maduro, saying only it was a domestic affair that should be resolved by the Venezuelan people.

Ian Bremmer, the president and founder of the Eurasia Group, told Bloomberg Television on Monday that China has a different objective from Russia in the Middle East. "The Russians actually want chaos. The Chinese want stability," Bremmer said.

Similarly, China has dramatically scaled back its purchases of Iranian oil since the U.S. ended sanctions waivers last year, importing less than 548,000 tons of crude in November compared with just over 3 million in April. China remains Iran's biggest oil buyer, but it bought five times as much from Saudi Arabia

in the first 11 months of last year.

It's unclear what it would take for China, which boasts the world's second-biggest economy and defense budget, to take a more assertive role in the Middle East. Last month, China hosted Zarif, the Iranian foreign minister, for a visit to Beijing and participated in joint naval drills with Iran and Russia in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman.

Li Guofu, a former Chinese diplomat to the U.S. and director of the China Institute of International Studies' Center for Middle East Studies, said foreign powers had few options to discourage Trump from his "law-of-the-jungle" decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal. "In this case, other countries can do very little to possibly change the status quo," Li said.

Trump has at times suggested that he would like to see Xi come off the sidelines in the Middle East, saying in a June tweet that countries like China should start protecting their own oil shipments through the Persian Gulf. China's foreign ministry sidestepped a question Monday about whether the country would consider a larger security role in the Middle East.

"The worsening of the situation in the gulf is not in the interests of anyone," ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular news briefing in Beijing. "We oppose the abuse of force in international relations. We call on all relevant parties to exercise restraint, avoid the spiral of escalation and make efforts to cool down the situation."

China could use its platform as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to criticize U.S. actions against Iran, a role that Wang Yi mentioned in his statement on the Soleimani killing. Still, Beijing would delay such a move for as long as possible, according to Shi, the Renmin University professor.

"China will not take sides in the UN Security Council until it has to," Shi said. **BLOOMBERG**

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Japan prosecutors issue arrest warrant for Nissan ex-chair's wife

YURI KAGEYAMA, TOKYO

TOKYO prosecutors obtained an arrest warrant yesterday for former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn's wife on suspicion of perjury, adding to the couple's legal troubles in the country where he once was revered as a star executive.

The move against Carole Ghosn, who is not in Japan, followed her husband's flight to Lebanon last week while he was out on bail awaiting trial for alleged financial misconduct.

Prosecutors said in a statement that Carole Ghosn gave false testimony to a Tokyo court last year in her husband's case about the transfer of money from one company to another that allegedly caused losses to Nissan.

She also denied knowing various people, or meeting with them, and the statements were false, they said. The allegations cited were unrelated to Ghosn's escape.

Carole Ghosn was not immediately available for comment but earlier she told The Associated Press



Private security guards stand outside of the house of ex-Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn in Beirut, Lebanon

after her questioning in court that she considered the questions trite and unsubstantial.

She was banned from meeting with her husband after his release on bail because of fears she might help tamper with evidence.

Lebanon and Japan do not have an extradition treaty. Japanese justice officials acknowledge that it's unclear whether the two can be brought back to Japan to face any

of the charges. They said they were still looking into what could be done.

The Lebanese presidential palace said that Lebanon's president met with the Japanese ambassador and they discussed the case, but did not provide any other details. This is the first known meeting between the president and a Japanese diplomat since Ghosn arrived in the country on Dec. 30.

Japan's chief government spokesman said Japanese officials have told Lebanon that Ghosn left the country illegally and that they are seeking cooperation in finding out what happened. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said the situation must be handled carefully.

Prosecutors have said they did not want Carlos Ghosn to be granted bail because they saw him as a flight risk.

"With his abundant financial power and multiple foreign bases worldwide, it would be easy for the defendant Ghosn to flee from Japan," they said in a statement.

Earlier yesterday, Ghosn's former employer, Nissan Motor Co., said it was still pursuing legal action against him despite his escape.

The Japanese automaker said in a statement that Ghosn engaged in serious misconduct while leading the Nissan-Renault-Mitsubishi alliance.

"The company will continue to take appropriate legal action to hold Ghosn accountable for the harm that his misconduct has cau-

sed to Nissan," it said, without giving details.

Ghosn managed to skip bail and leave the country despite surveillance while he was staying at a home in Tokyo.

Japanese news reports yesterday gave new details of that escape, saying he left his residence alone, met two men at a Tokyo hotel, and then took a bullet train to Osaka before boarding a private jet hidden inside a case for musical equipment.

