



### AMENDED BUDGET PASSES

The Legislative Assembly has approved amendments to this year's budget, predicting a decrease on the gov't revenue

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# Times

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

### WORLD BRIEFS

**CHINA & JAPAN** China and Japan report gloomy industrial data, adding to pressure on leaders of the world's second- and third-largest economies to launch new stimulus. *More on p10*

**CHINA** Sri Lanka said yesterday that President Xi Jinping has proposed three-party talks with India and Sri Lanka to clear any misgivings over its activities in the Indian Ocean region. Cabinet minister Rauff Hakeem, who accompanied President Sirisena on a four-day visit to China, told reporters the Chinese government "was looking forward to developing trilateral talks between Colombo, Delhi and Beijing."



**JAPAN** The world's oldest person, a Japanese woman, died yesterday, weeks after celebrating her 117th birthday. Misao Okawa died of heart failure as relatives and nursing home workers stood by her side. "She went so peacefully, as if she had just fallen asleep," relatives said. A 116-year-old American woman, Gertrude Weaver of Arkansas, is now the oldest person in the planet.

**US** Over three decades ago, a 3-year-old S Korean boy and his sister flew to the US to become the adopted children of American citizens. But they were abandoned, sent into foster care and separated. A family adopted the girl, and got her citizenship. The boy, named Adam Crapser, wasn't as fortunate. *More on p12*

**PACIFIC OCEAN** A super typhoon blamed for the deaths of at least four people on islands in the western Pacific Ocean has moved into the open sea and is expected to weaken before reaching the Philippines this weekend.

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# It's official: March gaming revenue drops 40 percent

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# Thailand junta to replace martial law with absolute power

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## GAMING

# Investors see Macau's 40 pct gaming revenue drop as good news

Stephanie Wong and Billy Chan

**T**his is what passes for good news in Macau these days: the city's drop in casino revenue is stabilizing at about 40 percent.

Gross gambling revenue in the world's largest gambling hub fell 39.4 percent to 21.5 billion patacas (USD2.7 billion) last month - the second-worst monthly decline on record - according to data released yesterday by Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau. That met a median estimate of 40 percent from nine analysts surveyed by Bloomberg.

"The in-line result is just showing that the market is stable. I would think that the worst dip is over," said Shengyong Goh, a Hong Kong-based gaming analyst at BNP Paribas SA. "It's going to be long time before any upside catalyst."

SJM Holdings Ltd. jumped



2.8 percent in Hong Kong trading, while Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd. and MGM

China Holdings Ltd. each gained 2.3 percent. Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. climbed 1.8 percent, followed by Sands China Ltd. and Wynn Macau Ltd., which increased 1.7 percent and 0.7 percent, respectively.

Macau casinos are facing their lowest revenue since 2011 as the Chinese economy slows and President Xi Jinping nationwide graft crackdown stretches into a third year. The campaign has hurt sales of luxury goods and deterred high rollers from visiting the country's only legal enclave of casino gambling. A smoking ban in casinos and stricter visa rules have also damped business.

The former Portuguese colony recorded its biggest-ever drop in monthly gaming revenue in February - almost 49 percent - due to weak demand over the Lunar New Year holiday, usually a peak gambling period. Yesterday's figure was the city's 10th straight month of decline. The latest data shows that revenue for the first quarter fell 37 percent to 64.8 billion patacas.

Revenues from high-stakes gamblers may bottom out soon, said Credit Suis-

se Group AG analysts led by Kenneth Fong, saying their surveys of junket operators indicate that VIP volume was similar to January.

Junket operators are the middlemen who bring to Macau many of the high rollers whose business accounted for about 60 percent of last year's total revenue. Most of the negative news has been largely priced into casino shares, the Credit Suisse analysts said.

"While initial sign of sequential stabilization for VIP volume is encouraging, the further deceleration of mass-market revenue may weigh on the share price," they said. The brokerage retained its "neutral" rating on the sector as the outlook remains uncertain.

The contraction in Macau has led analysts to cut their forecasts for casino receipts this year to about 278 billion patacas, which would be the smallest take since 2011. Revenue was expected to fall 21 percent, according to the median estimate of 13 analysts surveyed by Bloomberg, more than double the decline they had projected in January.

Macau's government reduced its average monthly fo-

recast to a figure that would represent a 32 percent plunge from last year, Chief Executive Chui Sai On said last week.

The downward revisions were largely finished and shares of casino operators could

**The in-line result is just showing that the market is stable. I would think that the worst dip is over**

SHENGYONG GOH

see a rebound, Deutsche Bank AG analyst Karen Tang wrote in a note after the data was released. "However, we think any relief rally will be short-lived as first-quarter results will show how consensus still underestimates margin squeeze," Tang said.

Macau is trying to diversify its economy and develop itself into a global tourism center to cut its reliance on casino gambling. Casino operators are adding shops, restaurants and other non-gaming entertainment attractions to attract more middle-class consumers. In May, Galaxy Entertainment will be the first among the city's six major casino operators to open a new wave of new and expanded resorts. **Bloomberg**

**Q1 REVENUE FALLS 36.6 PERCENT**

**TAKING INTO** consideration the gambling revenue of MOP21.5 billion in March, the gaming operators have closed the first quarter of the year with a revenue of MOP64.7 billion, a year-on-year decrease of 36.6 percent.

## APRIL FOOLS

Ikea is not coming to Coloane - at least as far as we know. Our short piece titled "Ikea to open doors in Coloane," published on yesterday's back page, was the Times' April Fools' hoax and proof of our adherence to this ancient "pranktice". Other newspapers in Macau also followed the tradition, "revealing" that "the LRT [rails] will reach Coloane in a year" (Jornal Tribuna), and the headline "Gov't mull Cotai visa to reduce visitor pressure on the peninsula" (Macau Post Daily).

April Fools' Day - also named All Fools' Day - is celebrated every year on the first day of April as a day when people play practical jokes and hoaxes on each other. The jokes and their victims are known as "April fools." The press has followed the tradition by publishing a hoax on this day, before retracting it over the subsequent days. Popular since the 19th century, the day is not a national holiday in any country, but it is well known in Europe, Australia, Brazil, India, Canada and the United States.

An explanation of the origins of April Fools' Day was provided by Joseph Boskin, a professor of history at Boston University. He explained that the practice began during the reign of Constantine "The Great," when a group of court jesters and fools told the Roman emperor that they could do a better job of running the empire. Amused, Constantine, allowed a jester named Kugel to be king for one day. Kugel passed an edict calling for absurdity on that day, and the custom became an annual event.

This explanation was brought to the public's attention in an Associated Press (AP) article printed by many newspapers in 1983. There was only one catch: Boskin made the whole thing up. It took a couple of weeks for the AP to realize that they had been victims of an April Fools' joke themselves.

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# Amended budget passes, lawmakers advocate 'cautious spending'

Catarina Pinto

**T**HE Legislative Assembly (AL) has approved amendments to this year's budget, including a 22.4 percent decrease on the government's foreseen revenue, which has been reviewed from MOP154 billion to MOP119 billion. Lawmakers called for 'cautious public spending' as Macau's gaming revenue has now dropped for the past ten consecutive months.

The Budget Law for 2015 passed its second reading last November but the government felt the need to amend it after reviewing the estimated casino tax revenue it will collect from MOP115 billion to MOP84 billion.

The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, reiterated that there was a need to adjust the government budget to meet "current reality needs."

On the other hand, the amended budget sees a slight increase (0.5 percent) on the government's expenditure, which is due to reach MOP83.7 billion.

The government budget balance sees a decrease of 63.7 percent from MOP51 billion to MOP18.8 billion.

Lawmakers voiced concerns over an increase on expenditure and slammed the government for failing to manage the budget of major public works, such as the LRT (Light Rail Transit) and the Pac On ferry terminal, in a better manner.

Pereira Coutinho asked the Secretary to elaborate on measures to control budget surplus, now that the gaming revenue had dropped. With several major public infrastructures under development, the legislator urged the government to introduce policies preventing budget exceeding.

Lawmaker Lei Cheng I also voiced concerns over public expenditure. "We need to control spending according to our revenues. If the revenues this year are not as favorable... We come to realize that this is an adequate time to take new measures," she stated.

Ho Ion Sang added that, "I am worried most about



The government headquarters, located on Avenida da Praia Grande

## The Budget Framework Law needs to be revised as soon as possible, and it should introduce a supervision mechanism

NG KUOK CHEONG

the public administration's spending," and asked the government to clarify how it will manage its financial reserves.

Also worried about public spending, Leong Veng Chai claimed that the Macau Economic Services have spent MOP20 million "to redecorate their facilities."

