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AN ALLEGED BRIBERY SCANDAL INVOLVING A JAPANESE LAWMAKER THREATENS TO STALL THE CASINO CITY SELECTION PROCESS

POLITICAL SCIENTIST SAYS CE MANIFESTO RESEMBLED 'SHOPPING LIST'

THE GOV'T IS HOPING TO USE THE RESUMPTION OF THE WANZAI FERRY ROUTE TODAY TO REVITALIZE COMMERCE IN THE INNER HARBOR DISTRICT

Thailand Police have arrested a man on suspicion of ruthlessly killing three people, including a toddler, during a gold shop robbery that shocked the country. Local media said the suspect is the director of a primary school. It was unclear when he was arrested.

Indonesia An American journalist is facing up to five years in an Indonesian jail and a fine on charges of violating immigration regulations, a lawyer and officials said yesterday. Philip Jacobson of California is accused of conducting journalistic activities not permitted by his business visa, according to the arrest warrant.



Switzerland European automakers were left in little doubt they face a tough year after U.S. President Donald Trump renewed his threat to impose tariffs on imported cars from the region and a lobby group forecast a drop in annual sales. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos yesterday, Trump said the European Union is "more difficult to do business with than China," indicating he's about to turn his attention to renegotiating trade deals with the bloc.



Lebanon The new government held its first meeting yesterday, a day after it was formed following a three-month political vacuum, with the prime minister saying his Cabinet will adopt financial and economic methods different than those of previous governments.

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FIRST CONFIRMED CASE LEADS TO STORE RUN

DEMAND FOR SURGICAL MASKS SOARED AS MACAU DETECTED ITS FIRST CONFIRMED CASE OF THE WUHAN CORONAVIRUS



CARRIE LAM CONFIDENT BEIJING WILL NOT USE PROTESTS TO GROW CLOUT OVER HK



FIRST CASE OF CORONAVIRUS INFECTION CONFIRMED IN MACAU

JULIE ZHU

A visitor from Wuhan was yesterday confirmed as the first case of the novel coronavirus in Macau. Yesterday, the local government held a press conference to report the first case, imported from the mainland city where the infection originated.

According to the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, the case involves a 52-year-old woman from Wuhan who arrived in Macau via the Border Gate, having travelled by train from Wuhan to Zhuhai first.

An investigation led by the local government revealed that the patient took a casino shuttle bus to the Landmark Macau and met with two friends before she checked into the hotel.

During her stay in Macau, besides dining out in restaurants near her hotel, she also gambled inside the property's casino.

At approximately 6 p.m. on Tuesday, January 21, she presented herself to the Conde S. Januário Hospital (CHCSJ) with a sore throat, claiming she had been coughing for approximately one week, although without developing a fever. She has been classified as a high-risk patient and CHCSJ immediately isolated her.

She entered Macau at 10:28 p.m. on January 19 and got on a shuttle bus at 10:50 p.m. At 11:15 p.m. she arrived at StarWorld Ho-

DANIEL BEITLER



tel and walked to Landmark Macau. At 3 a.m. on January 20, she visited a pharmacy to purchase medicine. At 5 p.m. on January 20, she went to a restaurant on Rua de Pequim. At 9:45 a.m. on January 21, she went to another restaurant on Rua de Pequim, before checking herself into the public hospital at 4 p.m. on the same day.

By 2 a.m. yesterday, the patient was confirmed as being infected with the novel coronavirus after two rounds of testing.

Meanwhile, the local government has found the two friends of the woman who were in close contact with her during her visit

to Macau. Both are being kept in isolation for medical observation.

The director of the Health Bureau (SSM) Lei Chin Ion estimated that the transmission risk of this patient is "not high", however no conclusions can be made before her travel companions are tested.

Lei claimed that the symptoms of this first infection are "not serious" and have not progressed to fever. A comprehensive assessment indicated that she is still at the early stages of the onset of the virus.

The SSM will carry out frequent tests on the two companions of

the confirmed patient and then wait 14 days to confirm their situation.

Besides the two friends, another woman was also reportedly in close contact with the patient. Currently, all three visitors are under medical observation at the Coloane public hygiene clinical center.

Four Judiciary Police officers stationed at the casino where the woman was gambling also made close contact with the patient. Firefighters assisted the four police officers with the task of sterilization.

In total, 12 officers from the

Fire Services entered the Landmark Macau and sterilized the hotel guestroom where the woman was staying.

After this first case, the center has made a series of new measures for further prevention.

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Ao Ieong U, who is also the vice chairman of the center, reported that all members of the public entering public governmental departments will have their body temperatures scanned.

The SSM also issued instructions requesting that all casino workers wear masks, and that all parties entering from different immigration checkpoints complete a health declaration form.

The local government also issued instructions to schools to take suitable measures upon resuming activities after the holiday.

To keep the public frequently updated with the latest developments of the situation, the SSM will hold a press conference every day at 5 p.m., to release information to the public.

During the Lunar New Year holiday, the local government will organize different performances and will scan the body temperature of workers and performers.

Currently, Macau has 180 beds for isolated patients. The Fire Services have also prepared 11 ambulances for transporting patients.

The government announced yesterday that package tours from Macau to Wuhan are being suspended. Meanwhile, travel agencies are obliged to report to the Macao Government Tourism Office when a package tour to Macau consists of visitors from Wuhan.

Transport operators instructed to guard against pneumonia

ANTHONY LAM

ADDITIONAL hygiene measures, including regular disinfection and ventilation, have been introduced to local public transport operators as a means of controlling the potential spread of the Wuhan coronavirus, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) told the Times.

Following reports yesterday of the city's first case of the virus, the DSAT has informed the Times that it is working to introduce

cautionary measures to operators of public transport facilities.

Yesterday, buses were confirmed operating with air-conditioning on and windows closed. As observed, most passengers were not wearing surgical masks.

In response, the bureau explained that it has already requested operators of public transport, particularly the bus companies and the Light Rapid Transit (LRT), to stay compliant with the guidelines issued by the Health Bureau.

Preventive measures, such as the disinfection of bus terminals, should be conducted at a greater frequency than usual. The frequency should go up further at the Border Gate terminal, because of the high foot traffic at the location.

Cars and carriages should maintain a clean and disinfected environment. Good ventilation should be observed.

The health conditions of workers, especially bus drivers, should be monitored.

Announcements should be made in cars and carriages to remind passengers of the importance of maintaining hygiene. The bureau said that the operators will announce their respective measures soon.

For the time being, it is unclear to what extent the Contagious Disease Prevention and Treatment Law will be used. The law authorizes the director of the Health Bureau, when ratified by the Chief Executive, to mandate measures deemed necessary.

DANIEL BEITLER



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Health authorities to distribute 20 million masks to handle shortage

RENATO MARQUES, JULIE ZHU

HEALTH authorities will distribute 20 million surgical face masks and restrict the conditions of their sale in order to handle a shortage that has affected nearly half of Macau's pharmacies.

After the first confirmed case of the Wuhan coronavirus in Macau was disclosed by local health authorities yesterday, residents hurried to stock up on surgical masks among other items to confront a potential outbreak in the city. Within hours of the report, some netizens were reporting shortages of masks at Macau pharmacies. Others decried rampant price inflation in response to the growing demand and dwindling supply.

The use of protective masks, which are designed to cover the

nose and mouth of users, is considered an effective way to avoid contamination.

According to information disclosed by the Health Bureau (SSM), 160 of the city's 294 pharmacies do have masks in storage. Only one out of eight masks distributors in the city still had stock as of yesterday afternoon. Macau residents and other people can still purchase masks from other places in Macau, such as in supermarkets.

Yesterday, the SSM disclosed the first confirmed case of the coronavirus in Macau. At a 5 p.m. press conference, the health authority said Macau had registered 23 suspected novel coronavirus cases with 18 of them already cleared, four still undergoing testing and one confirmed.

Within hours of the disclosure, local residents took to social me-

dia to protest about speculative practices enforced by some local shops in light of the great demand from the public. Social media buzzed yesterday with reports and photographs of the price hikes for such products.

The Times learned that the prices for the acquisition of N95 particle respirator masks have at least doubled, with the same happening for the more commonly used surgical masks. According to some reports, the price for such masks in some shops has risen by as much as five-fold.

The SSM announced yesterday that, starting from today, some 20 million stockpiled masks will begin to be distributed to approximately 50 pharmacies in collaborative partnerships with public health institutions. They will be ready for collection by the public by Friday, according to the SSM.

These masks will only be supplied to local residents, with each Macau identification card entitling the holder to purchase up to 10 masks at one time. Only after 10 days can the same Macau ID be used to buy masks again.

According to analysts, visitation to Macau over the busy Lunar New Year period is not expected to be impacted by the occurrence of imported cases of the Wuhan coronavirus now confirmed in Macau, Hong Kong and Guangdong Province. As such, Macau may receive as many as 1 million visitors in the seven-day holiday period starting Friday.

The city's top health official explained that the restrictive sale measure was not intended to restrict the sale of masks, but only to ensure an ample mask supply to Macau residents.

Excluding the abovementioned 50 pharmacies in collaborative partnerships with public health institutions, the sale of masks at other locations, including supermarkets, is not affected by the measure.

Lei said that further measures or restrictions on mask sales would depend on the development of the situation.

One pharmacy located in the Horta e Costa area told the Times that they were aware of the price hike, noting that most pharmacies are selling the protective masks for around double their ordinary price. The pharmacy stated that they have not raised their prices, continuing to sell the product at its original price.

For the time being, this pharmacy says it still has some masks in stock, but its stock of disinfecting alcohol for hand wash had run out as of yesterday afternoon.

Similar cases have been reported in the neighboring region of Hong Kong, with South China Morning Post reporting stock shortages and similar price hikes across the region as more cases of infection and deaths by the virus are reported by mainland authorities.

Health Bureau (SSM) director Lei Chin Ion, has reaffirmed the need for the population to pay attention to personal hygiene and care. But he also said that protective masks only need to be used in cases of hospital visits or other health care facilities, or when in contact with a large group of people, such as those that work in customer-facing or tourist-facing roles. The masks are not required to be worn, most of the time, by the general population, said Lei.

Two weeks ago, the SSM dispelled accounts suggesting that Macau was facing a shortage of masks in some local pharmacies. The health authority confirmed the availability of masks at the vast majority of the city's 294 pharmacies and stressed that the supply of masks should be sufficient for the city's population.

At the time, the SSM also said it had called on pharmacies not to raise the selling prices of the masks in response to the greater demand, and reminding them of their duty to serve the public in a socially responsible way.



COMMENTATOR: LACK OF POLITICAL ROADMAP MAKES GOV'T MANIFESTO IMPLAUSIBLE

LYNZY VALLES

POLITICAL commentator Eric Sautédé said yesterday that the electoral platform of Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng mostly closely resembles a "shopping list" in that it is lengthy but contains no timeline specifics.