Japanese Justice Minister Masako Mori told reporters that measures were being taken to make sure all cargo and luggage are inspected at regional airports, including those for private jets, to prevent a recurrence.

Japanese major business daily Nikkei reported, without citing sources, that dozens of people in various countries helped to plan Ghosn's clandestine departure.

Nissan's statement was the first word from the company since Ghosn's flight last week. The automaker and Japanese prosecutors allege Ghosn misstated his future compensation and diverted company assets for personal gain. He says he is innocent.

Ghosn has not appeared in public since arriving in Lebanon. He is expected to give his side of the story in a news conference planned today in Beirut. AP

AD

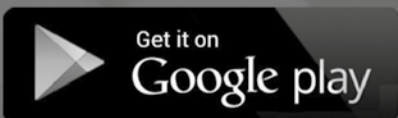
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AUSTRALIAN CREWS RACE TO CONTAIN BLAZES AS DAMAGE BILL SOARS

NICK PERRY & KRISTEN GELINEAU, BALMORAL

BOLSTERED by cooler weather and desperately needed rain, exhausted firefighters in Australia raced to shore up defenses against deadly wildfires before the blazes flare again within days when scorching temperatures are expected to return.

The first hints of the financial toll from the disaster began to emerge yesterday. The Insurance Council of Australia said the estimated damage bill had doubled in two days, with insurance claims reaching 700 million Australian dollars (\$485 million).

That estimate comes one day after Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the government was committing an extra 2 billion Australian dollars (\$1.4 billion) toward the recovery effort in addition to the tens of millions of dollars that have already been promised. Morrison's funding announcement came amid fierce criticism from many Australians who say he has been too slow to respond to the crisis. He has also faced backlash for downplaying the need for his

government to address climate change, which experts say helps supercharge the blazes.

The fires, fueled by drought and the country's hottest and driest year on record, have been raging since September, months earlier than is typical for Australia's annual wildfire season. So far, the blazes have killed 25 people, destroyed 2,000 homes and scorched an area twice the size of the U.S. state of Maryland. Three people in New South Wales state who were reported missing earlier were later found, police said.

Across New South Wales, 130 fires were still burning yesterday, around 50 of which were uncontrolled. The day's cooler, rainier weather was providing thousands of weary firefighters a "psychological and emotional" reprieve as they scrambled to strengthen containment lines around the blazes before temperatures rise again, said Shane Fitzsimmons, commissioner of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service.

"It really is about shoring up protection to limit the damage potential and the outbreak of these fires over the coming days," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corp.

So far, the blazes have killed 25 people, destroyed 2,000 homes and scorched an area twice the size of the US state of Maryland

The rain was not heavy enough to extinguish the blazes. Victoria state Emergency Services Minister Lisa Neville said on Monday at least 200 millimeters (8 inches) of rain would need to fall in a short time to snuff out the fires — around 20 times what has fallen across the region in the past day. And officials warned that Australia's wildfire season — which generally lasts through March — was nowhere near its end.

The rain was also complicating firefighters' attempts to strategically backburn certain areas, and was making the ground slippery

for fire trucks.

Anxious, weary and frustrated after living through months of fires already, many Australians have focused their fury on the prime minister, whose response

to the crisis has been roundly criticized as lax, and at times, dismissive. Morrison faced particularly fierce backlash for taking a family vacation to Hawaii in the midst of the disaster.

Helena Wong and her partner Justin Kam, who lost their home when fires swept through the town of Balmoral south of Sydney last month, were frustrated with what they say has been a slow, uncoordinated response to the fires and a lack of preparedness by the government.

"Disaster plans should have been put in place ahead of time, not after the fact when everybody's in a state of emergency and everybody's scrambling," Wong said. "Communication could be better. We are told different things by different people. [...] We are a fire-prone country. Things should have been put in place."

Thousands of army, navy and

air force reservists were being dispatched to battle the fires. Yesterday, rescue crews were still trying to reach some affected communities. A navy ship was sent to rescue stranded residents of Mallacoota, a coastal town in Victoria cut off for days by fires that forced around 4,000 people to shelter on beaches over the weekend. Heavy smoke squandered the navy's efforts to airlift people out on Monday.

Around 200 of the 340 residents still waiting to be evacuated from the town had signed up to board the navy ship yesterday, said Andrew Crisp, Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner. The rest were hoping to be rescued by military helicopter.

The fires have exacted a grisly toll on the country's wildlife, with carcasses of kangaroos littering the sides of roadways. Hundreds of millions of wild animals are believed to have been killed in the blazes, along with thousands of livestock.