On the other hand, Chui Sai Cheong said that the amended budget "is realistic and pragmatic," although he called on the government to return to the AL in June to provide further details on budget execution.

The Secretary for Economy

and Finance, Lionel Leong, assured lawmakers that social benefits and the efficiency of public administration will not be harmed with an amended budget.

Mr Leong acknowledged that, "we need to find solutions to cope with the casino revenue decline." Pledging to use Macau's financial reserves cautiously, the secretary said that the government is negotiating investing MOP10 to 20 billion in Guangdong province in the hope for a good return. In addition, the government is also pondering investing in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Regarding public expenditure, Mr Leong assured that the government's plans to control spending will not affect social benefits, but pledged, "to save money" by monitoring "government souvenirs and trips overseas."

Lawmakers yet again raised criticism over the budget exceeding in major public works, and called for a quick revision of the Budget Framework Law.

"The Budget Framework Law needs to be revised as soon as possible, and it should introduce a supervision mechanism, allowing the AL to supervise the government's budgeting," said lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong.

The secretary said that, "the government is still studying its revision and once the draft is ready we will launch public consultation." He reiterated that the Budget Framework Law needs to go through public consultation and only after that can it be submitted to the AL. Previously, while discussing his cabinet's action plan for this year with lawmakers, Mr Leong had revealed that the Budget Framework Law could enter the legislative process within this year.

Not all lawmakers felt reassured by the secretary's responses. Pereira Coutinho said that, "we have heard about several government commitments but we are sure these promises will be fulfilled." "I am talking about the major public works; public revenue will decrease and we need to find alternative ways to increase our revenue," he added.

The secretary pledged to step up efforts to increase the government's revenue, also through promoting the creation of more creative industries.

Yesterday, the Legislative Assembly lawmakers also passed the second reading of AL's Organizational Set Up Law, and another two regulations regarding the AL.

### ON THE LAWMAKERS' AGENDA

**HEALTH MATTERS** Health is the population's greatest concern, according to lawmaker Si Ka Lon. At yesterday's plenary meeting, the lawmaker focused on the lack of human resources in the public and not-for-profit healthcare units.

He believes that this has worsened since the government implemented a new method to reduce patients' waiting time for healthcare appointments. This year the Health Bureau announced it would be implementing a new scheme, through which eligible Macau residents are given subsidies to access Kiang Wu or non-profit healthcare units for external medical appointments.

"According to one of those units their human resources are limited, and now with this new measure the situation has worsened," said Si, adding that the Health Bureau is hiring 528 new healthcare professionals, but other smaller units face challenges in recruitment since they cannot compete with public health care system salaries. The lawmaker urged the government to provide an estimate for the number of healthcare professionals Macau will need, as a new public hospital is under development. Finally, he asked the government to consider granting subsidies to healthcare professionals, namely physicians and nurses, who work for non-profit healthcare units.

**TRANSPORT WOES** Song Pek Kei and Chan Meng Kam have called on the government to take responsibility for the city's transportation system problems in a joint spoken enquiry. Lawmakers criticized the continuous delays on LRT construction, and urged the government to "improve its administrative efficiency," particularly now that several department chiefs have left the Transportation Infrastructure Office. They believe that the delay on the construction of the LRT depot in Taipa is an even bigger issue. "This is a serious delay which will affect the LRT's opening date," they said. "All public services involved are included on the Secretary for Transport and Public Works' portfolio, so he should coordinate and reinforce cooperation between these services in the name of public interest."

**FOOD SAFETY** Melinda Chan called again on the government to improve food safety measures, after an inspection found bacteria on frozen smoked salmon imported into Macau. Ms Chan suggested the government draft extra regulations providing food safety criteria. She also called for a review of IACM's work in the food safety field. She believes that IACM cannot only rely on inspections conducted in the food products' country of origin. Melinda Chan believes Macau should also conduct inspections here before these products reach supermarket shelves. The lawmaker also suggested the establishment of a Food Safety Experts Council, through which professionals could monitor and assess food safety risks, while also launching investigations into food safety incidents.

## Young musicians' contest applications open in mid April



In order to promote the development of classical music in Macau, as well as raise the training and musical interpretation ability of young musicians and offer learning and performance opportunities, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has organized the 33rd Macau Young Musicians Competition. This year the competition is dedicated to piano, and will take place between August 2 and 8. All interested parties are invited to apply online from April 13 to 18, and in person from April 19 and 22. According to a press release issued by the IC, online applications will be available from 10 a.m. on April 13 to 9 p.m. on April 18 through the webpage [www.icm.gov.mo/cjmm](http://www.icm.gov.mo/cjmm).

# MGTO to cooperate with Angolan counterparts

**T**HE Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) inked a collaborative memorandum with Angola's Ministry of Hotels and Tourism Office of International Exchanges yesterday, seeking to strengthen inter-cooperation in tourism affairs between both sides.

According to MGTO's head, Helena de Senna Fernandes, this partnership was tailor-made according to the actual situation in the country, and based on similar memorandums signed with four Portuguese-speaking countries previously, which were Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and East Timor. The first of this kind of partnership started in 2010.

Pursuing the eight major objectives laid down in the so-called "multifaceted memorandum," the authorities hoped to optimize the travel information and experience exchanges from both sides, develop bilateral partnerships among the middle and small-sized enterprises



Helena de Senna Fernandes

from the hotel and hospitality sector, organize more promotional activities to boost both sides' profiles on the international stage and nurture technical talents to respond to the development of tourism.

However, after the signing ceremony the head of office told media that it would take some time to fully accomplish the cooperation goals. "Currently, the personnel exchanges with

Angola chiefly concentrate on government and business levels," said Senna Fernandes. "In the future, we hope there will be exchange opportunities between the tourism industries from both sides. We need to first understand each other, and then to seek out if there is any commercial opportunity regardless of investment or expanding clientele bases in the future."

With the partnership gradually progressing, the government would also mull arranging various field trips for local tourism practitioners to the country for the sake of seeking possible commercial and investment opportunities there.

In echoing the "One Belt and One Road" strategy, this year the MGTO authorities, as she said, would also continue to lead tourism practitioners not only from the city but also from the Pearl River Delta region to engage in promotional works in Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, aiming to lure in more tourists from the four Southeast Asian countries to the entire Guangdong area.

Ms Senna Fernandes also revealed that the China National Tourism Administration would like to see more local tour groups to be organized to the Mainland, especially the economic zone of Silk Road, to which some government officials, together with those from the Chinese tourism ministry and travel agency representatives from Macau and Hong Kong, paid a visit to last year to study the environment there. She expects to see more visitations between the city and the mainland in the future. **Staff reporter**

### HIGH TOURISM OFFICIAL TO VISIT REGION

A HIGH representative from the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) will be in town next week to promote the "Silk Road" initiative, and to discuss regional promotion and cooperation with local authorities. The Times tried to confirm whether the official is CNTA chairman Li Jinzao, but MGTO said that the information couldn't be disclosed at this time.

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# Beijing urges MSAR to join manhunt for corrupt officials

A leading Beijing official has urged Macau's anti-graft agency, the Commission Against Corruption, to cooperate in the central government's attempt to hunt down corrupt fugitives from mainland, South China Morning Post reported.

Huang Shuxian, minister of supervision and deputy chief of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, stated on Monday that he hoped to "pragmatically cooperate with Macau's Commission Against Corruption to strengthen the tracking down of fugitives and proceeds."

The remark was made during a meeting in Beijing with the director of the Commission Against Corruption, Andre Cheong.

Mr Huang was quoted as saying that mainland-Macau cooperation would strengthen the implementation of the United Nation's Convention Against Corruption.

Professor Simon Young Ngai-man, of the University of Hong Kong's faculty of law, told the Hong Kong newspaper that although Macau and the mainland do not have an agreement for the transfer of criminals, cooperation is still possible because handing over suspects is only one law enforcement option.

"This is probably what the mainland authorities are hoping for - that the Macau authorities will be able to prosecute and confiscate the proceeds of corruption and then return some or all of those proceeds to the mainland," the scholar said.

Beijing recently launched Operation Skynet, China's international manhunt for fugitive corrupt officials.

**A**FTER three months of deliberation, on Tuesday two giant pandas were selected as gifts from the central government to Macau.

According to Xinhua, a female panda, numbered 667, and a male, numbered 726, were chosen from the 55 candidates which met the age requirement at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, in Sichuan Province, according to its director Zhang Zhihe. They have no blood relations, get on well with each other and are in their prime years for breeding, he claimed.