Sautédé said that, without timeline goals, Ho's electoral promises – including his headline administrative reform objective – "mean nothing." In this sense, they were no different from the goals of the previous administration.

Speaking to the Times on the sidelines of a French Macau Chamber of Commerce event, the political scientist remarked, "I remember the previous administration in 2014. [They were] always saying that we have an incremental approach to democracy and to universal suffrage, and it was so incremental it was almost a lie."

Back in August, pro-democracy group New Macau Association said that Ho had promised not to completely rule out the introduction of universal suffrage during his tenure. However, this promise did not impress the commentator, who noted, "as long as you don't give a date or a timeline, what does it mean to say that universal suffrage is not impossible?"

Unlike in Hong Kong, where the city's Policy Addresses usually list a timeline and goal for concluding projects, Macau's annual addresses do not provide such timeliness.

"If you look at the agenda that was put on his platform, it's very thin – it looks like a shopping list," said Sautédé. "I think it's just for show. [...] No milestone, no how, no nothing," he stressed.

The expert further criticized that Ho spent more time meeting with the people that made up the 400-member election committee, rather than reviewing how his



Political commentator Eric Sautédé

agenda would be implemented.

Speaking about the prospects for democratic reform in the current five-year government term, the political scientist said that the Chief Executive had only mentioned democracy once in his platform, implying that such reform would not be a priority.

For Sautédé, Ho's dislike of pro-democracy elements such as lawmaker Sulu Sou is obvious. Ho presided over the Legislative Assembly as its former president during the controversial suspension of Sou in late 2017. He was also seen as the hand behind the dismissal of legal veterans Paulo Taipa and Paulo Cardinal, who had advised the legislature on Sou's suspension.

"I think that this is not a positive heritage from his years in the assembly," said Sautédé.

For some, the new administration of Ho is dubbed as a "new game in town," with some noting that he is more outspoken than the previous administration. This is evident in his choices of secretaries.

"It's very clear, these guys are running the show [including] Wong [Sio Chak] and the new Secretary for Justice and Administration [André Cheong]," said Sautédé. Commenting on his choice of

secretaries, the political scientist noted, "it's brand new and [raises] a lot of question marks."

Sautédé said that the posting of André Cheong as Secretary for Administration and Justice was un-

expected. The former head of the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) was said to be frustrated back in 2014 when he became the commissioner for CCAC, as he had long wanted the job of Sonia Chan, the former top official for administration and justice.

"He had all the credentials [...] but he did not belong to the 12 guys who were sent to study in China and then were sent to Portugal in the 1980s and 90s to take the important roles in Macau."

Meanwhile, the appointment of Ao Ieong U as the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture came as a surprise for Sautédé. He believes that her main role was to put things straight in a timely and orderly manner. He recalled that the Identification Services Department, which she formerly headed, is one of the most efficient departments in the SAR.

"Honestly speaking, Ho thought we need to streamline and make the administration more efficient and if there is one person who really embodies the efficiency of the government, it's certainly her," he said.

MACAU YOUTH MIGHT TURN TO STREETS IN '5 TO 10 YEARS'

A public administration professor from the Macao Polytechnic Institute (IPM) says that local youngsters might turn to the streets in "5 to 10 years" to demand more democratic progress and swiftness on the resolution of long-running problems in the SAR such as housing problems.

In an interview with Portuguese newspaper Hoje Macau, Leung Kai Yin said that public protests might erupt if the new government headed by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng does not work toward political reform.

"In five years, young people can demand a high level of democracy, because those who were born in Macau have a much higher sense of belonging to the territory than their parents had. They will try to fight for their rights," Leung said in the interview with Hoje Macau.

The professor added that there are many scholars

currently believing that what is currently happening in Hong Kong will one day come to Macau, given the higher degree of local identity among the younger generations.

"The new generations have a higher educational level and a greater sense of belonging to Macau," he added.

For Leung, although the local government is paying a lot of attention to the problem and trying to prevent it from arising in the first place, the ideas aired by Ho when campaigning for Chief Executive show that he has no intention to put in place any significant political reform or enhanced democracy.

"In August [last year], some people tried to organize a vigil at the Senado Square, but the police stopped the event," he noted as an example of the prompt reaction of the government to any activities mimicking or related to the social unrest in Hong Kong. **RM**

Gov't hopes to revitalize Inner Harbor area with Wanzai ferry route

THE reopening of the ferry route between the Inner Harbor and the Wanzai Port in Zhuhai, set to take place today, is expected to help revitalize the area of the Inner Harbor, bringing more people to visit this part of the city.

To prepare for the revitalization, a delegation of the Economic Bureau (DSE) and the Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Center (CPTTM) visited several old shops in the area to provide advice to the shop owners on how to make use of this new opportunity, the Office of the Secretary for

Economy and Finance said in a statement.

According to the statement, the government officials see the reopening of this route as an opportunity for the old neighborhoods, but they expressed concerns that local businesses, mostly traditional shops,

might not be ready to receive the new tourism flow.

To prepare the businesses, the government is offering to help with the installation of devices to allow electronic payment, as well as planning a series of cultural and creative projects for this area, promoting it

and advertising it through several networks.

Besides, the government expects that these shops can be included in the plan to promote the so-called "traditional stores with special characteristics."

For the time being, the government is targeting shops and commercial spaces located in the Inner Harbor in places such as Praça de Ponte e Horta, Rua dos Ervanários and Rua de Cinco de Outubro, promoting activities based on lo-

cal gastronomy and the district's unique atmosphere.

It is also collaborating with local artists to allow them the opportunity to participate in artistic recreation of old neighborhoods, such as mural painting activities.

The ferry service, now resumed, was stopped about four years ago when the mainland authorities claimed that the pier on the Zhuhai side had no safety conditions to continue to operate. **RM**



SUPPORTING local Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) businesses through various events for the Christmas holiday season and Chinese New Year, Melco Resorts and Entertainment continues contributing to the sustainable development of Macau. As one of the city's leading integrated resort companies, **Melco has supported more than 70 local businesses in recent months by providing rent-free retail booths at their various properties.**

Traditionally, the end of the year marks the busiest season for retail businesses as shoppers search for the perfect gifts for their loved ones and prepare to gather with friends and family. To help businesses catalyze opportunities, Melco hosted a month-long SME-focused Christmas Bazaar at Studio City which featured festive retail booths, food and beverage, performances and giveaways.

SME vendors who took part in a questionnaire responded positively to the Melco Christmas Bazaar, with **around 80% of business owners reporting that they were pleased with the Bazaar's overall operations** including its duration, operation hours, decorations and booth settings, while **more than 90% of vendors expressed interest in joining future Melco-hosted SME-targeted events.**

At the same time, as one of the city's biggest employers with approximately 15,000 colleagues working locally in Macau, Melco has invited nearly 30 SMEs to take part in the Company's employee-only Heart of House area SME roadshows in the run up to Christmas and Chinese New Year, offering rent-free retail spaces at City of Dreams, Studio City and Altira Macau. **The Christmas Heart of House event generated more than MOP300,000 in sales revenue for vendors.**

"The Bazaar has been a positive and eye-opening experience for us as a local SME business. Having joined a few of Melco's workshops dedicated to SME development last year, we were confident

MELCO: CATALYZING CHRISTMAS AND LUNAR NEW YEAR OPPORTUNITIES FOR MACAU'S LOCAL SMES

to explore our relationship further with the company and jumped at the opportunity to take part in the Studio City SME-dedicated Christmas Bazaar. Initially not quite knowing what to expect, the outdoor space was beautifully lit up at the opening event, creating a lovely, festive atmosphere. It has been a great opportunity for us as a company to gain increased exposure, promoting our brand and products and meeting new clients and fellow SMEs," said Ms. Karen Chu, Executive Director of Paris Store Company Limited.

Following the employee-targeted Christmas market, a Chinese New Year market is also currently underway at Melco's Heart of House areas to support local SMEs. Sixteen attending vendors participating in the event are offering goods ranging from food and beverages to electronic appliances.

"Participating at the Christmas Bazaar event has been great for us to get to know the ins and outs of working with a large corporation like Melco. We are now further extending our relationship with them through operating a booth the employee-only area for the Chinese New Year, which we hope to be just as successful," said Ms. Ip Man Ian, Store Owner of Here Online Store.

This year, Melco plans to continue working hand in hand with SMEs for the sustainable development of Macau, announcing its forthcoming

initiative to offer rent-free spaces to local SMEs in support of Made in Macau projects through providing platforms for local vendors to showcase and sell products to visitors at Studio City.

Mr. Geoff Andres, Property President of Studio City, said, "Melco is firmly committed to supporting local SME business development in Macau. We have been planning a series of further initiatives to continue establishing detailed dialogue and understanding between ourselves and local SME businesses. We are pleased to introduce the forthcoming Macau-first pop-up store initiative at our Studio City property to provide support and contribute to the advancement of local small and medium-scale businesses and look forward to working in collaboration with many more of our local vendors towards the sustainable development of Macau."

Melco's SME-focused initiatives such as its 'Knowing You, Knowing Us' campaign aims to create a communications platform between SMEs and Melco; to help SMEs get to know Melco as a company, its management team and employees, as well as the Company's operational requirements and standards, and for Melco to get to know Macau's local suppliers, their businesses, services and offerings, and serve as a catalyst for the development of a sustainable Macau.



AUSTRALIA

LAWRENCE HO, JAMES PACKER TO APPEAR IN CASINO INQUISITION

Local casino operator Lawrence Ho and his ex-business partner, Australian James Packer, have been subpoenaed by an Australian court to be witnesses in a wide-ranging "casino inquisition," according to a report by the Herald Sun of Australia.

The media outlet described the breadth of the case as "extraordinary". It will include a robust investigation into allegations of money laundering and criminal activity in Australia via VIP junket operators.

The investigation into Lawrence Ho was prompted by his decision to acquire 19.9% of James Packer's Crown Resorts.

Ho and Packer were once business partners. About a decade ago, the duo cooperated to obtain a sub-concession from Wynn Macau, then known as Wynn Resorts S.A., to operate a gambling business in Macau.



The two extended Packer's brand in Australia, Crown, to Macau, and opened Crown Macau, currently called the Altira Macau. Ho once said the rebranding was facilitated so that intra-corporate competition would not happen.

Later, when the corporation opened the City of Dreams property, the Crown brand was relocated to the resort, with the opening of Crown Towers.

Eventually, due to corporate restructuring, Packer sold all his stakes in the company to Ho. The company was then rebranded as Melco Resorts and Entertainment.