"Those who are working with wildlife, those who are having to go through that incredibly painful process of having to put down stock [...] my heart — as someone who grew up in regional Victoria — I could only think how challenging it would be for my family to have to destroy stock," Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews said. "I can barely imagine how the grief, the toll, that would take on you." AP

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Stampede kills 40 at funeral for Iran general killed by US

NASSER KARIMI, AMIR VAHDAT & JON GAMBRELL, TEHRAN

A stampede yesterday at a funeral procession for a top Iranian general killed in a U.S. airstrike last week killed 40 people and injured 213 others, two Iranian semi-official news agencies reported.

The stampede took place in Kerman, the hometown of Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani, as the procession got underway, said the Fars and ISNA news agencies, citing Pirhossein Koulivand, the head of Iran's emergency medical services.

There was no information as to what had set off the stampede. Initial videos posted online showed people lying lifeless on a road and others shouting and trying to help them. Soleimani's funeral was later delayed but no new timing was given.

"Unfortunately as a result of the stampede, some of our compatriots have been injured and some have been killed during the

AP PHOTO



funeral processions," he earlier said. In delaying Soleimani's burial, authorities cited concerns about the massive crowd that had gathered, the semi-official ISNA news agency said.

A procession in Tehran on Monday drew over 1 million people in the Iranian capital, crowding both main thoroughfares and side streets in Tehran.

Soleimani's death has sparked calls across Iran for revenge against America for a slaying that's drastically raised tensions across the Middle East. The U.S. government warned ships of an unspecified threat from Iran across all the Mideast's waterways, crucial

routes for global energy supplies. Meanwhile, the U.S. Air Force launched a drill with 52 fighter jets in Utah, just days after President Donald Trump threatened to hit 52 sites in Iran.

Early yesterday, the leader of Iran's Revolutionary Guard threatened to "set ablaze" places supported by the United States over the killing of a top Iranian general in a U.S. airstrike last week, sparking cries from the crowd of supporters of "Death to Israel!" Hossein Salami made the pledge before a crowd of thousands gathered in a central square in Kerman before a casket carrying Soleimani's remains.

The outpouring of grief was an unprecedented honor for a man viewed by Iranians as a national hero for his work leading the Guard's expeditionary Quds Force. The U.S. blames him for the killing of American troops in Iraq and accused him of plotting new attacks just before his death Friday in a drone strike near Baghdad's airport. Soleimani also led forces in Syria backing President Bashar Assad in a long war, and he also served as the point man for Iranian proxies in countries like Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen.

His slaying already has pushed Tehran to abandon the remaining limits of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers as his successor and others vow to take revenge. In Baghdad, the parliament has called for the expulsion of all American troops from Iraqi soil, something analysts fear could allow Islamic State militants to mount a comeback.

Speaking in Kerman, Salami praised Soleimani's exploits, describing him as essential to

backing Palestinian groups, Yemen's Houthi rebels and Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria. As a martyr, Soleimani represented an even greater threat to Iran's enemies, Salami said.

"We will take revenge. We will set ablaze where they like," Salami said, drawing the cries of "Death to Israel!"

Israel is a longtime regional foe of Iran.

According to a report yesterday by the semi-official Tasnim news agency, Iran has worked up 13 sets of plans for revenge for Soleimani's killing. The report quoted Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, as saying that even the weakest among them would be a "historic nightmare" for the U.S. He declined to give any details.

"If the U.S. troops do not leave our region voluntarily and upright, we will do something to carry their bodies horizontally out," Shamkhani said.

The U.S. Maritime Administration warned yesterday ships across the Mideast, citing the rising threats after the U.S. killed Soleimani. "The Iranian response to this action, if any, is unknown, but there remains the possibility of Iranian action against U.S. maritime interests in the region," it said. AP

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what's ON



EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY TAM CHECK WUN AND LAO CHON HONG, ARTISTS WINNING THE GRAND PRIZE OF THE JURY AWARD OF THE COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION OF MACAU ARTISTS 2017

TIME: 10am-7pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: March 1, 2020

VENUE: Exhibitions Gallery and the Nostalgic House of the Taipa Houses

ADMISSION: Free

KONG SENG TICKETING SERVICE: 8988 4000

THE WORLD AS WILL AND IDEA – COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION OF EMERGING ARTISTS FROM MAINLAND CHINA

TIME: 10am-7pm (No admittance after 6:30pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: February 23, 2020

VENUE: Macau Contemporary Art Centre - Navy Yard No.1, located at Rua de S. Tiago Da Barra

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

EXHIBITION BY LIO MAN CHEONG

TIME: 3pm-8pm (Mondays)