The pandas, both 110 kilograms in weight, will be flown into Macau at the beginning of May, taking the place of the two pandas previously sent as gifts. Male panda Kai Kai and his partner Sam Sam, who died of illness last year, arrived in Macau in 2010. It has not yet been decided whether Kai Kai will be returned.

According to Lan Jingchao, head of the Base's veterinary hospital, panda 726 was born in 2008 and has large black patches around his eyes. He is strong,

# Chengdu pandas arrive in May



Combo photo taken on March 31, 2015 shows two giant at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding

energetic, active and good at climbing. He likes interacting with the keepers and other pandas and has shown good leadership qualities.

Panda 667, born in 2007, has a very round mouth, head, ear and body shape, which makes her seem like a rolling ball when playing.

She is gentle and has a good appetite. She has displayed typical rutting behaviors for three years but has yet to mate, Lan said.

The pandas have gone through three rounds of selection. After the first two rounds, which were conducted by experts from across

the country, two pairs stood out based on criteria such as age, health and fertility. The final selection was conducted by Macau representatives. A 30-day quarantine will be carried out before the two pandas set off on their journey to the region. Xinhua

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## GAMING

# Mongolia considering casinos to diversify economy from mining

Michael Kohn

**M**ONGOLIA'S parliament is considering allowing casinos in the country to attract more tourists and reduce the economy's dependence on mining revenue.

Mongolia, which has a population of 3 million in an area about the size of France that's landlocked between China and Russia, had USD5.8 billion in exports last year and 83 percent of that was copper, coal and other minerals. The economy is expected to slow this year as disputes over mining projects have reduced foreign investment.

The casino law will be submitted to parliament for review in the spring session scheduled to begin April 6, Margad Banzragch, tourism department head at the Ministry of Environment, Green Development and Tourism, said in an interview Tuesday in the capital, Ulaanbaatar.

"What is most important is how the casinos can help boost the economy," she said. No more than two casinos will be allowed under the

## What is most important is how the casinos can help boost the economy

MARGAD BANZRAGCH



A statue of Damdin Sukhbaatar, right, stands in front of Blue Sky Tower in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

law, said Margad, and to prevent gambling from becoming a social problem, Mongolians won't be permitted.

While the law doesn't specify where the casinos would be built, likely locations include Ulaanbaatar and near the new international airport, said Margad. The airport is being built 54 kilometers (34 miles) south of the capital. Other possibilities are Altanbulag on the Russian border or Zamyn-Uud on the Chinese border, she said.

"The key issue here is what happens to the revenue that the government earns from this casino," Jargalsaikhan Dambadarjaa, a political and economic commentator, said by phone from Ulaanbaatar. "It needs to be used to decrease inequality in the country, for education or social

infrastructure."

A one-time license fee of 35 billion tugrik (\$17.6 million) would be required of any investor planning to build a casino, said Margad, in addition to taxes that will be determined at a later date.

Another provision would require that the casino make up 15 percent of the complex. Hotel and commercial space will make up the remaining 85 percent, she said. The casinos could create more than 2,000 jobs a supply chain of new business opportunities, said Margad.

Mongolia also plans to adopt a horserace betting law, which is now in draft form, said Margad.

"We'll use the advantage of our location between countries, and our new airport to attract visitors," she said. **Bloomberg**

## ONLINE RETAIL

## Why Amazon refuses to wear purple lanyards in Vegas

Spencer Soper

**A**BOUT 1,300 people from the online retail industry are in Las Vegas this week for the annual Catalyst Americas conference. Every attendee is sporting a name badge they were given at the registration desk, along with a purple lanyard emblazoned with the logo for the startup Jet.com—everyone except Amazon.com employees, who brought a stash of orange lanyards.

Jet, which is planning to launch a sort of online Costco later this spring with 10 million discounted products, is a corporate sponsor of the Catalyst convention. The three-day event ended yesterday with a presentation from Sebastian Gunningham, Amazon's senior vice president of seller services. Employees from eBay, Newegg, and other companies at the show wore the standard-issue purple lanyards. Representatives from Amazon, which has a sizable booth at the event located in the Aria Resort and Casino, were quick to swap their purple lanyards for ones featuring the online shopping giant's own logo. Craig Berman, an Amazon spokesman, didn't respond to requests for comment.

The dispute goes beyond lanyards. Jet was founded by Marc Lore, who went toe-to-toe with Amazon for years selling diapers, soap, and other products through his company Quidsi, best known for its website Diapers.com. Amazon acquired Quidsi in 2010 for \$550 million, and Lore stayed on for more than two years. After he left, it became clear that his next venture was designed to confront Amazon head-on. "We're basically not making a dime on any of the transactions. We're passing it all back to the consumer," Lore said in a recent Bloomberg Businessweek cover story. Jet has plenty of cash to do so. In February the company said it had raised \$140 million in funding, bringing its total to \$220 million.

Lore spoke in Las Vegas on Monday, during the opening keynote at the conference, which is organized by ChannelAdvisor. He drew applause from the audience when he described Jet's business model, which connects club members to discounts from different stores in its network, rather than selling its own goods directly. "We don't compete with merchants at all," he said onstage. It's safe to assume the orange-lanyard people weren't clapping. **Bloomberg**

## corporate bits

### GALAXY DONATES MOP100,000 TO HANDICAPPED ASSOCIATION

With Easter is fast approaching, Galaxy Entertainment Group ("GEG") warmly visited Associação dos Familiares Encarregados dos Deficientes Mentais de Macau and donated MOP 100,000 in support of its charitable work. During the visit, the GEG volunteer team hosted a festive "Easter Bunny Cookies Decoration Workshop" for members of the association to create their very own Easter cookies.

"The donation from GEG can help us further refine our facilities and subsidize some needy families. It fully demonstrated its adherence to the philosophy 'from the community, for the community' when GEG shares its success with the local community. Furthermore, the workshop will help the mem-



bers to build up their abilities of dealing with emotion management, social cognition and interaction with others," said Ms Sandra Lia, executive director of Associação dos Familiares Encarregados dos Deficientes Mentais de Macau.

With the help of GEG volun-

teers, the association members were able to showcase their creativity by decorating one-of-a-kind bunny cookies with colorful decorative garnishes and icing sugar. After decorating the bunny cookies, GEG volunteers also sang in chorus with the members and beat time to the music. Both the members and GEG volunteers enjoyed the afternoon of fun and festive joy.

Gary Lam, a GEG volunteer from the table games department, regards this activity as fulfilling because he can learn from the members of the association. "It's a truly meaningful activity which reminds me [to be grateful] for what I have and helps me understand the true essence of 'giving is better than receiving,'" he said.

### ICE SCULPTURE EXHIBITION WRAPS UP AT THE VENETIAN MACAO

Ice World, Asia's largest annual indoor frozen wonderland, returned to the Cotai Expo at The Venetian Macao for its fourth year, opening Nov. 27, 2014 and closing March 31. Originally scheduled to conclude on March 8, Penguins Undercover Ice World with the DreamWorks Gang run was extended until the end of March. The frozen wonderland offered people the chance to see everyone's favorite DreamWorks Animation characters expertly carved in ice by craftsmen from Harbin.

Penguins Undercover Ice World with the DreamWorks Gang spanned more than 1,600 square meters and was divided into six themed zones where visitors were able to see ice renderings of Italian piazzas, brid-



ges over canals, singing gondoliers, and meet all-ice versions of much-loved characters from "Shrek," "Madagascar," "How to Train Your Dragon," and "Kung Fu Panda." Skipper and his fellow penguins – Kowalski,

Rico and Private – even took guests on a top-secret mission to explore the different worlds the DreamWorks Animation characters lived in, discovering what makes the holiday season so special for each.