The former Macau duo, who are reportedly still close enough to describe each other as "brothers", may have to reappear in court for at least some of the five hearings. It is understood Ho and Packer are set to

appear in the second and fourth hearings, in which the share transaction between them will be discussed. International bodies have levelled allegations of triad crimes against Stanley Ho, Lawrence Ho's father, who once controlled a casino monopoly in Macau. Such allegations have caused bumps in the path to the closure of the deal between Lawrence Ho and Packer. **AL**

JAPAN

SCANDAL MAY DELAY POLICY FOR SELECTING CASINO CITIES

The formation of a policy for selecting casino resort cities in Japan may be delayed following the arrest of a ruling party lawmaker on suspicion of receiving bribes from a Chinese company seeking to invest in the casino industry.

Initially, a set of guidelines for selecting host cities was to be published this month to provide a framework for the actual selection to take place.

However, as cited in Japanese media reports, authorities are planning to postpone the release of the final draft.

Japan's former defense minister Takeshi Iwaya has denied receiving money from a Chinese company involved in a casino bribery scandal. Iwaya, a ruling Liberal Democratic Party member who has a seat in the Lower House, was one of five lawmakers questioned by Tokyo prosecutors on a voluntary basis regarding their alleged receipt of cash from a Shenzhen-based company, reported The Japan Times.

Part of the government's plan is to minimize the negative impact of these casino resorts, once developed.

The government had already authorized licenses to build three integrated resorts and is officially receiving bids from localities in 2021. Leading the race to obtain a license are Osaka, Yokohama, and Tokyo.

Government estimates show that it would take three to four years for a casino resort to be developed. **LV**

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Macau casino profit seen to fall as Xi's visit crimped arrivals

MACAU casino operators are expected to show quarterly profit declining about 2.5% when they start reporting results this month, according to analysts' forecast.

Three out of six operators are seen posting year-on-year declines in earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization for the quarter ended December, according to a Bloomberg survey of seven analysts.

The past year was particularly challenging for the industry as it faced trade war uncertainty, a slowing Chinese economy, escalating protests in Hong Kong and a crackdown on cross-border gaming that squeezed junkets and the VIP sector.

The last quarter was further crimped by President Xi Jinping's visit. Gaming revenue declined 8% in the quarter compared with a year earlier, according to data from Macau's Gaming



Inspection & Coordination Bureau.

Wynn Macau Ltd. is expected to post the largest profit drop due to its higher reliance on the VIP segment. SJM Holdings is seen reporting the strongest earnings growth after they had a financial issue with a satellite casino resulting in a low year earlier comparison.

The gross gaming revenue contraction will soften and stabilize in the first half before moving to low double-

digit growth in the second half of the year amid improved sentiment following the U.S.-China trade deal, a more stable yuan, and increased liquidity, Bernstein analyst Vitaly Umansky wrote in a Jan. 17 report.

The Bloomberg Intelligence gauge of Macau casino shares rose nearly 19% in the December quarter compared with an 8% gain in the Hang Seng Index over the period.

Macau gross gaming re-

venue slipped 3.4% in year-on-year terms last year to post the worst annual decline since 2015. Accumulated gross gaming revenue stood at 292.45 billion patacas in 2019, with much of the year-on-year slowdown felt in the final quarter.

The 2019 revenue drop interrupted three prior years of consecutive growth that had seen Macau recover much of the ground lost after the 2014 gaming slump. **DB/BLOOMBERG**

MACAU HOTELS POPULAR DURING CNY, SAY ANALYSTS

High room prices and full bookings across many Cotai hotels and resorts is an indicator that the territory will welcome a large number of visitors this Chinese Lunar New Year period, noted the research branch of HSBC. It observed that Macau gaming stocks have been trailing the market recently. The city confirmed its first case of the new coronavirus yesterday. However, hotel bookings in the city are seemingly unaffected. Prices for hotel accommodation in Macau during the Lunar New Year period are soaring. Online travel agency Trivago shows that a standard room at Pousada Marina Infante, a four-star hotel as old as the Special Administrative Region, is selling at HKD1,900 per night. At the same time, competitor Agoda shows rooms at the Venetian Macao, amid other Cotai properties, are completely sold out for the first two nights.

MEG-STAR CLUB RECOGNIZED FOR HIGH SERVICE STANDARDS

To align with the objectives of building Macau into a "World Centre of Tourism and Leisure", local junket investor Meg-Star Group has been working to develop products and services emphasizing warm hospitality with integrated facilities and qualified services. The Venetian Macao Meg-Star International Club (under the Meg-Star Group) has been crowned SGS QualiCert™ Service Quality Certification, in recognition of its meticulous pursuit of outstanding luxury service. QualiCert Certification is the world's best-recognized official sign of independently verified service quality. The Meg-Star Group held the "SGS QualiCert™ Service Quality Certification Ceremony" for its Meg-Star International Club during the annual Charity Night and Reunion Gala Dinner in a ballroom on the third floor of the Venetian Macao this week.

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HONG KONG

BURBERRY BECOMES LATEST VICTIM OF POLITICAL PROTESTS

ROBERT WILLIAMS

BURBERRY Group Plc became the latest victim of the Hong Kong protests as sales in that market dropped in half over the Christmas quarter, while growing concern about the spread of a new viral disease in Asia risks dimming the outlook further.

The stock fell as much as 2.9% as investors looked past a higher forecast for full-year sales. Retail sales growth came in just ahead of the consensus for the company's fiscal third quarter, which ran through December, but the stock has been strong recently, gaining 27% in 2019.

The luxury industry is bracing for the impact of the growing outbreak of a new lung ailment that broke out in Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization is set to decide Wednesday whether to declare the virus an interna-



tional public health emergency, just before millions of people prepare to travel for the Chinese Lunar New Year holiday.

Revenue in Hong Kong slumped as the protests led to a drop in Chinese tourists. Sales on the mainland rose more than 10%. Burberry's growth is still lagging peers nearly two years after the head designer, Riccardo Tisci, was hi-

red and about three years since Chief Executive Officer Marco Gobetti joined. Both came from top luxury rival LVMH.

A retooled aesthetic with new products, logos, and store decor is fueling interest in the British maker of \$2,000 trenchcoats and \$470 scarves. New products made up three-quarters of the assortment. But with stores as far-flung as a bou-

tique in Paris's posh 8th district and an outlet mall in Dawsonville, Georgia, the transition to a new Burberry is taking time.

"Brand heat is improving but we are unsure that it is strong enough to take market share from the sector winners," wrote Piral Dadhania, an analyst at RBC. The company previously forecast flat sales this year. **BLOOMBERG**

HONG KONG

MAINLAND BUYERS COOL ON PROPERTY FOLLOWING PROTESTS

SHAWNA KWAN

MAINLAND Chinese, once the driving force behind Hong Kong's stratospheric home prices, are now shunning the city after months of protests.

Inquiries for Hong Kong properties from mainland Chinese plunged through the second half of last year, according to Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors data that tracks the percentage of agents reporting a drop in interest versus those reporting an increase.

"Whereas a year ago they were enthusiastic, mainland buyers today are cautious or downright skeptical," said Georg Chmiel, executive chairman of Juwai IQI, an online platform that specializes in Chinese buyers looking for international properties. "Either they are postponing their purchase in Hong Kong or deciding against it altogether."

The often-violent demonstrations have also deterred tourists from mainland China. The number of visitor arrivals from the mainland, Hong Kong's key source of tourists, slumped 58% in November from a year earlier, according to government data.

Hong Kong retained its title of the world's least-affordable housing market for a 10th straight year in 2019, according to a Demographia report earlier this week.

Chinese demand had long been seen as a catalyst for surging home prices before the Hong Kong government increased stamp duties for foreign buyers in 2016. Demand from across the border has since dwindled but remains an important factor supporting the city's real estate market. **BLOOMBERG**

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WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Xi Jinping isn't tightening China's grip on HK, according to Carrie Lam

HASLINDA AMIN,
DANDAN LI & IAIN MARLOW

CHINESE President Xi Jinping offered personal assurances that he wouldn't use protests in Hong Kong as an excuse to increase Beijing's control over the city, Chief Executive Carrie Lam said, as she used a World Economic Forum visit to try and reassure global investors.

Speaking to Bloomberg Television in Davos on Tuesday, Lam pushed back against protesters who say China is tightening its grip on Hong Kong and maintained the Asian financial center remains stable despite more than seven months of violent protests.

"There is no truth in the allegation that the central government is tightening the grip on Hong Kong," Lam said in the interview. "The central government has time and again made it very clear that they want Hong Kong to succeed under 'one country, two systems' and a high degree of autonomy."

"It was made very clear to me by President Xi Jinping on the three occasions that I met him" in recent months, she added.

Lam arrived in Davos after a fresh bout of protest violence in downtown Hong Kong, with four police officers injured in clashes with demonstrators Sunday following an otherwise peaceful rally. More than seven months of pro-democracy protests have battered the former British colony's economy, undermined its reputation for political stability and increased geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and China.

China has governed Hong Kong since 1997 under a "one country, two systems" framework that preserves its freedom of expression, independent courts and capitalist financial system. The city's pro-democracy opposition has accused Beijing of eroding that autonomy and stonewalling calls for meaningful direct elections of the chief executive, who's currently selected by a 1,200-member committee.

In the interview, Lam pushed back against the idea that Beijing was calling the shots in Hong Kong as the city grappled with the protests, maintaining that Hong Kong has a significant degree of autonomy. She said she "almost immediately" suspended legislation allowing extraditions to China that initially prompted the unrest, and that "one has to wonder what are the underlying factors that have caused this sustained

BLOOMBERG



social unrest."

"They have not given any explicit directive on how to handle it, except that they've made it clear that the solution also has to abide by 'one country, two systems,'" she said, referring to China's directives. "You can't go beyond the constitutional requirement to solve this issue. Similarly, domestically, I couldn't go beyond the rule of law to solve this political crisis."

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

The most consequential demand from protesters is universal suffrage, which was promised in the Basic Law - the city's mini-constitution - since China took control of the former British colony in 1997.

Asked why she hasn't agreed to universal suffrage as demanded by protesters, Lam stuck by a proposal that China made in 2014 to have a committee historically stacked with Beijing loyalists screen nominees. The proposal also requires that the nominee "loves the country and loves Hong Kong."

"I wouldn't say that framework required approval by the central government as far as the candidates are concerned," Lam said, adding that she helped design the proposal. The nominating committee, she said, is "not entirely within sort of Beijing loyalites: You have professional people, you have representatives from the trade unions, from the business sector. But ultimately there is another Basic Law provision that the chief executive has to be appointed by the central people's government."

"It depends on whether we can build consensus on this very important issue within a framework laid down in the Basic Law," she added.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION

Lam has also refused to consider other key protester demands including an independent commission of inquiry, which has statutory power to issue search warrants, compel testimony and hold witnesses in contempt if they fail to cooperate. Instead, she has opted for methods with limited investigative powers that have failed to appease the city's pro-democracy movement.