12pm-8pm (Tuesdays to Sundays)

UNTIL: February 9, 2020

VENUE: A2 Gallery, Albergue SCM, No.8, Calçada da Igreja de São Lázaro

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2550

2019 CARMO MARKET

TIME: 4pm-6pm (Mondays to Fridays)

12pm-6pm (Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays)

UNTIL: January 19, 2020

VENUE: Carmo Fair, Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

Enquiries: (853) 2875 0721

"Taste of Celebration" Exhibition

TIME: 10am-10pm

UNTIL: February 9, 2020

VENUE: Macau Tower

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2893 3339

ROOSTER, TIGER, SHEEP BY SNAKE

TIME: 11am-8pm

UNTIL: February 9, 2019

VENUE: Shop 100 and 107, Emerald Lobby, MGM Cotai

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8806 8888

Offbeat

AMAZON DELIVERY DRIVER STEALS UPS PACKAGE FROM HOME

An Amazon delivery driver stole a package that was delivered earlier by UPS at a Pennsylvania home, police said.

A woman in Wilkes-Barre reported a package being stolen from her home Monday.

Surveillance footage showed a UPS driver dropping off a package at the house. Later that afternoon, an Amazon driver dropped off two packages and took the UPS package as he was leaving.

Wilkes-Barre police said charges will be filed once the Amazon driver is identified.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Água de Mar
15:30	BING
15:45	Os Ursos Boonie na Neve
16:15	As Novas Viagens Filosoficas
16:45	Portugueses Pelo Mundo Sr.1
17:30	Mar de Letras Sr.2
18:05	Império (Repetição)
18:55	TDM Entrevista (Repetição)
19:30	Ouro Verde Sr.1
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Semana Internacional
21:50	Dez Grandes Segredos e Mistérios
22:20	Império
23:15	TDM News
23:50	O Último Reino Sr.2
00:40	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:25	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

03 - 08 Jan



RICHARD JEWELL

ROOM 1

2:15, 4:45, 7:05, 9:30pm

Director: Clint Eastwood

Starring: Sam Rockwell, Kathy Bates, Jon Hamm, Olivia Wilde

Language: English

Duration: 141min



ASHFALL

ROOM 2

2:15, 4:45, 7:05, 9:30pm

Director: Lee Hae-Jun, Kim Byung-Seo

Starring: Lee Byung-hun, Ha Jung-woo, Ma Dong-Sock

Language: Korean

Duration: 108min



CATS

ROOM 3

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

Director: Tom Hooper

Starring: James Corden, Jason Derulo, Taylor Swift

Language: English

Duration: 123min

this day in history



1989 DOZENS DIE AS PLANE CRASHES ON MOTORWAY

A Boeing 737 airplane has crashed onto the M1 motorway near East Midlands airport, killing 46 people.

Eighty have survived, of whom ten are seriously injured.

The British Midland flight 092 was forced to crash land after both engines of the brand new aircraft failed.

It slammed into the motorway embankment at 2026 GMT, breaking into three pieces.

Motorists on the M1 had a lucky escape as there were no vehicles in the immediate vicinity at the moment of impact.

The flight to Belfast was forced to divert to East Midlands airport 10 minutes after leaving Heathrow, when one of the plane's two engines caught fire.

As the aircraft began its descent the remaining engine failed too.

Experts said later the chance of suffering such a double engine failure was a hundred million to one.

The plane passed very low over the village of Kegworth, Leicestershire, crashing just a few hundred metres from the safety of the runway, where emergency services were waiting.

The most severely injured were given medical attention immediately, while others were lifted from the twisted fuselage and taken to local hospitals.

Survivor Gareth Jones described the moment when the plane hit the ground.

He said: "There was a shudder, crash, like a massive motor car accident, crunch, blackness, and I was by the emergency hatch."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

A report by the UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch later found the flight crew had shut down the wrong engine.

The crew had responded "incorrectly" to a fractured fan blade in the No.1 engine, by shutting down the No.2 engine "which was running satisfactorily".

The report made several recommendations, calling for increased engine inspections and improvements to engine vibration indicators on Boeing 737s.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Today's going to start off as a very calm day, with nary a ripple on the proverbial water's surface. But as the day goes on, there will be lots of activity right under that surface.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Why pressure yourself into taking it all in when grabbing one small detail can be so rewarding? Right now, you need to focus on one aspect of your life. How can you improve it?