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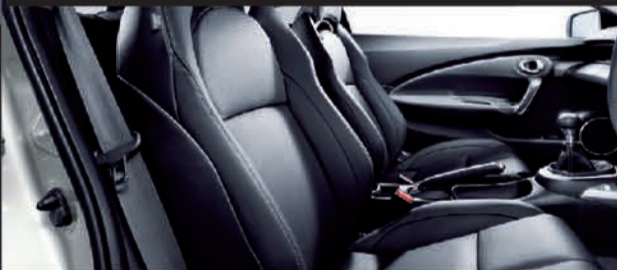
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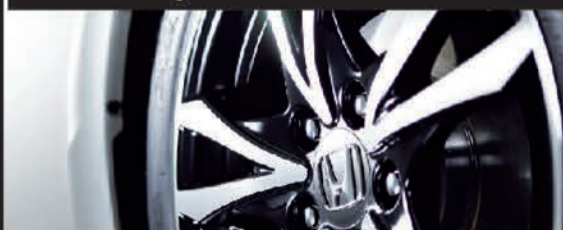
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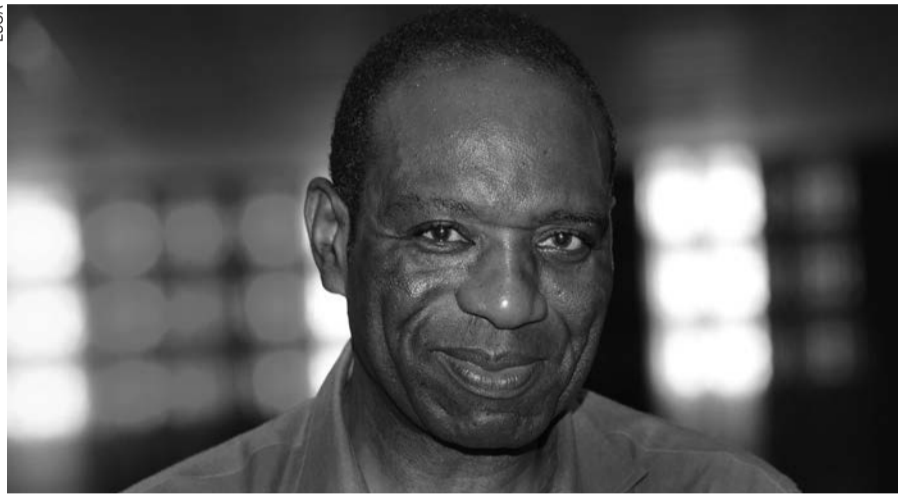
# Gov't approves new minimum wages

**T**HE government of Mozambique has approved the new minimum wages to be paid by each sector and sub-sector of activity, with increases ranging from 4 to 13 percent coming into force this month, the Mozambican Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security said Tuesday in Maputo.

**The wage increases range from 4 to 13 percent**

After a cabinet meeting, Vitória Diogo said the minimum wage for the agricultural sector, hunting and forestry increased by 5.74 percent to 3183 meticaïs or US\$87.4 at the current exchange rate (about 36.4 meticaïs per dollar).

The minimum wage for the micro-finance, micro-insurance and other financial intermediation activities,



Mozambique's prime minister Agostinho do Rosário

rose 7.72 percent to 7,800 meticaïs and for the banking and insurance company increased to 7050 meticaïs, an rise of 7.84 percent.

The government also adopted minimum wages for fishing, quarrying, manufacturing, production, distribution of electricity, gas and water, construction and non-financial services of between 3000 meticaïs (+5.0 percent) in the ca-

penta fishing sub-sector and 5643 meticaïs (+5.48 percent) in the sub-sector of large companies in the mining sector.

The Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security also said that minimum wages of public administration, defense and security workers would be submitted directly to the Council of Ministers and approved in April. **MDT/Macauhub**

ANGOLA

# 2,000 hotel rooms will be opened this year

**B**y the end of 2015 Angola will have an additional 2,000 hotel rooms, said Tuesday in Luena, Moxico province, the State Secretary for Hotels and Tourism, Paulino Baptista Domingos, cited by Angolan news agency Angop.

The Secretary of State, who attended the inauguration of Hotel Kawissa, said the new rooms were the result of the opening of 25 hotels of various categories by the end of 2015, and which are currently under construction.

Baptista highlighted the Intercontinental Hotel under construction in Luanda, which upon completion will have 390 rooms, Hotel Palanca in Malanje, with 146 rooms and 20 others under construction in another of the country's five provinces.

The Secretary of State said he believed these hotel units would significantly change the history of Angola, in terms of accommodation and tourism services and would make it possible to create thousands of new jobs in a sector that already employs more than 202,000 people.

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism currently has 14,000 rooms registered distributed over 185 hotels, 88 tourist villages, 14 apartment hotels and six inns. **MDT/Macauhub**

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## ECONOMY

# Gloomy China, Japan data add to pressure for stimulus

Joe McDonald & Elaine Kurtenbach, Beijing

CHINA and Japan reported gloomy industrial data yesterday, adding to pressure on leaders of the world's second- and third-largest economies to launch new stimulus.

Two surveys showed Chinese manufacturing was weak in February and employers cut more jobs. In Japan, a central bank survey found companies expect conditions to deteriorate and plan to cut investment.

The latest data muddy the global outlook at a time when the U.S. is the only major economy to show signs of healthy momentum. Both China and Japan are relying on U.S. demand and a strong dollar to offset internal problems. Either could send shockwaves through the global economy if efforts to overhaul their economic models fail.

The loss of manufacturing jobs is a setback for Chinese leaders who are trying to steer their economy to more sustainable growth based on domestic consumption while avoiding a politically dangerous spike in unemployment. They have cut interest rates twice since November but want to avoid a large-scale stimulus that would set back efforts to reduce reliance on investment.

The surveys by HSBC Corp. and an industry group, the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing, found manufacturing was weak in February. HSBC said companies shed jobs at their fastest rate in seven months. That came after China's central bank governor,



A man walks past an electronic stock indicator of a securities firm in Tokyo

Zhou Xiaochuan, warned economic growth had fallen "too sharply."

Despite improvement in the federation's index, "growth is still likely to have slowed sharply last quarter," said Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics in a report. "We expect more policy support measures, including further rate cuts and required reserve ratio reductions, as the government moves to avoid missing its annual growth target."

The Bank of Japan's quarterly "tankan" survey, the country's leading measure of corporate sentiment, highlights a dilemma for leaders who are trying to break out of two decades of stagnation.

Japanese media assert there is growing friction between the central bank and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration over expanding stimulus further. The central bank governor, Haruhiko Kuroda, says the economy is on course for a moderate recovery and inflation will pick up again after it cools due to lower oil prices.

The central bank has been pumping trillions of yen (tens of billions of dollars) into the economy through asset purchases aimed at keeping interest rates low and stimulating inflation. But Kuroda and other economists say government action alone cannot fix Japan's problem with weakening demand.

Two-thirds of the 11,126 com-

panies surveyed anticipate further deterioration in conditions. Some 83 percent of large manufacturers found conditions "not so favorable" or unfavorable.

The survey found companies plan to reduce capital spending by nearly 5 percent in this fiscal year, which ends March 31, 2016. The companies expect to cut spending on land purchases by nearly 37 percent.

Japan emerged from recession last year following a sales tax hike that dented consumer and corporate demand. But growth still is weak.

In China, economic growth slowed to 7.3 percent in the latest quarter. That prompted concern the decline brought

on by Beijing's efforts to shift the economy to self-sustaining growth based on domestic consumption might be deepening too sharply.

The top Chinese economic official, Premier Li Keqiang, said in March that Beijing might intervene to stimulate growth if employment weakens too much.

Manufacturing "continues to struggle to gain growth traction," said economist Annabel Fiddes of Markit Economics,

## The latest data muddy the global outlook, when the US is the only major economy to show signs of healthy momentum

which conducted the HSBC survey, in a statement.

"Company downsizing policies contributed to a further decline in manufacturing employment," said Fiddes. "Any savings were generally passed on to clients as part of attempts to attract new business, suggesting a further squeeze on profit margins."

Instead of the uptick usually seen as Chinese factories resume work following the Lunar New Year holiday, HSBC said its survey showed new orders declined for the first time in three months. New export work also fell for a second straight month.

On Sunday, the Chinese central bank governor, Zhou Xiaochuan, said growth had fallen "too sharply." He said inflation has fallen so low the country should be alert to the possibility of deflation, or a damaging overall decline in prices. AP

A China-born university philosophy professor was arrested yesterday (Macau Time) on charges of conspiring to smuggle rhinoceros horns and elephant ivory out of the United States and into China.

Yiwei Zheng, who appeared in U.S. District Court this week, faces a federal indictment accusing him of conspiracy, smuggling and making a false statement to agents. Zheng also is charged with violating the federal Lacey Act, which bans trade in wildlife, fish and plants that have been illegally taken, transported or sold.

Zheng, who has taught at St. Cloud State Uni-

## Minnesota professor accused of smuggling ivory to China

versity since 1999, was arrested by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents, the Star Tribune reported. Zheng appeared in court, surrendered his passport and was released on USD25,000 unsecured bond, according to a spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's office.

An email sent to Zheng's defense attorney for comment was not immediately returned. A university spokesman said he can't comment due to the in-

vestigation.

The indictment alleges Zheng conspired with two unnamed co-conspirators in a scheme that ran from 2006 through 2011. The two co-conspirators are not named as defendants.