In the interview, Lam said the Independent Police Complaints Council - the city's police complaints watchdog - was sufficient to look into the unrest, calling it "an equally independent and statutory mechanism." The overseas experts she appointed to advise the body withdrew from the process, citing the agency's lack of independence and resources.

"One of the important principles that I have adhered to in dealing with this very difficult situation is we need to protect the institutional strengths of Hong Kong and uphold the rule of law," Lam said. "So if we have already an independent statutory mechanism to deal with that situation, that mechanism must be put in place for very good reason in the overall interest of Hong Kong."

She also said protesters were demanding an amnesty for

everyone arrested, including for serious crimes like arson, petrol bombs and setting a man on fire, which "nobody could agree to."

"Am I going to respond to those political demands in order to solve this problem?" she said.

THE ECONOMY

The protests have had a profound impact on the city's retail and tourism-dependent economy, with rallies deterring visitors from mainland China and elsewhere and leading companies to cancel many local events. The government has estimated that the economy contracted 1.3% last year, and economists forecast stagnation this year.

Lam's administration has so far proposed additional spending of about HK\$25 billion (\$3.2 billion) - or less than 1% of the city's gross domestic product - despite holding fiscal reserves in excess of around HKD1 trillion.

"Those four rounds of measures introduced and announced by the financial secretary are really relief measures," Lam said. "They are there to support the companies, especially the small and medium enterprises, so that we can preserve as many jobs as possible."

"Ultimately to take Hong Kong out of the economic difficulties requires first of all stability," she added. "Secondly it's an early restoration of law and order, and thirdly it's continued government investment in important sectors - for example, innovation and technology."

LAM'S OWN FUTURE

Rumors have persisted for months that Beijing may replace Lam, whose approval rating is hovering near a record low of 14%, according to a Hong Kong Public Opinion Program survey released earlier this month. So far, Xi has reaffirmed China's support for Lam, although Beijing replaced its main representative in Hong Kong earlier this month with an official some analysts described as a hardliner.

Asked her thoughts on the approval rating, Lam said: "I have confessed and I have taken full responsibility for misjudgment and for the sort of a lack of a full assessment of the situation in taking forward the bill. But let me make it very clear, hand on my heart, that bill was well intended."

"It is not difficult to quit, but walking away from such a big dilemma and problem now is, in my view, not very responsible," she said. "Because we have several crises that we need to manage at the same time, I will do my utmost to stay in this position to help arrest the current situation," Lam added.

Asked about her legacy, Lam noted it was her 40th year in Hong Kong's public service.

"I hope that people would remember, in whichever position facing whichever difficulties, my heart goes to the people of Hong Kong," she said. "And I would continue to serve the people of Hong Kong." **BLOOMBERG**



EU GIVES GOVERNMENTS SCOPE FOR BANS ON SOME 5G SUPPLIERS

NATALIA DROZDIAK

THE European Union will advise member states to consider banning some suppliers from parts of their 5G networks, in a policy document that may give them more scope to restrict the activities of China's Huawei Technologies Co.

The proposal is part of a so-called "toolbox" of measures seen by Bloomberg, to help national governments mitigate risks arising from 5G mobile te-

chnology. The recommendations will help coordinate the policies of member states to reduce the likelihood of espionage and sabotage.

While the measures don't explicitly mention China, they will help EU governments decide whether to limit the access of Huawei and other Chinese vendors to 5G as phone companies accelerate investment in the technology.

Member states will act following risk assessments that

take into account criteria outlined in a previous report, such as the "democratic checks and balances" in the home country of the supplier, according to the proposals.

The document is due to be unveiled by senior EU officials next Wednesday. The proposals also include bolstering the role of national authorities, audits of telecom operators and measures to ensure diversity of suppliers for any single telecommunications company.

5G promises to fix data bottlenecks in busy areas and open up more sophisticated mobile applications such as augmented reality gaming and mapping. The technology will also be used to connect factories, transportation systems and critical infrastructure.

U.S. officials have long urged European governments to exclude Huawei from their networks, arguing it threatens their national security. Huawei and Chinese officials have repeatedly denied

the company poses a spying risk.

Despite the U.S. lobbying, the long-anticipated document won't point to a blanket European ban of Chinese companies from lucrative 5G contracts.

The proposals do, however, include stricter screening of foreign direct investment in the area of 5G, to avert takeovers of companies deemed critical for network security. The document also proposes anti-dumping duties and other penalties for companies benefiting from state subsidies, in what could pave the way for import levies on Chinese equipment.

The European Commission's own powers are limited as decisions to ban companies for national security reasons rest strictly with member states.

The wording of the toolbox and the political agreement leave room for countries to interpret the guidelines as they wish. Telecom companies in various European countries have already struck deals with Huawei on 5G.

Still, the attempt at a coordinated approach among EU members may avoid potential U.S. or Chinese retaliation against a single European country.

Many governments are wary of angering Beijing, a significant trading partner. China's ambassador to Germany, Wu Ken, warned last month that a Huawei ban would result in consequences, and cited German auto sales in China. The U.S. is an important security ally that has said repeatedly it may reassess intelligence sharing with countries that use Huawei in their 5G networks.

British Culture Secretary Nicky Morgan has said the U.K. plans to keep Huawei out of critical national infrastructure. A final decision is expected later this month. **BLOOMBERG**

Tencent offers 27% premium to take over game maker Funcom

MIKAEL HOLTER

CHINESE giant Tencent Holdings Ltd. offered to buy Funcom NV in an all-cash offer that values the Norwegian game developer at 1.33 billion kroner (\$148 million) fully diluted.

The 17 krone-a-share offer, which was recommended by Funcom's management and board, represents a 27% premium to Tuesday's closing price in Oslo. The shares rose to 16.88 kroner apiece as of 10:25 a.m.

Tencent is making its move after buying 29% of Funcom last year, already making it the biggest shareholder in the company. It's the latest international foray for the world's biggest online game company, whose foreign investments span stakes in leading game developers such as Riot Games Inc and Supercell Oy, to U.S. electric-carmaker Tesla Inc.

Funcom also said it planned to focus resources on the so-called open world survival

segment, building on the success of its biggest seller, Conan Exiles. That will mean delays for another project and require more funding, it said in a separate statement on Wednesday.

"Tencent will provide Funcom with operational leverage and insights from its vast knowledge as the leading company in the game space," Funcom Chief Executive Officer Rui Casais said in the statement. "We will continue to develop great games that people all over the world will

play, and believe that the support of Tencent will take Funcom to the next level."

The offer period will last five weeks from about Feb. 5, Funcom said.

Tencent hired JP-Morgan Chase & Co. as financial adviser and Baker McKenzie and AGP Advokater AS as legal advisers. ABG Sundal Collier ASA is Funcom's financial adviser, and Advokatfirmaet CLP DA and Weidema van Tol its legal advisers. **BLOOMBERG**

HK BROADCASTER TVB SOARS AS CHAIRMAN TO RESIGN, SELL STAKE

SHIRLEY ZHAO

TELEVISION Broadcasts Ltd., Hong Kong's dominant broadcaster, gained the most in almost three years after saying its chairman would quit and sell his stake in Young Lion Holdings Ltd., the company's biggest shareholder.

Shares in the company known as TVB jumped as much as 8.1% on Wednesday in Hong Kong, the biggest surge since February 2017. Chairman Charles Chan has signed a conditional agreement to dispose of his interests in Young Lion, TVB said in a statement Wednes-

day. Chan held a 6% stake in Young Lion, the Apple Daily newspaper reported in December.

Hong Kong's largest broadcaster has drawn investment from funds including Silchester International Investors LLC, which has boosted its stake to more than 20%, becoming the second-largest holder. A change in the ownership of Young Lion may signal the broadcaster seeks to attract more investors.

TVB stock has declined about 12% in the past 12 months, compared with a 4.9% gain in the benchmark Hang Seng Index. **BLOOMBERG**

Taiwan urges China to release all information on new virus

TAIWANESE President Tsai Ing-wen urged China yesterday to release all information about the outbreak of a new virus and work with Taiwan on curbing its spread.

At China's insistence, Taiwan is not a member of the World Health Organization and is not allowed to participate in any of its meetings. However, large numbers of Taiwanese travel to and live in China, where hundreds of people have been sickened and nine have died in an outbreak that apparently originated in the city of Wuhan.

Despite Beijing's restrictions, the Taiwan Center for Disease Control said earlier this month it had been notified on Jan. 15 by its Chinese counterpart about the outbreak. It said it had also sent two experts to Wuhan to visit health care facilities in order to "better understand the treatment process of the cases."

Tsai made no mention of those interactions at her news conference yesterday. Calls to her spokesman rang unanswered.

"I especially want to urge China, being a member of international society, that it should fulfill its responsibilities to make the situation of the outbreak transparent, and to share accurate information on the outbreak with Taiwan," Tsai told reporters.

One case of the previously unknown coronavirus has been confirmed in Taiwan and others in Macao, South Korea, Japan, Thailand and the United States. The Taiwanese patient, a businesswoman who recently returned from Wuhan, is recovering, Tsai said.

Sharing information is also important for the health of the Chinese population and Beijing

AP PHOTO



"should not put political concerns above the protection of its own people," Tsai said.

China regards Taiwan as its own territory and says it is not entitled to representation in most international bodies.

"I want to reiterate that Taiwan is a member of international society. The 23 million people here,

like all other people in every corner of the world, are facing threats to their own health," Tsai said.

Taiwan, which was heavily affected by the 2002-2003 SARS outbreak that also originated in China, has enacted strict monitoring, detection and quarantine measures.

In Beijing, foreign ministry

spokesman Geng Shuang said the Taiwanese experts had visited Wuhan at Taiwan's request on Jan. 13-14 and held exchanges with Chinese colleagues.

"No one cares more about the health welfare of Taiwan compatriots than the Chinese central government," Geng said at a daily briefing yesterday.

Chiu Chui-cheng, deputy minister of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, told The Associated Press that the visit was facilitated by an existing bilateral agreement covering medicine and public health.

"They dealt with issues related to the health and well-being of both countries' people," Chiu said. AP

Tour agencies: N. Korea bans foreign tourists over new virus

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

NORTH Korea has banned foreign tourists to guard against the spread of a new virus from China, tour operators in China said.

Foreign travel to North Korea has been temporarily suspended as of yesterday, the Beijing-based Uri Tours said on its website citing its partners in Pyongyang.

It said it wasn't immediately known how long the travel suspension will last or what protocols will be implemented.

"Our future tours remain open for booking," the agency said. "But should this border closure affect your travel, we are giving tourists the ability to reschedule at any time or to

AP PHOTO



receive a complete refund of their deposit [less bank charges] as per our terms and conditions."

Two other well-known

North Korea tour operators based in China confirmed the border closure.