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
It's tough not to blame them for judging you, but they're just doing their best to understand you. Talk to them and explain that you're not doing what you're doing to hurt them. You're just trying to be happy.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You should think long and hard before you share any opinions today. There is a possibility that some tension could result from what you say. You might not realize who you're talking to...

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
The best lesson you learn today won't be found in the same old place. You're going to have to move as far outside your comfort zone as you can stand to go in order to get the nutritious input that your brain is hungry for.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Getting sidetracked or lured away by promises of more time or more money is not a good option, so avoid veering off in any new direction. Your extra efforts will pay off handsomely today.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Don't let their status or powerful position intimidate you into adopting a style of living that isn't comfortable for you. You're doing just fine managing things the way you are managing things.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
If a blur of social obligations is working on your last nerve, get some alone time today. Treat yourself to a quiet dinner out, or rent your favorite movie and just chill. It's not selfish to want to be by yourself.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
A powerful person could come into your life bearing gifts today, and there may be some big strings attached, so don't let your gratitude fog your skepticism.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Try not to be nervous. These people want to get to know you better, and in order to portray yourself accurately, you need to feel relaxed and optimistic.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Your trademark modesty may prevent you from bragging to the world about your latest success, but it won't prevent friends and loved ones from singing your praises!

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Put social obligations and romantic endeavors on hold for a little while. They aren't going anywhere any time soon! Today, your brain is wired for wheeling and dealing!

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-4	2	clear
Harbin	-24	-13	clear
Tianjin	-2	4	cloudy
Urumqi	-13	0	clear
Xi'an	-1	12	clear
Lhasa	-5	10	clear
Chengdu	6	13	cloudy
Chongqing	9	13	cloudy
Kunming	2	8	drizzle
Nanjing	1	13	cloudy
Shanghai	6	13	cloudy
Wuhan	2	14	cloudy
Hangzhou	5	14	overcast
Taipei	16	17	moderate rain
Guangzhou	12	17	overcast
Hong Kong	12	17	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	0	4	drizzle
Frankfurt	-3	3	clear
Paris	-2	4	clear
London	2	8	overcast
New York	-1	4	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Sudden pull; 5- Part of RSVP; 8- Mogul capital until 1658; 12- Rival of Bjorn; 13- Ventured; 15- Antlered animal; 16- City on the Rhine; 17- Eat away; 18- Album unit; 19- Important; 22- Sticky substance; 23- Building annex; 24- Plaintiff; 26- Arrest; 29- Trojan War hero; 31- ___ anglais (English horn); 32- War horse; 34- A, as in Athens; 36- "___ She Lovely?"; 38- Ahead of time; 40- Steer clear of; 41- Maker of Pong; 43- Weeps; 45- This ___ stickup!; 46- Kiss; 48- Blemish; 50- Sicilian volcano; 51- Baton Rouge sch.; 52- 1980's movie starring Bo Derek and Dudley Moore; 54- Dominance; 61- Broadway opening; 63- Word after Anglo; 64- Tom, Dick and Harry, e.g.; 65- Zoo barrier; 66- Checking out; 67- Lewd look; 68- Paris pronoun; 69- RR stop; 70- Being, to Brutus;

DOWN: 1- Triangular sails; 2- "The Time Machine" race; 3- Circular band; 4- Shelter for a dog; 5- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 6- Camaro model; 7- Moon of Jupiter; 8- Super Bowl highlights?; 9- Earthly; 10- "All The Way To ___", song by REM; 11- Jason's craft; 13- Puncture; 14- Slow on the uptake; 20- Evils; 21- "Chicken of the sea"; 25- Electric fish; 26- Prices paid; 27- Decorative; 28- Get to; 29- Improvise; 30- "Quiet!"; 31- The Company; 33- Drift, make a mistake; 35- "SNL" alum Gasteyer; 37- Horse's gait; 39- Shouting; 42- They're charged; 44- Just okay; 47- Bring about; 49- Tortoise; 52- Easy to manage; 53- Environmental sci.; 55- Is worthwhile; 56- Way out; 57- Author Jaffe; 58- Ticks off; 59- Rail supports; 60- Long ago; 62- Follower's suffix;



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- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
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- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
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- [Taipa] Manhattan Luxury 3 2 2 1
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- [Coloane] Large 3/4 room 2 3 3 2 1
2,530 ft² \$13,800,000 (ref: 19096000)

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- [Taipa] New studio 1 1 1
470 ft² \$9,500/mth (ref: 19101002)
- [Taipa] Nova Grand 2 1 1 1
935 ft² \$17,800/mth (ref: 19091005)
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2,122 ft² \$23,000/mth (ref: 1903001RT)

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



'JOKER' TOPS NOMINATIONS FOR ACADEMY FILM AWARDS

THE film "Joker" has topped the nominations for the British Academy film awards announced Tuesday.