According to the indictment, the black rhinoceros is listed as an endangered species and international trade in elephant ivory is largely banned. Trade in rhinoceros horn and elephant

ivory has been regulated by an international treaty since 1976. Any animal species listed as protected under the treaty cannot be legally exported from the U.S. without approval from the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Zheng, who grew up in Shanghai, China, is accused of importing into the U.S. objects made from rhinoceros horn from his co-conspirators in China. Demand for libation cups and other ornamental

carvings made of rhinoceros horn has resulted in a thriving black market and has pushed most species of rhinoceros to the brink of extinction, the indictment said.

The indictment also alleges Zheng smuggled objects made from rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory from the United States to China by using the U.S. mail. Among the items Zheng is accused of smuggling to China in April 2011 are potted

flower carvings, a fan and a carved lion all made with elephant ivory.

Zheng also is accused of facilitating the sale in March 2010 of a rhinoceros horn libation cup that was fraudulently imported into the U.S. and of exporting two rhinoceros horns in July 2010.

In September 2011, the indictment alleges, Zheng told agents he had sold two rhinoceros horns to a Chinese national named Mr. Zhang at a McDonald's restaurant in St. Cloud. In fact, Zheng knew that he had illegally sent to the rhino horns from the U.S. to China, the indictment said. AP

## VIETNAM

## Thousands strike at Nike, Adidas shoe factory

**T**HOUSANDS of Vietnamese workers at a major footwear factory were on strike for a sixth day yesterday over a social insurance law in a rare challenge to government policy.

Several thousand people at the Taiwanese-owned Pou Yuen factory in southern Ho Chi Minh City began the stoppage last Thursday. Pou Yuen Vietnam, which employs more than 80,000 workers, is a subsidiary of Pou Chen Group and makes footwear for companies such as Nike and Adidas.

The workers continued the peaceful strike in the factory's compound yesterday under a heavy police presence. They marched along Highway 1 with banners and beating drums on Monday and Tuesday, blocking traffic on the main road artery.

They were protesting a new law, which comes into effect next year and says that workers will get a social insurance monthly allowance when they retire instead of getting a one-time payment if they resign. The striking workers said that if they quit earlier, they would have to wait until their retirement age — 60 for men and 55 for women — to get the allowance, and they prefer the lump sum to pay for their daily needs while seeking new jobs.

Vietnam is hit by several hundred labor strikes a year, but they are mostly over poor working condition and low pay. Protests over government policies are rare.

Vice Minister for Labor Doan Mau Diep met with the workers Tuesday and said that his department would propose to allow them to choose whether to get one-time social insurance benefits when they quit or receive them upon retirement. His words were met with applause from the workers, according to state media reports, but if was not clear that he had persuaded them to stop the strike.

Dang Ngoc Tung, the president of Vietnam General Confederation of Labor, said in a statement on the trade union's website that the strikers should return to work and authorities will address their concerns.

He also told them not to allow "bad elements" to take advantage of the situation to stir up unrest that would affect security, order and the company's operations.

Nearly 70 percent of Vietnam's population of 90 million are under 40, providing a major workforce for many multi-national companies. AP



AP PHOTO



Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha

## THAILAND

## Junta to replace martial law with absolute power

Jocelyn Gecker, Bangkok

**T**HAILAND is about to lift martial law. But make no mistake — 10 months after staging a coup, a military junta is still ruling the country, essentially with absolute power, and made clear this week it's not easing up yet.

On Tuesday, the military-installed prime minister, Prayuth Chan-ocha, said he plans to lift martial law — a move his deputy said was "a response to calls from foreign countries." He gave no immediate timeline.

Martial law made Thailand look bad, and the junta faced growing pressure from foreign governments, human rights groups and particularly its own business community to remove it. Although it wasn't generally visible in everyday life — there were few soldiers in the streets — it scared off foreign investors and hurt tourism, which accounts for nearly 10 percent of the GDP. Tour operators called it a tourist deterrent — partly because many insurance companies won't cover travelers to countries under martial law.

But scrapping martial law doesn't mean that Thailand is any closer to civilian rule.

In its place, Prayuth said he will invoke a special security measure in the junta-imposed interim cons-

titution called Article 44. Critics say it gives Prayuth unchecked authority over all three branches of government and absolves him of any legal responsibility for his actions.

"From the outside, the lifting of martial law is good news for business and tourism," said Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a political scientist and director of the Institute of Security and International Studies at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University.

"But from the inside, we're functionally in the same boat," he said about Article 44. "Similar restrictions are still in place. And where there are pockets of dissent and political expression it is likely to be more draconian."

Under Article 44, Prayuth has the power to make any order in the name of national security. Some Thai media have referred to it as "the dictator law." Under a similar law in the 1960s, a Thai dictator carried out summary executions.

Human Rights Watch said the move "will mark Thailand's deepening descent into dictatorship."

"Thailand's friends abroad should not be fooled by this obvious sleight of hand by the junta leader to replace martial law with a constitutional provision that effectively provides unlimited and unaccountable powers," said Brad Adams,

the group's Asia director.

The main difference between the two measures is that martial law is very specific and Article 44 is very vague.

Martial law puts the military in charge of public security and clearly defines its uses in a seven-page document originally enacted in 1907 and amended over the years. It allows arrests without warrants, trials of suspects in military courts, bans on public gatherings and censorship in the name of preserving order.

Article 44 is a single vaguely worded paragraph in the interim constitution which gives the junta leader the power to override any branch of government in the name of national security.

Thailand's military has a history of intervening in politics, having seized power 12 times since the end of absolute monarchy in 1932.

Prayuth imposed martial law on May 20, 2014, when he was the country's army chief. A few days later on May 22, he led a coup that toppled the elected civilian government after months of sometimes-violent street protests.

Stability was restored but at a steep price. Thailand's democratic institutions were dismantled, and the country's authoritarian rulers have crushed dissent.

Critics say the coup lea-

ders' real goal is to eliminate the political influence of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was overthrown in a 2006 coup. His sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, was ousted by a court ruling just days before last year's coup and later barred from holding office for five years.

The coup was part of a societal schism that in broad terms pits the majority rural poor, who back the Shinawatras against an urban-based elite that is supported by the army and staunch royalists, who see the Shinawatras as a threat to the traditional structures of power.

Since the coup, the junta has moved to consolidate power. In July, the military adopted the interim 48-article constitution and formed a junta-appointed legislature. In August, the legislature appointed Prayuth as prime minister — a post he said he will retain until elections, though no date has been set. Polls were initially promised for this year, then pushed to sometime in 2016.

Prayuth sought to downplay concerns about Article 44, saying nobody had made much fuss about it until now.

"Article 44 will be exercised constructively," Prayuth said. "Don't worry, if you're not doing anything wrong, there's no need to be afraid." AP

## THE INVISIBLE MAN

# Adoptee from South Korea faces deportation from US

Gosia Wozniacka, Portland (Ore.)

**M**ORE than three decades ago, a 3-year-old South Korean boy and his sister flew to the U.S. to become the adopted children of American citizens, but their life together didn't last long.

They were abandoned, sent into foster care and separated even though he was dependent upon her.

A family adopted the girl, and got her citizenship. The boy, named Adam Crapser, wasn't as fortunate: The parents he had were abusive, and never sought the green card or citizenship for him that they should have.

Now, at 39, after a life struggling with joblessness because of his lack of immigration papers, homelessness and crime, Crapser, a married father of three, is facing deportation because he's not a citizen.

"The state abandoned him when he was a child," his attorney, Lori Walls, said. "Now the U.S. is throwing him out."

A deportation hearing is set for April 2.

Federal immigration officials say they became aware of Crapser after he applied to renew his green card two years ago: his criminal convictions, ranging from burglary to assault, made him potentially deportable under immigration law.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement wasn't aware of Crapser's childhood adoption history when it decided to pursue his deportation, agency spokesman Andrew Munoz said.

Two U.S. senators, including Jeff Merkley, an Oregon Democrat, are proposing a stand-alone, automatic citizenship bill for adoptees like Crapser.



Korean adoptee Adam Crapser poses with daughter, Christal, 1, in the family's living room in Vancouver, Wash.

"It was not his responsibility to fill out that immigration paperwork," Merkley said. "He knows no other country."

Advocates say thousands of adoptees don't know they aren't citizens until they, for example, try to get a job.

The federal government does not track the citizenship status of international adoptees or how many have faced deportation. The State Department says it is aware of adult adoptees who are in immigration removal proceedings.

Adoptees who didn't become citizens are lawful permanent residents — but they lack the documents to prove it. Their stories about deportation to countries as diverse as India, Russia or Brazil are detailed on advocacy websites.