Koryo Tours said in an email that North Korea

"has closed all of their borders until further notice due to coronavirus." Young Pioneer Tours said details about the travel suspension

had not been elaborated by its North Korean partners.

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles relations with North Korea, said yesterday it couldn't confirm the border closure with China.

Most foreign tourists to North Korea are Chinese or people who travel to the North from China, its major diplomatic ally and biggest aid benefactor.

Tourism has been one of the few legitimate sources of foreign currency for North Korea, which is under multiple rounds of U.N. sanctions over its nuclear program. The North has been building ski slopes, spas and other attractions to entice more tourists and revive its troubled economy.

North Korea hasn't re-

ported any cases of the new coronavirus centered in China. But its state media have reported about the outbreak in China to try to increase public awareness of the disease and its symptoms.

In 2003, North Korea closed its borders during the scare over SARS, which is caused by a different coronavirus. For several months between late 2014 and early 2015, North Korea also banned foreign tourists over fears of the spread of the Ebola virus.

In 2003, North Korea suspended South Korean tours to its scenic mountain for two months. The joint tour program was eventually put on hold in 2008 after a North Korean soldier fatally shot a South Korean tourist. AP

HUAWEI Technologies Co. founder Ren Zhengfei shrugged off the threat the U.S. will impose even stricter sanctions against his company, saying he was confident China's largest tech company can survive further attacks from Washington.

Tighter restrictions on the sale of American technology to the telecommunications giant - something the White House is considering - will not have very significant impact on Huawei, the billionaire chief executive said during a panel discussion at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

"This year, the U.S. might further escalate its campaign against Huawei but I feel the impact on Huawei's business would not be very significant," he said in response to a question about U.S. curbs. "We're confident we can survive further attacks."

Huawei has risen to global prominence as the No. 2 smartphone maker and a leader in the fifth-generation wireless technology that will underpin future advances from autonomous cars to robotics. It's also become a major target for the U.S. as China's technological prowess grew along with its ambitions, encapsulating growing tensions between the world's two largest economies.

The Trump administration has pushed allies to ban Huawei equipment from their networks on worries about spying, and blacklisted Huawei along with a clutch of Chinese technology companies in fields from artificial intelligence to surveillance.

HUAWEI'S CEO DISMISSES LOOMING THREAT OF A US ESCALATION



Huawei Technologies Co. founder Ren Zhengfei

Ren initially estimated the May 2019 blacklisting in particular could wipe \$30 billion off annual revenue and threaten his company's very survival, though

he tempered that outlook in the ensuing months. Huawei mobilized a massive effort to develop in-house alternatives to American software and circuitry, while

U.S. suppliers like Intel Corp. and Microsoft Corp. found ways to continue supplying Huawei vital components it needed to make its products.

"The U.S. should not be concerned about Huawei and our position in the world," Ren, looking at ease in a blazer and open shirt, told the panel. **BLOOMBERG**

Wife: Ex-Interpol boss jailed for reformist views

JOHN LEICESTER, PARIS

IN her first comments about her husband's jail sentence, the wife of the former Interpol president imprisoned in China has dismissed his bribery conviction as "a lie, a fake case" and said he is being punished for having used his senior position within the ruling Communist Party to push for reform from within.

Speaking in an exclusive interview yesterday with The Associated Press, Grace Meng said her husband, Meng Hongwei, had been part of a reformist faction within the secretive ruling party. She said he and others argued, out of the public eye and at the highest circles of power in China, for a "modern" constitutional and election-based political system, as a response to worsening corruption.



Former Interpol president Meng Hongwei

"About four or five years ago, at the center of the upper echelons of the CCP (Communist Party), everyone discussed the problem: Everyone knew corruption was rampant,

touching all officials, every department," Grace Meng said. "Everyone was worried about the situation."

"So what should be done? There were two opposing points of view,"

she said. "One was that power needed to be concentrated even further, which is the method adopted now."

"The other view was that the system should be fun-

damentally changed," she added.

She said her husband and others were part of a faction that pushed that view and that he is now being persecuted for it. Meng Hongwei was a senior official in the regime who held high-ranking positions, including as a long-serving vice minister of public security.

Grace Meng offered no written or other documentary proof of what she said were her husband's reformist views. She has previously said the case against him is politically motivated. But she had never before discussed the political background in such detail.

China said this week that Meng was sentenced to 13 years and six months in prison on charges of accepting more than \$2 million in bribes.

A statement Tuesday from the No. 1 Intermediary Court in the northern city of Tianjin said Meng accepted the verdict and would not appeal. In addition to his prison sentence, he was fined 2 million yuan (\$290,000).

It said Meng, 66, admitted he abused his position to accept 14.4 million yuan (\$2.1 million) in bribes while serving in various offices, including as a vice minister of public security and maritime police chief, often in exchange for favors and using his influence with other officials.

His wife described the charges as trumped-up and said that nothing attributed to him by China's entirely state-run media should be believed.

"It's all lies," she said. "He has no right to speak."

"It is a political issue," she said. **AP**

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BATTLE FOR INDIA'S NEW CITIZENSHIP LAW MOVES TO TOP COURT

RISHABH R. JAIN, NEW DELHI

INDIA'S top court yesterday began hearing dozens of petitions seeking the revocation of amendments to the citizenship law following nationwide protests and a security crackdown that led to more than 20 deaths.

The Supreme Court would not grant a stay before hearing from the government, which has argued the law is a humanitarian gesture allowing citizenship for people fleeing religious persecution in Muslim-majority Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Chief Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde, the head of a three-judge panel, told the courtroom he will make a decision in four weeks after the government has replied to all of the petitions. He also asked a larger, five-judge constitutional panel to take part in the decision.

The law Parliament approved in December sparked vehement opposition. Protesters, political opponents and constitutional lawyers have said it is discriminatory because it excludes Muslims.

The nationwide protests numbering in the tens of thousands appear to be the fiercest public criticism Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist-led government has faced.

Modi's party has downplayed the protests as orchestrated by political opponents. His powerful Home Minister Amit Shah said the government will not retreat on the law.

"Those who want to protest may continue doing so," Shah said Tuesday at a public rally in Lucknow.



AP PHOTO

Most of the petitions argue that by excluding Muslims, the law undermines the first sentence of the preamble to the Indian Constitution, which defines the country as secular, and violates Article 14, which guarantees equality before the law.

"We believe the court will certainly take into consideration the views expressed by all these sections of people, and they will come to a conclusion that it is against the Constitution of India," said petitioner K.M. Kader Mohideen.

Modi's government and proponents of the changes say Muslim immigrants still could attain citizenship through the existing naturalization process.

"Because it is a well-drafted legislation, with a specific purpose, for a specific group of people, there is really no problem on it passing the muster," said Aishwarya Bhati, a senior advocate at the Supreme Court who

supports the government's move.

Those who oppose the law believe the government will argue it is not based on an immigrant's religion, but on religious persecution in the three countries.

"If you discriminate on the grounds of religion, that itself is prohibited in the constitution," said Colin Gonsalves, a senior advocate at the Supreme Court and founder of the Human Rights Law Network, which filed two of the petitions.

Gonsalves, however, said it is unlikely judges will strike down or alter the law, echoing the fears of many Indians who oppose the measure and are questioning the court's independence.

"The Supreme Court is no longer the beacon light of democracy in India," Gonsalves said. "Judges today are political, liaised, in a wrong way, that is, towards government."

Jay Panda, the national vice president and spokesman of Modi's party, said that many of the protesters were students or poor, illiterate people, many of whom had not read the amendment and were being misled by "provocateurs."

"Some people are deliberately provoking them," said Panda, referring to a monthlong sit-in by hundreds of Muslim women, many of them homemakers, on the outskirts of India's capital.

Critics also say that the new citizenship law discriminates because it lowers the minimum residence requirement to five years for Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian migrants, while keeping it at 11 years for Muslims and other religious groups.

India has a vast, undocumented immigrant population among its 1.3 billion people, with many of them living in the country for generations.

In the northeastern state of Assam, the center of sometimes-violent opposition to immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh, the government last year said 1.9 million people had failed to prove their Indian citizenship.

Those people must make their case for citizenship in front of quasi-legal tribunals, and could be detained or deported if the tribunals deem them foreigners. AP

Singapore says Asia's at 'turning point' as US, China face off

FARIS MOKHTAR

THE first-phase trade deal between the U.S. and China doesn't signal an end to tensions between the world's top two economies, according to Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who warned that Asia is now at a turning point as the nations jostle for influence across the region.

"We're relentlessly optimistic, but not that much so," Lee said in a 30-minute dialog at the World Economic Forum in Davos yesterday. Tensions between the pair have yet to peak as Washington seeks to adapt to a rising China, whose economy will eclips

se the U.S.'s, Lee told the audience.

The U.S. and China struck an interim deal on trade this month, with Beijing agreeing to step up purchases of goods from America, and a second-phase agreement is meant to be in the works. Singapore, a trade-dependent city-state in Southeast Asia, has been buffeted by the conflict as growth slowed.

"Now we are at a turning point, all three of these factors are changing," Lee said, referring to the roles of the U.S. and China in Asia, as well as the pace of globalization. The "security balance, strategic balance in the region is

shifting because China has become more influential, a more substantial participant."

Previously, Lee has warned that Southeast Asian nations might one day be forced to choose between the U.S. and China if the world economy gets pulled apart into different blocs - a theme he revisited in his remarks in Davos.

"That means you must have the courage to stand up and call things as they are," he said. "And from time to time, you will incur at least a raised eyebrow, and sometimes more than one raised eyebrow from one side or the other and occasionally both."

BLOOMBERG



Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

UN experts: Jeff Bezos phone hack shows link to Saudi prince

THE phone of Amazon billionaire and Washington Post owner Jeff Bezos was hacked after receiving a file sent from an account used by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, United Nations experts alleged yesterday.

The experts called for an "immediate investigation" by the United States and others into information they received that suggests that Bezos' phone was hacked after receiving an MP4 video file sent from the Saudi prince's WhatsApp account.

Bezos went public about the incident after allegedly being shaken down by the National Enquirer tabloid, which he said threatened to expose a "below-the-belt" selfie he'd taken and other private messages he'd exchanged with a woman he was dating while still married at the time.

A forensic report that was commissioned by Bezos and shared with the U.N. experts assessed with "medium to high confidence" that his phone was infiltrated



Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos

on May 1, 2018, via the MP4 video file.

Saudi critic and Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi

was killed by Saudi agents inside the Saudi consulate in Turkey in October that same year. The Post was highly critical of the Saudi go-

vernment after his killing.

"The information we have received suggests the possible involvement of the Crown Prince

in surveillance of Mr. Bezos, in an effort to influence, if not silence, The Washington Post's reporting on Saudi Arabia," the independent U.N. experts said.