The movie about the origins of the comic book villain received 11 BAFTA nominations including best film, best actor for Joaquin Phoenix, and best director.

Martin Scorsese's gangster epic "The Irishman" and Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" were close behind with 10 nominations, including best picture, and Sam Mendes' war film "1917" also earned a best picture nomination

two days after winning that award at the Golden Globes.

The Korean film "Parasite" also is on the best picture list.

In addition to Phoenix, best actor contenders include Leonardo DiCaprio, Adam Driver, Taron Egerton and Jonathan Pryce.

The best actress will be chosen from Scarlett Johansson, Saoirse Ronan, Charlize Theron, Renee Zellweger and Margot Robbie.

The awards will be announced at a gala event hosted by Graham Norton on Feb. 2.

CAMERON DIAZ ANNOUNCES BIRTH OF A DAUGHTER



CAMERON Diaz is starting the new decade with a very important role: mommy.

The actress and her musician husband, Benji Madden, announced the birth of a daughter they've named Raddix.

"We are so happy, blessed and grateful to begin this new decade by announcing the birth of our daughter," Diaz wrote on Instagram. "She has instantly captured our hearts and completed our family."

But don't expect a photo of the baby. Diaz wrote that while she and Madden "are overjoyed to share this news" they "also feel

a strong instinct to protect our little one's privacy." The Instagram post had no image attached.

"We won't be posting pictures or sharing any more details, other than the fact that she is really really cute! Some would even say RAD," Diaz wrote.

Diaz, whose films include "There's Something About Mary" and "Bad Teacher," married Madden, a member of the band Good Charlotte, in early 2015.

Both parents posted the identical message on Instagram. Representatives for both stars did not immediately respond to calls for comment.

HARVEY BACK AS NFL HONORS HOST WHEN AP AWARDS ARE ANNOUNCED

The personality Steve Harvey will return as host of the NFL Honors show on Feb. 1, when The Associated Press hands out its individual league awards.

The two-hour prime-time show airing on Fox will be held at the Adrienne Arsht Center in Miami. Harvey hosted last year's show in Atlanta.

Harvey hosts the game show "Family Feud," as well as a syndicated radio

show. While hosting the Miss Universe pageant in 2015, he accidentally named the wrong woman as the winner during the live broadcast.

NFL Honors, which debuted in Indianapolis in 2012, is held in the Super Bowl host city the night before the AFC and NFC champions meet. The 2020 Pro Football Hall of Fame class will be introduced during the program.



AD

ON SALE
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

EVEN without Andy Murray, Britain looks likely to advance to the ATP Cup quarterfinals.

Britain No. 1 Dan Evans outclassed Radu Albot 6-2, 6-2 to clinch the fifth-day match after Cameron Norrie beat Alexander Cozbinov by the same score on Tuesday.

A 6-2, 6-3 doubles victory for Jamie Murray and Joe Salisbury over Albot and Cozbinov completed the 3-0 win over Moldova, leaving the British in a good position to qualify for the quarterfinals that begin Thursday at Sydney Olympic Park.

Murray announced late last month that he would not play at the inaugural ATP Cup or the Australian Open due to his continuing recovery from hip surgery.

Britain could top Group C and face Australia in Thursday's first quarterfinal. But the British, captained by Tim Henman, are more likely to advance to the knockout stages as one of the two best pool runners-up at the season-opening 24-team event.

"It would be a lot of fun if that were the case," Henman said of the potential match against Australia. "Obviously I have a lot of history with [Aus-

TENNIS

Britain in good shape to advance to ATP Cup quarterfinals

tralia captain] Lleyton [Hewitt] and everyone knows the team well. It would be a big challenge, but we would love that opportunity."

Unbeaten in its first two matches, Bulgaria is the favorite to top Group C and can secure a quarterfinal spot with a win over Belgium on Tuesday night in the second match in Sydney.

Undefeated Australia will complete Group F play on Tuesday night against Greece in Brisbane. Australia said earlier Tuesday it would sit out Alex de Minaur against Greece. De Minaur has won both of his singles matches at the tournament.

John Millman will come into the team for the second time, with Nick Kyrgios returning from a back injury to take on Greek star Stefanos Tsitsipas.

In the opening match Tuesday in Brisbane, Canada beat

Germany 2-1 and will hope to advance to the quarterfinals as one of the two best second-place finishers in group play. The Canadians lost to Spain in the Davis Cup final in Madrid seven weeks ago.