Many of them remained stuck in legal limbo. A provision that would make citizenship automatic for all international adoptees regardless of age was added to a Senate immigration bill several years ago. But when reform stalled, the provision did, too.

Since the 1950s, American couples have adopted nearly half a million children from other countries; about 100,000 of those children came from South Korea. For years, it was the parents' responsibility to seek citizenship, but many did not.

In 2000, lawmakers made citizenship automatic for international adoptees, but the law wasn't retroactive. It excluded adoptees 18 or older at the time. Crapser wouldn't have met the

criteria.

Seven years after Crapser and his sister were adopted, their parents abandoned them. The foster care system separated Crapser, 10 at the time, from his sister, whom he was dependent on, according to orphanage records.

The boy bounced through several foster and group homes. When Crapser was 12, he moved in with Thomas and Dolly Crapser, their biological son, two other adoptees and several foster children.

The next four years, Adam Crapser said, the couple choked, kicked and hit him and the other children every day, slammed them against walls, set dogs to attack them and burned them with hot objects.

"Everything I did was wrong,"

he said. "As far as humiliation goes, I have been there."

His father also used racial epithets to address him and forced him to forget Korea.

"He always told me I'm American, and that I need to let go of my past," Adam Crapser said.

In 1991, the couple was arrested on charges of physical child abuse, sexual abuse and rape. They denied the charges. Thomas Crapser's sentence included 90 days in jail, and his wife's three years of probation.

Because students at his high school teased him about the abuse, Adam Crapser said he dropped out of 9th grade.

He became homeless and slept in a shelter or the back of an old car while working several fast food jobs and finishing his high school equivalency diploma at night.

The Crapsers had not obtained U.S. citizenship papers for him.

Over the next few years, Adam Crapser struggled alone, and also got into trouble with the law.

Once it was after he broke into his parents' home — it was, he said, to retrieve the Korean Bible and rubber shoes that came with him from the orphanage — and later it was for stealing cars and assaulting a roommate.

Because he lacked a green card to prove he could work in the U.S., he opened a barber shop and an upholstery business — something he could do without immigration papers.

He said his parents withheld his adoption record for years, so it wasn't until 2012 that Adam Crapser submitted a green card application — which set in motion his path to a deportation hearing.

Adam Crapser said he takes full responsibility for his crimes, but he has "done his time" and changed his life.

"America promised me a home," he wrote in his court declaration. "I implore this country to keep its promise. If not for me then for my children, so they won't have to grow up without a dad." AP

**S**OUTH Korean prosecutors yesterday indicted a man who slashed the U.S. ambassador in Seoul last month on charges of attempted murder.

Kim Ki-jong, 55, was also indicted on charges of assaulting a foreign envoy and obstruction, according to an official at the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office, who did not want to be named, citing department rules.

South Korean law requires the trial to start within 14 days, and there is a possibility that it could start as early as next

## SOUTH KOREA

## Man charged in knife attack on US envoy

week, according to an official at the Seoul Central District Court, who didn't want to be named, citing office rules. He said it was too early to comment on the potential penalties Kim could face.

Prosecutors have also been investigating whether Kim violated a controversial law that bans praise or assistance for North Korea. The court

official said it was possible prosecutors may add such charges against Kim during the trial.

Police say Kim attacked Ambassador Mark Lippert with a knife during a breakfast forum on March 5. He suffered deep gashes on his face and arm and was treated at a Seoul hospital for five days.

Police say Kim chose Lippert as a target to hi-

ghlight his opposition to ongoing U.S.-South Korean military drills. North Korea has angrily reacted to the drills, calling them an invasion rehearsal.

Anti-U.S. activists such as Kim have long blamed the presence of 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in the South as a deterrent to the North for the continuing split of the Korean Peninsula. AP



U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Mark Lippert

Adam Schreck, Dubai

AVIATION

# Emirates, Etihad planes involved in air traffic scare

**J**ETLINERS from the United Arab Emirates' two main airlines avoided a possible mid-air collision after they got too close to each other over the Indian Ocean earlier this week.

The incident happened Sunday as passenger planes from Dubai-based Emirates and Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways were traveling in opposite directions between the Gulf federation and the island nation of Seychelles.

Both carriers have recently re-routed flights to the archipelago nation to avoid Yemeni airspace due to fighting there.

Emirates, the Middle East's biggest carrier, said its flight 706 was returning to Dubai when what it called "an air traffic control incident" happened in airspace monitored by air traffic controllers in Mumbai, India.

It said it informed authorities of the incident and later filed an air safety report that will be forwarded to investigators in the Indian city.

"Safety is of paramount importance to Emirates, and we will be cooperating fully with Mumbai Air Traffic Control in the subsequent investigation," the carrier said in a statement.



Both it and Etihad denied that passenger safety was compromised.

Neither carrier would say how close the two planes came to

each other, though they were close enough that an onboard crash warning system issued what is known as a "resolution advisory," according to an offi-

cial at one of the airlines, who was not authorized to speak publicly.

That level of alert, more serious than a broader "traffic

advisory," tells pilots to take urgent action such as climbing or descending to avoid a possible collision.

Etihad said the traffic collision avoidance system onboard the Airbus A320 from Abu Dhabi "ensured that safe vertical separation of both aircraft was maintained at all times."

Emirates and Etihad have both grown rapidly in recent years, enticing long-haul transit passengers through their Gulf hubs aboard relatively young aircraft.

Emirates is owned by the government of Mideast commercial hub Dubai, while Etihad is controlled by the oil-rich Emirati capital, Abu Dhabi.

Both carriers are regulated by the Emirates' General Civil Aviation Authority, which had no immediate comment. They each operate multiple flights weekly to Seychelles, a tropical tourism destination that has built close ties to the Emirates. **AP**

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David Mchugh &  
Joan Lowy, Frankfurt

## GERMANWINGS TRAGEDY

## Lufthansa: Co-pilot disclosed earlier "severe depression"

**L**UFTHANSA knew that the co-pilot of the passenger plane that crashed in the French Alps last week had suffered from an episode of "severe depression" before he finished his flight training with the German airline.

The airline said that it has found emails that Andreas Lubitz sent to the Lufthansa flight school in 2009 when he resumed his training in Bremen after an interruption of several months.

In them, he informed the school that he had suffered a "previous episode of severe depression," which had since subsided.

The airline said Lubitz subsequently passed all medical checks and that it has provided the documents to prosecutors. It declined to make any further comment.

French authorities say voice recordings indicate Lubitz, 27, locked the other pilot out of the cockpit and deliberately crashed the Airbus A320 in the French Alps on March 24. All 150 people aboard Flight 9525 from Barcelona to Dusseldorf died.

The disclosure that Lubitz had told the airline he had suffered from depression before he was hired in September, 2013 at Lufthansa's budget arm Ger-



Passengers watch candles and flowers for the victims of the plane crash at the airport in Dusseldorf, Germany

manwings is another blow to the company's reputation. Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr had said that Lubitz passed all tests and had been pronounced fit to fly.

The revelation adds to questions about how much Lufthansa and its insurers will pay in damages for the passengers who died.

It also underlines questions about how thoroughly the aviation industry and government regulators screen pilots for psychological problems.

German prosecutors say Lubitz received psychotherapy before obtaining his pilot's license and that medical records from that time referred to "suicidal tendencies." They have given no dates for his treatment, but said visits to doctors since then showed no record of any suicidal tendencies or aggression against others.

They also have found torn-up sick notes from doctors, including one that would have kept Lubitz off work on the day of the crash.

The latest disclosure "really does suggest a potential problem with the airline's oversight of this aviator," says Alan E. Diehl, a former air safety investigator with the NTSB and a former scientist for human performance at the Federal Aviation Administration.

Diehl says the global shortage of pilots might be leading to lax hiring standards. Every week, there are nearly 30 new jets rolling off assembly lines. Each one requires airlines to hire and train at least 10 to 12 new pilots.

"Maybe some of these carriers, not just Germanwings, are taking people that they wouldn't normally take," Diehl says.

In the U.S., the Federal Aviation Administration in 2010 starting allowing some pilots who are taking medication for mild to moderate depression to continue flying on a case-by-case basis. Pilots taking drugs like Prozac, Zoloft, Celexa and

Lexapro were allowed to fly if granted a special medical certificate. One prerequisite was the successful treatment on the medication for at least 12 months.

Dr. Warren Silberman, manager of medical certification for the FAA until the end of 2011, said pilots in the U.S. can fly again even after having suicidal thoughts.