"At a time when Saudi Arabia was supposedly investigating the killing of Mr. Khashoggi, and prosecuting those it deemed responsible, it was clandestinely waging a massive online campaign against Mr. Bezos and Amazon targeting him principally as the owner of The Washington Post," the U.N. experts said.

The U.N. experts reviewed the 2019 digital forensic analysis of Bezos' iPhone, which they said was made available to them as U.N. special rapporteurs, which are independent experts appointed by the world body.

The experts said that records showed that within hours of receipt of the video from the crown prince's account, there was "an anomalous and extreme change in phone behavior" with enormous amounts of data from the phone being transmitted over the following months.

The Financial Times has seen the forensic report that was done by FTI Consulting, the private firm hired by Bezos. The newspaper said the forensic report "does not claim to have conclusive evidence," and "could not ascertain what alleged spyware was used." AP

AD

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what's ON



RED DECEMBER – EXHIBITION OF CARLOS MARREIROS

TIME: 10am-9pm

UNTIL: February 13, 2020

VENUE: Tap Seac Gallery, located at No. 95, Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

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

"TASTE OF CELEBRATION" EXHIBITION

TIME: 10am-10pm

UNTIL: February 9, 2020

VENUE: Macau Tower

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2893 3339

Offbeat

COLD-STUNNED IGUANAS EXPECTED TO FALL FROM FLORIDA TREES

The National Weather Service routinely warns people about falling rain, snow and hail, but temperatures are dropping so low in South Florida the forecasters warned residents Tuesday about falling iguanas.

"This isn't something we usually forecast, but don't be surprised if you see Iguanas falling from the trees tonight as lows drop into the 30s and 40s. Brrrr!" NWS Miami tweeted.

The low temperatures stun the invasive reptiles, but the iguanas won't necessarily die. That means many will wake up as temperatures rise Wednesday.

Iguanas aren't dangerous or aggressive to humans, but they damage seawalls, sidewalks, landscape foliage and can dig lengthy tunnels. The males can grow to at least 5 feet (1.5 meters) long and weigh nearly 20 pounds (9 kilograms).

Female iguanas can lay nearly 80 eggs a year, and South Florida's warm climate is perfect for the prehistoric-looking animals. Iguanas are native to Central America, tropical parts of South America and some Caribbean islands.

Iguanas are allowed to be kept as pets in Florida but are not protected by any law except anti-cruelty to animals. They've been in South Florida since the 1960s, but their numbers have increased dramatically in recent years.

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 Filosóficas
16:45	Portugueses Pelo Mundo Sr.1
17:30	LiteraturAqui
18:00	Império (Repetição)
18:55	Semana Internacional (Repetição)
19:30	Ouro Verde Sr.1
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
21:55	Viagens Gastronómicas
22:20	Império
23:15	TDM News
23:50	5 Para a Meia Noite
01:40	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:25	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

23 - 30 Jan



ENTER THE FAT DRAGON

ROOM 1

2:00, 6:05pm

Director: Kenji Tanigakari

Starring: Donnie Yen, Teresa Mo, Niki Chow

Language: Chinese (Chinese, English)

Duration: 123min

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

ROOM 1

3:50, 8:00, 10:15pm

Director: Dayo Wong

Starring: Dayo Wong, Annie Liu, Catherine Chau

Language: Chinese (Chinese, English)

Duration: 109min



DOLITTLE

ROOM 2

2:00, 5:50, 9:45pm

Director: Stephen Gaghan

Starring: Robert Downey Jr, Antonio Banderas

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 125min

ALLS WELL THAT ENDS WELL 2020

ROOM 2/3

2:55, 7:45, 9:30pm

Director: Raymond Wong

Starring: Julian Cheung, Louis Cheung, Raymond Wong

Language: Chinese (Chinese/English)

Duration: 101min

SPIES IN DISGUISE

ROOM 3

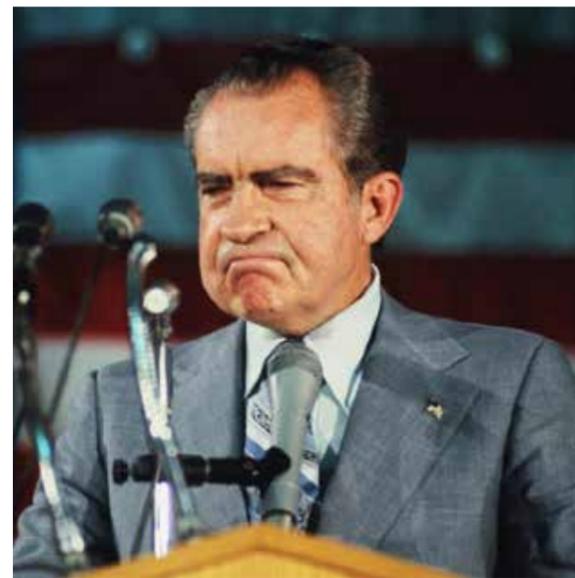
2:00, 3:55, 7:30pm

Director: Troy Quanc, Nick Bruno

Language: Chinese

Duration: 120min

this day in history



1973 NIXON ANNOUNCES VIETNAM PEACE DEAL

The US president, Richard Nixon, has appeared on national television to announce "peace with honour" in Vietnam.

Statements issued simultaneously in Washington and Hanoi confirmed the peace deal was signed in Paris at 1230 local time, bringing to an end America's longest war.

The ceasefire will begin at midnight Hanoi time on Saturday, 27 January, monitored by an international force made up of troops from Canada, Poland, Hungary and Indonesia.

President Nixon's speech from the Oval office at the White House was broadcast on national radio and television.

He said: "Throughout the years of negotiations, we have insisted on peace with honour, I set forth the goals that we considered essential for peace with honour.

"In the settlement that has now been agreed to, all the conditions that I laid down then have been met."

The conditions include the release of prisoners of war within 60 days and all American forces to be withdrawn within the same time period.

An international conference will be held within 30 days, probably in Vienna, to guarantee the peace.

American forces have been involved in the conflict in Vietnam for more than a decade. In 1967, there were 500,000 American troops deployed in Vietnam.

For the people of South Vietnam, the president had this message: "By your courage, by your sacrifice, you have won the precious right to determine your own future and you have developed the strength to defend that right.

"We look forward to working with you in future, friends in peace as we have been allies in war."

To the leaders of North Vietnam, the president said: "As we have ended the war through negotiations, let us now build a peace of reconciliation.

"For our part, we are prepared to make a major effort to help achieve that goal, but just as reciprocity was needed to end the war, so, too, will it be needed to build and strengthen the peace."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The last American troops left Vietnam on 29 March 1973. The following year there were frequent violations of the peace treaty.

In 1975, fullscale warfare resumed between North and South Vietnam - without American intervention. In 1976 the first elections were held to a National Assembly, finally reuniting North and South.

As for Nixon, he had been re-elected with a landslide majority and sworn in for a second time three days before announcing the 1973 peace deal.

But his honeymoon period did not last. Before Nixon's re-election, it was known there had been a break-in at the Democratic offices in the Watergate building. By the end of January, it was being linked to his re-election campaign and an inquiry was ordered.

The scandal grew and on 9 August 1974, facing impeachment, he resigned.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

A smile will turn out to be more valuable than a big wad of cash today. So, go ahead and use your charm to get what you want. Why not? It's a great way to make someone else happy.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Your daily routine won't seem so dull today. The universe has a few wrenches to throw into the works, and you'll enjoy every single hiccup you encounter! Embrace all the chaos.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

As a concept, love may be important to you right now, but you might be having some anti-romance feelings today. It would be wise for you to avoid any cooing couples.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You may be confused when someone close to you espouses two seemingly contradictory ideas today. To you, it sounds as though this person is talking out of both sides of their mouth.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Your opinions have extra weight right now, so vocalize them loudly and proudly if you really want to make some changes in your world. Get involved!



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

If you want a deep and meaningful exchange of ideas today, you need to get creative and have the courage to act in an unusual or unexpected manner. You need to get their attention.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Sometimes, there is absolutely nothing wrong with being more intrigued by the way something looks than by its practicality. Having an eye for beauty is important.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

If you're trying to get someone's attention today, you should opt for an illogical approach. Instead of making yourself as noticeable as a neon sign, try to be more elusive. Don't be too easy to get hold of.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

There is no denying that several people working together can be a far greater force than several individuals working alone. History shows that major change can happen when people unite.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Today, a friend's invitation could help you learn more about a foreign culture that you've always been curious about. This is a wonderful day for you to go exploring.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

In the past, when you saw something you wanted to do, you didn't wait for an engraved invitation before getting involved. Why are you being so shy about embracing a certain new experience?



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Your primary task today will be to try to figure out how to choose which option to take advantage of first. The good news is that picking a path is not an exact science. It's an art you have mastered.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

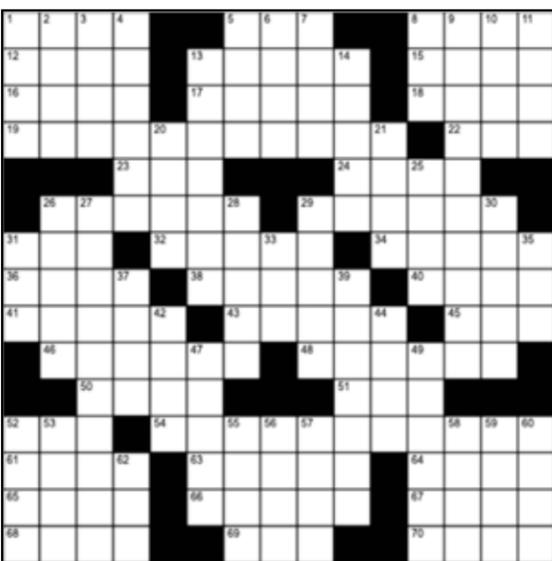
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-5	8	clear
Harbin	-22	-9	snow shower
Tianjin	-2	8	smoggy
Urumqi	-12	-3	clear
Xi'an	-1	8	overcast
Lhasa	-5	4	snow shower
Chengdu	7	12	overcast
Chongqing	10	12	overcast
Kunming	3	20	clear
Nanjing	7	10	drizzle
Shanghai	8	10	moderate rain
Wuhan	2	7	drizzle
Hangzhou	6	9	moderate rain
Taipei	17	21	cloudy
Guangzhou	18	26	cloudy
Hong Kong	19	24	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-6	-4	flurry
Frankfurt	0	5	overcast
Paris	0	4	clear
London	4	6	drizzle
New York	-7	1	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Roseanne, once; 5- Shoe tool; 8- Large wading bird; 12- Caesar's wings; 13- Chirp; 15- Lady of Sp.; 16- Chuck; 17- Thick-skinned charger; 18- Wanting; 19- Dominance; 22- Pond fish; 23- Pen point; 24- Bern's river; 26- Chemical indicator; 29- Nutlike kernel; 31- Devoted follower; 32- Lost a lap; 34- Hawkins of Dogpatch; 36- Chip in; 38- Taken in; 40- Actress Downey; 41- Distorts; 43- Warsaw residents; 45- Armed conflict; 46- Places of contest; 48- Sick; 50- Greek goddess of strife; 51- Bronze component; 52- T.G.I.F. part; 54- Inconsiderate; 61- Soak leather in base solution; 63- ___ nous; 64- Smell ___; 65- Skater's leap; 66- Campaign tactic; 67- Egypt's river; 68- Disencumbers; 69- Self starter?; 70- Consider;