Canadian Denis Shapovalov handed No. 7-ranked Alexander Zverev his third singles loss of the tournament with a 6-2, 6-2 win over the German player at Pat Rafter Arena. Zverev had seven double-faults in Tuesday's match.

Jan-Lennard Struff beat Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-1, 6-4 to give Germany the early lead. Auger-Aliassime and Shapovalov clinched it for Canada with a 6-3, 7-6 (4) win over Kevin Krawietz and Andreas Mies.

Zverev has 31 double faults in 31 service games in the tournament. He said an off-season exhibition tour in South America with Roger Federer left him behind in his

preparations.

"I had like five days less than I normally have ... I didn't practice a lot of tennis," he said. "I think you can see that on the tennis court. There are a lot of things that I still need to improve."

At Perth, Russia clinched a quarterfinal berth with wins over Norway in both singles and tops Group D. Karen Khachanov beat Norway's Victor Durasovic 6-2, 6-1 in the opening singles match and Daniil Medvedev beat Casper Ruud 6-3, 7-6 (6) on his second match point with an ace.

Italy played the United States in the night match at Perth.

The six group winners and two best second-place finishers advance to the Final Eight in Sydney. Two quarterfinals are set for Thursday and two more on Friday. The semifinals are scheduled for Saturday and the final on Sunday at Ken Rosewall Arena. AP



Britain's Dan Evans



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OPINION

World Views

Anjani Trivedi, Bloomberg

GHOSN ATTACKS THE SYSTEM THAT CROWNED HIM

Carlos Ghosn was nothing short of a celebrity in Japan. He carefully cultivated the image of a rebel outsider, but operated successfully enough within Japan Inc. to be adopted as something of a national hero after resuscitating Nissan Motor Co. He took on the system, yet scored its biggest victories when it was still intact.

Ghosn ended up taking advantage of the permissive establishment that he was picking apart. That style caught up with him as the corporate culture (slowly) mended its ways under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's economic reforms. Ghosn was seen to be making choices based on personal relationships. He spent the last few years building his own legacy, attempting to force together two vastly different auto giants in Nissan and Renault SA, causing yet more discomfort. Nissan's aggressive sales tactics in the U.S. led to faltering performance while Ghosn talked up futuristic mobility.

Now, as global authorities try to piece together how Ghosn maneuvered an international escape from Japan to Lebanon, he's planning to go public. He may name and shame some Nissan executives, adding suspense in Tokyo as Japanese markets re-open from a long break. He'll be looking for sympathy, important to whatever legal future awaits him on accusations of financial misconduct, including violating pay-disclosure rules and transferring personal investment losses to Nissan. He has denied any wrongdoing, saying that he's the victim of a corporate and political conspiracy.

More significantly, perhaps, will be his expected attacks on the system that made him a corporate emperor and scapegoat: Japan Inc. In doing so, Ghosn could help undermine Abe's last decade of reforms, which were already showing signs of trouble.

In recent months, the government has backpedaled on corporate governance promises and openness to money from abroad. The legislature has passed a bill to tighten review of investments by foreigners that seems to limit the role of activist investors looking to pressure companies to change. It will require outside investors to file a pre-acquisition notification before taking a 1% stake in listed Japanese companies across a broad list of restricted sectors. Previously, the threshold was 10%. The government can review board nominations.

Foreign investors have flinched at the return of the anti-gaijin narrative. They account for 70% of turnover on the Tokyo Stock Exchange and own almost a third of the market. Until recently, they had felt encouraged. Shareholder proposals to nominate or dismiss directors or auditors were on the rise. Japan's stewardship code, basic as it is, facilitated greater engagement. The likes of Third Point's Dan Loeb had been treading carefully in their overtures and making inroads.

The Ghosn case has been a warning shot. Last year, one of his lawyers issued a cautionary note ahead of the Group of 20 summit: Japan Inc. was returning to its old, cozy nexus with the government, said Takashi Takano, and the treatment of Ghosn amounted to "heavy interference into a private corporate matter."

In restructuring Nissan in the late 1990s, Ghosn, who came in as one of the first non-Japanese executives, helped rip up the keiretsu system — an often inefficient group of co-dependent companies. Known as Le Cost Killer, he slashed jobs and uprooted how auto suppliers did business in Japan. He pushed cross-functional teams mingling employees from different countries and divisions that bred "healthy conflict."