"It really would depend on what the psychiatrist or psychologist that he saw wrote, and what his symptoms were," Silberman said. "The minute he declares he is depressed, he is grounded. And if he goes on medication, he's definitely grounded."

After treatment, "If you were doing better after the depressive episode and the (doctor's)

note was favorable, then the FAA would likely clear you," he said. Admitting suicidal thoughts would probably mean a longer period of being grounded, and the pilot's case would probably wind up in the hands of the FAA's chief psychiatrist in Washington, he said.

Silberman said that over time pilots become more willing to discuss their mental state with their doctors, and there are employee-assistance programs to help them. Still, pilots often hide their medical problems.

Then there's liability.

The fact Lufthansa knew of Lubitz's illness only worsens the airline's legal position, even if cases are settled and not brought to trial. **AP**

## LUFTHANSA EXECS VISIT FRENCH ALPS CRASH SITE

**LUFTHANSA'S CHIEF** executive said yesterday it will take "a long, long time" to understand what led to a deadly crash in the Alps last week — but refused to say what the airline knew about the mental health of the co-pilot suspected of deliberately destroying the plane. Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr and the head of its low-cost airline Germanwings, Thomas Winkelmann, were visiting the crash area yesterday amid mounting questions about how much the airlines knew about co-pilot Andreas Lubitz's psychological state and why they haven't released more information about it.

The two men lay flowers and then stood silently facing a stone monument to the plane's 150 victims. The monument looks toward the mountains where the Germanwings A320 crashed and shattered into thousands of pieces March 24 and bears a memorial message in German, Spanish, French and English. Spohr said the airline is "learning more every day" about what might have led to the crash but "it will take a long, long time to understand how this could happen." He then deflected questions from reporters at the site in Seyne-les-Alpes, and drove away.

## The global shortage of pilots might be leading to lax hiring standards

ALAN E. DIEHL  
FORMER AIR SAFETY INVESTIGATOR

## MEXICO

## At least 4 killed in clash between vigilante groups

Mark Stevenson, Mexico City

**A** clash between two vigilante "self-defense" groups in the troubled Mexican state of Guerrero killed at least four people and dozens more were taken prisoner by each side, a leader of one of the groups said yesterday.

Over the last two years vigilantes have brought some peace to the rural area between the resort of Acapulco and the Guerrero state capital of Chilpancingo, a region that had been overrun by bandits and drug gangs. But rivalries have formed between the oldest and largest vigilante group, known as UPOEG,



Bruno Placido

and a smaller group that formed in the town of Tierra Colorada.

UPOEG leader Bruno Placido said one of his group's patrols was attacked Monday near Tierra Colorado, leaving four UPOEG vigilantes dead

and 10 wounded.

Placido said UPOEG had captured 32 members of the rival group, FUSDEG, and was willing to release them in return for 40 UPOEG members detained by the rivals. He said the two groups were negotiating a mutual exchange of prisoners.

Crescencio Ramirez, a leader of FUSDEG, disputed Placido's account. He told local media that UPOEG attacked a meeting at which some residents of an outlying hamlet were preparing to join his group. He did not give any details on casualties or prisoners.

The Guerrero state prosecutors' office was not

immediately available to confirm the deaths or detentions.

The "self-defense" groups, which rose up in early 2013 to confront the Knights Templar cartel, have been praised by many residents for curbing rampant drug gang violence, but some people now of abuses by the vigilantes.

The unsettled climate in Guerrero, the state where 43 teachers' college students disappeared in September, has raised doubts about whether the state can go ahead with a June 7 elections for governor and mayors. Parents of the missing students have vowed to prevent voting,

and a radical teacher group has seized some elections offices.

Federal police announced yesterday that they will provide protection for four of the candidates for governor and said they were still waiting for a response to the offer of protection from several other parties. One female politician who had planned to run for a mayorship in a nearby town was killed in early March.

Also Tuesday, federal police said they had arrested one of the men suspected in the 2010 slaying of 72 migrants by a drug cartel in northern Mexico. They said Jose Guadalupe Reyes Ri-

vera was detained Monday at a mechanics shop in Ciudad Victoria, capital of the border state of Tamaulipas.

Investigators have said the migrants were killed for refusing to join the Zetas cartel and their bodies were dumped on a ranch in the town of San Fernando in Tamaulipas.

In December, Mexico's national human rights commission criticized the government investigation of the mass killing, saying authorities failed to gather forensic evidence, preserve bodies and perform autopsies on time. Twelve of the dead remain unidentified and are buried in a common grave. **AP**

## what's ON



## MIFVF 2015 – CORRECTIONS CLASS

TIME: 7:30pm

VENUE: Macau Cultural Centre Small Auditorium

ADMISSION: MOP60

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2870 0699

## MACAO ARTS WINDOW UNFOLDABLE MAP II

– PHOTOGRAPHY BY IEONG MAN PAN

TIME: 10am -7pm

(Closed on Mondays, no admission after 6:30 pm)

UNTIL: May 10, 2015

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,

Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE

ADMISSION: MOP5

(Free on Sundays and public holidays)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

## HOMAGE TO MASTERS WHO INSPIRED US

– WORKS BY 10 HONG KONG

AND MACAU ARTISTS

TIME: 12pm-7pm (Closed on Tuesdays)

UNTIL: May 10, 2015

VENUE: Ox Warehouse,

corner of Avenida Do coronel Mesquita

and Avenida Do Almirante Lacerda

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2853 0026

## GRAND TAIPA NATURAL PARK

PARK AND SCULPTURE ZONE: 24 hours

GRASS-SKIING FIELD: 2:30pm-5:30pm (Tuesdays to Fridays); 10:30am-5:30pm (Weekends and public holidays)

VENUE: Rampa do Observatório, Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0087

## MACAU FASHION GALLERY

– FASHION POP UP SHOP

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

UNTIL: May 10, 2015

ADDRESS: Macau Fashion Gallery / No. 47,

Rua de S. Roque, Macau|

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853)2835 3341

## Offbeat

## NEW RESEARCH SAYS ANNE FRANK LIKELY DIED A MONTH EARLIER

Teenage Jewish diarist Anne Frank likely died of typhus in a Nazi concentration camp about a month earlier than previously thought, the Amsterdam museum that honors her memory said Tuesday, March 31st on the 70th anniversary of the officially recognized date of her death.

Anne likely died, aged 15, at Bergen-Belsen camp in February 1945, said Erika Prins, a researcher at the Anne Frank House museum.

Frank's diary about hiding from the Nazis in the occupied Netherlands during World War II was published after the war. It became an international best-seller and made her an enduring symbol of Holocaust victims.

The new date of her death changes little about the tragic lives of Anne and her sister Margot, who went into hiding with their family in an Amsterdam canal house but were eventually betrayed, sent to Nazi concentration camps and died in the Holocaust along with millions of other Jews.

The new date lays to rest the idea that the sisters could have been rescued if they had lived just a little longer. "When you say they died at the end of March, it gives you a feeling that they died just before liberation. So maybe if they'd lived two more weeks ...," Prins said, her voice trailing off. "Well, that's not true anymore."

Allied forces liberated the Nazis' Bergen-Belsen concentration camp on April 15, 1945.

## TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
18:10	Brazil Avenue (Repeated)
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:30	Criminal Minds S8
22:10	Brazil Avenue
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

## cinema

## CINETEATRO

02 APR - 08 APR

## FAST AND FURIOUS 7

ROOM 1

(2D) 2:15, 4.45, 9.45 pm

(3D) 7.15 pm

Director: James Wan

Starring: Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, Dwayne Johnson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 137min



## TWO THUMBS UP

ROOM 2

2.15, 5.45, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Lau Ho-leung

Starring: Francis Ng, Simon Yam, Leo Ku, Patrick Tam, Cheng Ho-nam

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 103min



## HOME

ROOM 2

4.05 pm

Director: Tim Johnson

Language: Chinese (English)

Duration: 94min

## SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SPONGE OUT OF WATER

ROOM 3

(2D) 4.00, 5.45 pm

(3D) 9.30 pm

Director: Paul Tibbitt

Language: Chinese (English)

Duration: 92min

## MACAU TOWER

02 APR - 22 APR

## FURIOUS 7

2.00, 4.30, 7.00, 9.30 pm

Director: James Wan

Starring: Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, Dwayne Johnson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 137min

## this day in history



## 1977 HAT TRICK FOR RED RUM

Red Rum has galloped into racing history by winning the Grand National for a record third time.

The steeple chaser won the race in 1973 and 1974 and came home second in the following two years.

Before the race concern was expressed that at 12 the horse was too old for an event widely regarded as the most dangerous on the jumping circuit.