DOWN: 1- Cricket equipment; 2- Baseball family name; 3- Coarse file, angry tone of voice; 4- Take as an affront; 5- Horton Hears ___; 6- Small dam; 7- Filmmaker Riefenstahl; 8- AOL, e.g.; 9- Dilapidated; 10- Langston Hughes poem; 11- Delhi wrap; 13- Testimonial; 14- Bottom line; 20- Wheel parts; 21- Edible roots; 25- Laugh heartily; 26- Sri ___; 27- Concerned; 28- Lathers; 29- Journalist ___ Rogers St. Johns; 30- Joltin' Joe; 31- Scale notes; 33- Siouan speaker; 35- Musical aptitude; 37- Large jug or pitcher; 39- Nor's partner; 42- Irritated state; 44- Split; 47- Barbecue leftovers?; 49- Upcountry; 52- Girder type; 53- Prepare for takeoff; 55- Treater's words; 56- Western Native Americans; 57- Mardi ___; 58- Ashtabula's lake; 59- Cut-price retail event; 60- Meerscham part; 62- Overhead trains;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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\$20,000/mth 2 bed 2 bath

FOR SALE

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- [Macau] Lakeview Tower 3 bed 2 bath 1,344 ft² \$11,000,000 (ref: 19126001)
- [Taipa] 2 connected unit 4 bed 2 bath 1,404 ft² \$8,680,000 (ref: 19096006)
- [Taipa] Nova City 3 bed 2 bath 1,515 ft² \$11,750,000 (ref: 19106001)

FOR RENT

- [Macau] La Marina n/a \$11,200/mth (ref: 19091001)
- [Cotai] One Grantai 3 bed 3 bath 2,122 ft² \$23,000/mth (ref: 19030001RT)
- [Taipa] Nova Grand 2 bed 1 bath 935 ft² \$17,800/mth (ref: 19091005)
- [Taipa] Nam Long 2 bed 1 bath 645 ft² \$11,800/mth (ref: 19111001)

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AD

The Art of Giving

Lurdes de Sousa *



MODERN PHILANTHROPY AND EDUCATION

SKILLS. It's all about skills.

Where are we now? The first industrial revolution used water and steam to mechanize production. The second used electric energy to create mass production, and the third used electronics and information technology to automate production. The fourth revolution is the digital era reshaping the entire production, management and governance systems.

We live in an era of digital technology and Artificial Intelligence. The time of the fourth industrial revolution is here to stay. Are we prepared? One thing we know is that the future of the tech industry relies heavily on people's skills. "Artificial Intelligence will require the entire workforce to learn new skills" as noted in LinkedIn's 2020 emerging job report. Are we prepared?

Neuroscientist Tara Swart stresses in her writings that brain agility makes us more adaptable and resilient. It enables us to master our emotions, trust our intuition and be more creative. Creativity is an essential skill that gives us the power to reinvent, rethink and imagine. Imagination and creativity are the supportive tools guiding us in making decision for social good.

Let's come back to philanthropy. In a series of recent published articles by Le Monde, modern philanthropy, described as an "American history", is very much brought into question when evaluating the impact that philanthropists had in the past and present century for the common good. We are living in a global "philanthropy crisis" the reflection seems to suggest.

Philanthropy needs to be reinvented, rethought, reimagined. Philanthropists cannot not meet themselves, and alone, this challenge without surrounding creative minds in their decision-making process. Skills. It all about skills. And consequently, how we train younger minds to be creative (and multicultural). How does global governance address this question? Very poorly, based on the assumption that our global education system must be, in many parts of the world, completely reinvented.

The arts, the neglected child of our education systems, have been proved to be one of the key success answer for creative intelligence. Arts in education develops crucial skills to foster creativity and imagination. Some years ago, leading knowledge institutions opposed the STEM system where Science, Technology, Engineering and Math were considered the excellence of knowledge. An "A" for the Arts was added, making it the STEAM movement. For far too long in education, we've been working with the presumption of teaching to ensure our students get a "good job". Foolishly (and the word is not too strong) we are still today in the era of the fourth industrial revolution, preparing students for jobs that won't (or don't) even exist anymore. If we aim at achieving sustainable and inclusive development goals and give back to society by ensuring the well-being of tomorrow's generation, we must prepare global creative minds to respond to pressing global challenges.

That's an area where philanthropy can reinvent itself. If global governance cannot encourage the arts in education then leading philanthropists and philanthropic institutions should contribute and fund reimagined programs for the arts inside or outside the educational system. Again, it's all about skills...

As a final note and as we are entering the new lunar year, the Associação Internacional de Filantropia (Macau) wishes readers a happy, healthy and prosperous Year of the Rat!

*President, Associação Internacional de Filantropia (Macau)
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 president@artofgiving.org.mo

Macau Daily Times is the official media partner of the Associação Internacional de Filantropia (Macau).

HOW CAN YOU MAKE HEALTHY FOOD RESOLUTIONS REALLY STICK?



FOR many of us, January is all about giving things up: Maybe we're going to stop eating meat and embrace a plant-based diet. Or we're ready to kick excess sugar to the curb after a holiday season awash in sweets. Or we're committed to avoiding fast food.

Starting the year with noble goals for eating well is a modern rite of passage. But it's just as common to ditch those grand plans within a few weeks.

This year, how can we do it right? If we're pledging to make better food choices, which strategies can help us stick with them?

The consensus among experts is clear: It's tempting to begin with dramatic gestures, but the key to lasting change is setting goals that are small enough we won't scrap them by Valentine's Day.

Manageable, measurable goals can create long-term change, says Leila Azarbad, associate professor of psychology at North Central College in Naperville, Illinois. When people set lofty goals, they can get discouraged after a couple weeks.

"Our self-efficacy, that belief in our own ability, tanks," she says. "And that's a huge predictor: If you don't feel confident in your ability to make the change, you're going to discontinue trying."

Picture this, says Dana White, a sports dietitian and clinical associate professor at Quinnipiac University: You want to lose 20 pounds and you know that every afternoon you visit the office vending machine for a snack to boost your energy. So, begin packing a healthy afternoon snack — not something punitive, but something healthier that you'll

enjoy — and have that instead of a vending machine candy bar.

It's a measurable, specific change that won't be unpleasant. And if it eliminates 200 calories, that shift will make a difference over the coming weeks and months. Once that new behavior is in place, you can add another small but meaningful change.

The same thinking works if you're eliminating animal products: Rather than going cold turkey (cold tofu?), begin by replacing one dinner per week with a vegetarian meal. Plan it for a night when you won't be rushed and can make an appealing recipe, or budget for going out once a week to a vegetarian restaurant.

Then track that change for three weeks, says Anna Baker, assistant professor of psychology at Bucknell University, who researches the connection between behavioral factors such as self-management and health outcomes.

"You hear that it takes 21 days to create habit. There's debate about whether it's 21 exactly, but you need a certain amount of time of continuing to do something before it becomes a habit," Baker says. "Once you do kind of get used to that change and you're doing it regularly, then you can add in another thing."

If you make that one good shift for three weeks, congratulate yourself. Then maintain that behavior and add another small change, like drinking more water.

It's tempting to try making a half-dozen changes all at once, White says. But by focusing on individual, small, unhealthy behaviors and "really identifying

what the triggers are that lead to those behaviors," she says, people "can have a tremendous amount of success without torturing themselves."

If your goal is to lose 20 pounds, for example, it really will take four or five months — and it should, says Alex Montoye, assistant professor of clinical exercise physiology at Alma College in Alma, Michigan.

Losing a pound a week is "really the maximum sustainable weight loss," Montoye says. Much as it surprises people, "2 pounds a week is pretty extreme."

So aim to lose 5 pounds over the next six weeks through small behavioral shifts, and measure your behavior along the way. Apps and fitness trackers can help, as can a notebook where you list what you've eaten.

Researchers have found "that we are notoriously bad at estimating how many calories we're taking in," Azarbad says. "We tend to underestimate what we're eating, because we forget. When we're cooking, we taste the pasta sauce a few times and those are calories. Or we walk past our colleague's desk and they had a jar of M&M's and we took a few, but those add up. That can be the difference between you losing a pound a week and you not."

Accept that mistakes are a normal part of building a new habit. If you know an event is coming up where you'll want to divert from your eating goals, accept that you may slip a bit then.

Aim for "consistency, not perfection," says Baker. "You have to plan in advance that you're going to screw up. We're not perfect." **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



United States' football player Megan Rapinoe, who says he will not be silenced at the Summer Games

Protests or not, politics and Olympics are intertwined

EDDIE PELLIS

MORE than a half-century later, Tommie Smith and John Carlos are cemented into Olympic lore — their names enshrined in the Olympic Hall of Fame in the United States, their portrait an indelible fixture on the universal sports landscape.

As for that raised-fist salute that transformed them into Olympic icons, while also symbolizing the power athletes possess for the short time they're on their biggest stage — it's still forbidden.

Such was the warning this month in the announcement by the IOC, whose athletes' commission banned kneeling and hand gestures during medals ceremonies and competition. It's all part of an attempt to tamp down political demonstrations at this summer's Tokyo Games.

"The eyes of the world will be on the athletes and the Olympic Games," IOC President Thomas Bach said, in delivering an impassioned defense of the rules.

IOC athlete's rep Kirsty Coventry portrayed the guidance as a way to provide some clarity on an issue that has confounded both athletes and authorities for decades.

The issue, always bubbling, surfaced last year when two U.S. athletes — Gwen Berry and Race Imboden — used medal ceremonies

to make political statements at the Pan American Games. Those gestures brought a strong rebuke from the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic committees, but the groups still appear confused and conflicted about the entire matter. (The USOPC didn't welcome Smith and Carlos to an officially sanctioned event until 2016.)

The IOC got its athletes' commission, which has often contradicted key athlete movements in other Olympic areas, to get out front on the issue and offer its advice. It was essentially no different from what the IOC itself has been touting for years. Not surprisingly, some view it as an out-of-touch, retrograde attempt to stifle an increasingly outspoken generation of athletes.

The mushrooming of live TV, to say nothing of the outlets now available on social media, has empowered athletes — the best examples from recent years would be Colin Kaepernick and Megan Rapinoe, but there are dozens more — to use sports to send a message.