But the turnaround proved fleeting. Ghosn's reputation for success enabled him to run Nissan with insufficient checks and balances. Among the lapses in governance, he built up substantial key-man risk that left Nissan unprepared. Other Japanese corporate scandals in recent years focused more on company-wide data falsification and accounting. His is centered around an individual. That's one price of nurturing a cult of personality. [Abridged]

A passenger plane skidded off the runway in the Turkish city of Istanbul yesterday, temporarily shutting down the airport.

The Boeing 737-800 from Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, operated by Turkish low-cost airline Pegasus, skidded as it landed at Sabiha Gokcen Airport in the morning. Passengers were evacuated by emergency slides.

The airline said there were no deaths or injuries. Istanbul go-

vernor's office said all 164 passengers were safely evacuated.

Storms and heavy rain have affected the city and transportation since Sunday night.

The official Anadolu news agency said the international airport will be closed until 1700 GMT, after initially saying it would re-open at 0820 GMT, but added the airport could open earlier. The airport is on the Asian side of Turkey's largest city, which spans two continents.

AP PHOTO



FACEBOOK BANS DEEPFAKES IN FIGHT AGAINST ONLINE MANIPULATION

KELVIN CHAN

FACEBOOK says it is banning "deepfake" videos, the false but realistic clips created with artificial intelligence and sophisticated tools, as it steps up efforts to fight online manipulation.

The social network said late Monday that it's beefing up its policies to remove videos edited or synthesized in ways that aren't apparent to the average person, and which could dupe someone into thinking the video's subject said something he or she didn't actually say.

Created by artificial intelligence or machine learning, deepfakes combine or replace content to create images that can be almost impossible to tell are not authentic.

"While these videos are still rare on the internet, they present a significant challenge for our industry and society as their use increases," Facebook's vice president of global policy management, Monika Bickert, said in a blog post.

However, she said the new rules won't include

parody or satire, or clips edited just to change the order of words. The exceptions underscore the balancing act Facebook and other social media services face in their struggle to stop the spread of online misinformation and "fake news" while also respecting free speech and fending off allegations of censorship.

Experts and lawmakers are trying to figure out how to prevent deepfakes from being used to interfere with US presidential elections in November

The U.S. tech company has been grappling with how to handle the rise of deepfakes after facing criticism last year for refusing to remove a doctored video of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi slurring her words, which was viewed more than 3 million times. Experts said the crudely edited clip was more of a "cheap fake" than a deepfake.

Then, a pair of artists posted fake footage of Facebook CEO Mark Zucker-

berg showing him gloating over his one-man domination of the world. Facebook also left that clip online. The company said at the time that neither video violated its policies.

The problem of altered videos is taking on increasing urgency as experts and lawmakers try to figure out how to prevent deepfakes from being used to interfere with U.S. presidential elections in November.

Facebook said any videos that don't meet existing standards for removal can still be reviewed by independent third-party fact-checkers. Those deemed false will be flagged

as such to anyone trying to share or view them, which Bickert said was a better approach than just taking them down.

"If we simply removed all manipulated videos flagged by fact-checkers as false, the videos would still be available elsewhere on the internet or social media ecosystem," Bickert said. "By leaving them up and labelling them as false, we're providing people with important information and context." AP

Iran A researcher with dual French-Iranian nationality held for months in a notorious Tehran prison will not be tried on espionage charges, her lawyer said yesterday. But she and another French researcher still face other security-related charges. Iranian prosecutors dropped the spying charges against Fariba Adelkhah after an hours-long hearing. Saeid Dehghan told The Associated Press. Both Adelkhah and Roland Marchal will remain in custody on charges of spreading propaganda, their lawyer said.

AP PHOTO



Switzerland A dozen climate activists have gone on trial for storming a Credit Suisse office in Lausanne, Switzerland, and playing tennis inside, part of a protest against the bank's investments in fossil fuels. In a trial billed as the first of its kind in Switzerland, the environmentalists from the "Lausanne Action Climate" group entered the courtroom yesterday in suburban Renens with a number of supporters on hand outside holding up placards and chanting.

AP PHOTO



Russia A fire at a greenhouse farm in a Moscow suburb killed eight people and injured one yesterday, Russian emergency services said. All eight victims — seven men and one woman — were illegal migrants from Vietnam who worked at the farm, officials said. Russia's Emergency Ministry initially identified the victims as Tajiks.

France has warned it will retaliate with the full backing of the European Union if the United States imposes tariffs on up to \$2.4 billion worth of French products, including Champagne, Roquefort cheese, handbags, and lipstick.

Germany moved 35 soldiers serving in Iraq to neighboring Jordan and Kuwait yesterday amid tensions over the U.S. killing of a top Iranian general in an airstrike in Baghdad last week.