Rapinoe's reaction to the IOC announcement: "We will not be silenced." As much as her play, Rapinoe's outspoken fight for equal pay for the U.S. women's soccer team underscored the American victory in the World Cup last year and made her, in the minds of many, the most influential athlete of 2019.

"So much for being done about the protests," Rapinoe wrote on Instagram last weekend. "So little being done about what we are protesting about."

The athletes' commission said disciplinary action would be taken "on a case-by-case basis as necessary" and listed the IOC, the sports federations and the athletes' national governing bodies as those who will have authority to make the call. It made no mention of what the sanctions could be. In that respect, it added confusion, and might have served to emphasize the power disparity between the athletes, who are the show, and the agencies who run this multibillion-dollar enterprise and, for all intents and purposes, control the invitation list.

Among the other questions not answered in the guidance document:

Who, exactly, will adjudicate the individual cases and how will cases be adjudicated?

Who, exactly, will have ultimate responsibility for implementing sanctions?

While those questions went unanswered, the document did include the reminder that "it is a fundamental principle that sport is neutral and must be separate from political, religious or any other type of interference."

That concept, however, runs counter to long thread of Olympi-

cs-as-politics storylines that have dominated the movement since it was founded in 1896.

A truncated list includes:

- Hitler's hosting of the 1936 Games (winter and summer) in Nazi Germany.
- IOC President Avery Brundage's ham-handed handling of South Africa's status in the Olympics during apartheid.
- The 1972 massacre of Israeli athletes during the Munich Games.
- The U.S. boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, followed by the Soviet Union's boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Games.
- The IOC's awarding of the 2008 Olympics to Beijing, in part compelled by promises to shine a light on the country's attempt to improve human rights.

More recently, Bach has founded the committee a permanent place at the United Nations, used the Pyeongchang Games in South Korea to strive for better relations between the Koreas and spent ample time negotiating deals with leaders who have been kind enough to spend billions to stage the Olympics.

Though the IOC would argue that there are still places to make political statements in the Olympic space — news conferences and social media among them — it does not condone them on the field of play or the medals stand.

It made all the more striking the picture the IOC tweeted out last Monday: Bach posing on a mountain with athletes in uniform from the United States and Iran at the Youth Olympic Games — a political statement during a time of strife that is designed to forward the long-held IOC-driven credo that the Olympics promote peace.

Peace itself is dependent on politics, and the people who run the Olympics are well connected to that world.

No fewer than nine members of IOC itself are princes, princesses, dukes or sheiks — and that list doesn't include the multitude of government officials involved in organizations that branch out of the IOC. For instance, half the World Anti-Doping Agency's board comes from governments across the globe.

Bach has singled out political concerns as a major divider in the Russian doping scandal that has embroiled the Olympics the past five years — implying it's as much an East vs. West issue as one based on decisions that stem from painstakingly accumulated evidence.

The latest move comes in the run-up to what figures to be a divisive election year in the United States, the country that sends the largest contingent to the Olympics, wins the most medals and often lands some of the most outspoken athletes on the podium.

Smith and Carlos were booted from Mexico City after their protest. If history — to say nothing of Rapinoe's reaction — is any guide, the IOC could be placed in the position to decide whether to make that same sort of statement again. **AP**

OPINION

Made in Macao

Jenny Lao-Phillips



BEGINNING OF ANOTHER CYCLE

2020 is a special year. Macau just celebrated the 20th anniversary of its handover. We enter into another decade. And this week, we are also beginning another cycle of the Chinese zodiac. The Chinese New Year of 2020 brings us into the Year of the Rat again, the first of the twelve animals that symbolize the Chinese zodiac. In fact, using the twelve animals to represent the change of year dates back to ancient times, over 4000 years ago, way before we had the calendar. But why these twelve animals? Why do we begin with the Rat? For that explanation, we have different versions of the stories.

The more well-known story of the Chinese zodiac is the myth of the heavenly god who called for a race amongst the animals to choose twelve to represent each year for humans to keep track of time. All the animals were called to cross a river, and the first 12 would be chosen. Obviously, the Rat came first and since then, represented the first of the twelve-year cycle. Legend has it that the Rat and the Cat were good friends, and on the day of the race, they got the Buffalo to carry them across the river. However, the Rat got greedy and wanted to be the first to arrive, and so pushed the Cat into the river. Once the Buffalo arrived at the finish line, the Rat jumped off and was the first to cross the line. This legend also explains why cats hate rats to this day.

Another story of how the twelve animals were chosen relates to the 12 hours of the day used in ancient times. Here is an equivalence of the ancient terms used for time: 子時 (Zii Si) 23:00 - 01:00; 丑時 (Cau Si) 01:00-03:00; 寅時 (Jan Si) 03:00-05:00 ; 卯時 (Maau Si) 05:00-07:00; 辰時 (San Si) 07:00-09:00; 巳時 (Zi Si) 09:00-11:00; 午時 (Ng Si) 11:00-13:00; 未時 (Mei Si) 13:00-15:00; 申時 (Shen Si) 15:00-17:00; 酉時 (Jau Si) 17:00-19:00; 戌時 (Seot Si) 19:00-21:00; 亥時 (Hoi Si) 21:00-23:00.

Legend has it that when people decided to come up with a way to count years, they used the sequence of the hours of the day, and chose 12 animals to represent each hour. Zii Si (midnight) was the beginning of a day. The reason the Rat is the first amongst the zodiac was that amidst the quietness of midnight, people used to hear only the squeaking of the rats. So, the Rat was chosen to represent Zii Si, the first hour. Meanwhile, Cau Si is the time people got up to feed their buffaloes in the farm. So, the Buffalo represents the second year. Jan Si (the third hour) was the time of dawn when people heard tigers roar. Maau Si (fourth hour) was sunrise, when rabbits started hopping around.

Then, as the sun was rising, the sky started to get foggy, so San Si was the time that people could see the dragon, or claimed to see a dragon among the clouds and fog. Zi Si was the time that snakes came out, and noon time, Ng Si, the brightest hour of the day, was represented by the fiery and hardworking horse.

Mei Si was the time to feed the goats. Monkey ran around at Shen Si. Roosters and chicken had to be brought back into the house before it got dark at Jau Si. Seot Si was the time after dinner that heads of houses brought their dogs out for security checks before closing for the night. Finally, at Hoi Si, people got up to feed their pigs. And that is a lesser-known version of how the twelve animals were chosen, and why the Rat is the first in the cycle.

MONTY PYTHON STAR TERRY JONES DIES AT 77 THE BUZZ

Terry Jones, a member of the Monty Python comedy troupe, has died at 77. He had been suffering from dementia.

Jones's agent says he died Tuesday evening. In a statement, his family said he died "after a long, extremely brave but always good humored battle with a rare form of dementia, FTD."

With Eric Idle, John Cleese, Michael Palin, Graham Chapman and Terry Gilliam, Jones formed Monty Python's Flying Circus, whose anarchic humor helped revolutionize British comedy. Jones appeared in the troupe's TV series and films including

"Monty Python and the Holy Grail" and "The Life of Brian."

In 2016 he was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia. Jones's wife, Anna Soderstrom, and children Bill, Sally and Siri, said "we have all lost a kind, funny, warm, creative and truly loving man whose uncompromising individuality, relentless intellect and extraordinary humor has given pleasure to countless millions across six decades."

"His work with Monty Python, his books, films, television programs, poems and other work will live on forever, a fitting legacy to a true polymath," they said.

AP PHOTO



S. KOREAN MILITARY DECIDES TO DISCHARGE TRANSGENDER SOLDIER

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SOUTH KOREA

SOUTH Korea's first known transgender soldier pleaded to be allowed to continue serving after the military decided yesterday to discharge her for undergoing gender reassignment surgery.

It was the first time in South Korea that an active-duty member has been referred to a military panel to determine whether to end his or her service due to a sex reassignment operation. South Korea prohibits transgender people from joining the military but has no specific laws on what to do with those who have sex reassignment operations during their time in service.

The army said in a statement that it concluded the soldier's operation can be considered a reason for discharge.

It said the decision went through due process and was based on a related military law on personnel changes. Army officials cited a provision of the law allowing the military to discharge personnel with physical or mental disabilities if those problems weren't a result of combat or in the line of duty.

After the ruling, the staff sergeant, who identified herself as a tank driver na-

med Byun Hui-su, held a news conference at which she asked military leaders to reconsider their decision and let her serve as a female soldier.

She said becoming a soldier was her childhood dream and that she now

"Regardless of my sexual identity, I'd like to show everyone that I can become one of the great soldiers who protect this country."

BYUN HUI-SU

wants to serve at the tense border with rival North Korea.

"Regardless of my sexual identity, I'd like to show everyone that I can become one of the great soldiers who protect this country," Byun said, holding back tears. "Please give me that chance."

Byun said she had sex reassignment surgery in Thailand in November after suffering depression over her sexual identity for an extended period. She said in early 2019 she had the top score in an official assessment of tank driving skills among her battalion staff sergeants.

Speaking at the same news conference, rights activist Lim Tae-hoon said he

will fight alongside Byun and others to transform what he called "our savage military."

Lim, the leader of the Seoul-based Center for Military Human Rights, took issue with the army's legal justification for discharging Byun. "I can't resist feeling wretched at the military's vulgar mindset as they determined that the lack of a male genital is a physical disability," he said.

South Korea's state-run human rights watchdog recommended Tuesday that the army postpone its decision. The National Human Rights Commission said in a statement that referring the soldier to the military panel would be an act of discrimination over sexual identity and affect the soldier's basic human rights.

Public views on gender issues in South Korea have gradually changed in recent years. Several gay-themed movies and TV dramas have become hits and some transgender entertainers have risen to stardom. However, a strong bias against sexual minorities still runs deep in South Korean society.

Activists say transgender people are likely to face harassment, abuse and insults, and many suffer from depression. AP

AP PHOTO



Greece's lawmakers elected their country's first female president yesterday, with an overwhelming majority voting in favor of high court judge Katerina Sakellariopoulou.

AP PHOTO



Russia-Poland Over the next several days, world leaders will gather twice to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the most notorious of Nazi Germany's death camps. That there will be two competing ceremonies — one in Jerusalem today and the other at the Auschwitz site in southern Poland on Monday — underlines how politically charged World War II remains as nationalist governments in Russia and Poland seek to use their own interpretation of the past for contemporary political gain.

AP PHOTO



Venezuela The opposition leader said yesterday that he wants the European Union to broaden sanctions against members of the Venezuelan government as a way to push toward free presidential elections in the country. Speaking in Brussels during a global tour that defied a year-long travel ban at home and sought allies' support to oust Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

France's finance minister said yesterday that his country will delay its tax on the digital business of big tech firms like Google and Facebook and that the United States will hold off retaliatory sanctions.