But after he romped home his jockey, Tommy Stack, said Red Rum's entry had been justified.

"He is so intelligent, always looks for the open places and is always on the alert for loose horses," Mr Stack said.

Red Rum's win on Saturday brought his career earnings to a steeple-chasing record of £114,000.

The horse took the lead at Becher's Brook on the second circuit of the course when Andy Pandy, the leader and pre-race favourite, fell.

After that Red Rum was never in danger of being caught and came home well clear of second-placed Churchtown Boy and Eyecatcher in third.

Only nine of the 42 runners completed the infamous 4.5 mile (7.2 kilometre) course at Aintree in Liverpool, north-west England.

Two horses, Zeta's Son and Winter Rain, had to be put down after falling and one jockey was taken to hospital.

After the race Red Rum's trainer, Ginger McCain, said he believed the horse would compete again next year.

Bookmakers responded by offering odds of 20-1 against him.

This year's race also featured the first woman rider. In spite of dire warnings from male jockeys and trainers, Charlotte Brew, 21, almost completed the course though she was a long way behind the leaders.

Her horse, Barony Fort, refused the fourth fence from home forcing Ms Brew to pull out of the race.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Red Rum was entered for the 1978 Grand National but suffered a heel injury shortly before the race and was declared unfit to run.

However, he appeared at Aintree to lead the parade of the runners.

After retirement he became the first equine celebrity appearing at charity events and betting shop and supermarket openings.

He also received a daily stream of visitors at trainer Ginger McCain's yard in Southport, Merseyside.

After his health deteriorated in October 1995 he was put down and buried near the winning post at Aintree racecourse.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Getting upset is a choice. Just because things are going wrong with your checkbook doesn't mean other things in your life are going south, too. Focus on what's looking up.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Don't hide from how you feel. If making money stirs up deep emotions, it only makes sense that losing money does, too. Live life with intensity, even on the flip side.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Some feelings make your whole body sing, and others are downright bad for your health. Yours are moving into the unknown range, so ignore the computer, the TV stock ticker and the BlackBerry for the day.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 The time for caution is long gone. You got in over your head -- involved with investments you were unsure of. Consider it a lesson learned, one you can mine for wealth in the not too distant future.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Things may look bleak on the surface, but take comfort in looking deeply at the issues. If you're not in any hurry to sell, then today's numbers should activate intuition, not panic.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Your left palm is itching. Making easy money is an unrealistic goal in today's economy, but making some money is not. The hard work comes in handy for soothing your restless feelings.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Things are changing in the business world, and the effects are running deep. Even you as an individual can feel them. It's the wrong time to be acquisitive, but oddly, not the wrong time to be generous.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Money and people seem to be attracted to you, but don't be surprised if they're suddenly nowhere in sight. Money isn't everything, but sometimes it takes losing it to learn who your real supporters are.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Looking at your bottom line just makes you want to run and hide. Don't -- being alone is the perfect way to let your active subconscious get the best of you. Don't look at details, so that you can focus on the big picture.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You're too close to be objective. Looking at all the details in this case means backing up. Further, further, further ... you get the picture. Only when you have some distance will it be a good day for decision making.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Your accounts may have slowed down, but the rest of your life doesn't have to. Focus on something other than career ambitions. Put all of your deep feelings into being socially useful.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Changes in financial status can cause huge emotional upheaval. Just because your bottom line is in the red doesn't mean you should be treated like a doormat. And if it's in the black, keep this lesson in mind anyway.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

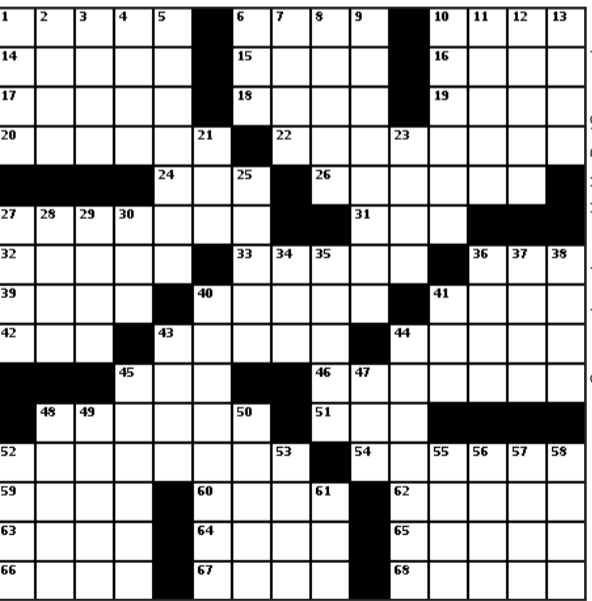
WEATHER

Table showing weather conditions for various cities in China and the World, including min/max temperatures and conditions like rain, snow, or clear.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Grannies; 6- Monumental; 10- Signs; 14- Diciembre follower; 15- Change the decor; 16- Christmas song; 17- Throat problem; 18- Approach; 19- Away from port; 20- Adventurous expedition; 22- Phraseology; 24- Whiz; 26- Edmonton team; 27- Wide strait; 31- Dwarf with glasses; 32- Lout; 33- From head ...; 36- Abner's adjective; 39- Storage shelter; 40- Hue; 41- Assistant, particularly to heads of state; 42- Skye cap; 43- Discovers; 44- St. ... fire; 45- Gun, as an engine; 46- Capable of being cured; 48- The other inheritor; 51- "Rope-a-dope" boxer; 52- Cabbage salad; 54- Compositions; 59- Romance novelist Victoria; 60- Metal filament; 62- Claw; 63- Potpourri; 64- Warts and all; 65- Pineapple fiber; 66- River of Flanders; 67- Nerve network; 68- Strangle;

DOWN: 1- Capone's nemesis; 2- Architectural pier; 3- Soft ball brand; 4- Geographical expanse; 5- Highest singing voice in women; 6- East ender?; 7- Quick look; 8- Boise's state; 9- Hallway; 10- Momentarily; 11- Polite refusal; 12- Wails; 13- Smelting waste; 21- Frozen water; 23- Drug-yielding plant; 25- Singer John; 27- Fluid-filled sac; 28- Very funny; 29- Excuse me; 30- Tacit assent; 34- Advanced in years; 35- Puccini classic; 36- Leg or arm; 37- Worshiped one; 38- ... majeste; 40- War within the same country; 41- ... carte; 43- Professional charges; 44- Controversial; 45- Daniel Webster, e.g.; 47- Suffix with glob; 48- Loses heat; 49- Stan's pal; 50- Bluffer's ploy; 52- Bok ...; 53- Sealed document; 55- Scarf; 56- Choir member; 57- Yellow of an egg; 58- Dagger of yore; 61- End for Siam



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Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 1990 992
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
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## F1

## High winds cause damage to roof at Silverstone



The roof of the motor racing circuit that stages Formula One's British Grand Prix was being repaired yesterday after it was damaged by high winds and extreme weather. Part of the "Wing," the USD40 million, three-story corporate building at Silverstone, was affected by wind on late Sunday and Monday. Images on social media appeared to show a section of the roof had been removed. "Although it looks a bit of a mess at the moment, the damage is largely cosmetic and the structural and functional integrity of the roof remains completely intact," Silverstone sporting director Stuart Pringle said, adding that debris landed in the paddock. Pringle said a domestic sports car race scheduled for this weekend should not be affected, and the circuit's high-profile season opener, the World Endurance Championship on April 10-12, will take place. The British GP is on July 5.

## FOOTBALL

## Kluivert leads Curacao through in World Cup qualifying

Former Netherlands forward and assistant coach Patrick Kluivert has made a winning start in World Cup qualifying as coach of Curacao. The Caribbean island team advanced to the second qualifying round in CONCACAF for the 2018 tournament late Tuesday. Curacao drew 2-2 in a second-leg match at Montserrat to win 4-3 on aggregate. Kluivert's team won 2-1 on Saturday in Willemstad. The first-round encounter was headed to extra time on Tuesday until former Netherlands Under-21 international Charlton Vicente scored in the 87th minute, five minutes after coming on as a substitute. Curacao plays Cuba in the next round, on June 8 and 16. Kluivert, whose mother is from Curacao, was a World Cup losing semifinalist in 1998 as a player, and last year as assistant to coach Louis van Gaal.

## ATHLETICS

## Federation investigates death threat against runner Kipsiro



The Uganda Athletics Federation is investigating claims by Commonwealth Games 10,000-meter champion Moses Kipsiro that he received a death threat from a coach, while police said yesterday they had arrested a relative of the runner on suspicion of setting the coach's house on fire. The apparent feud between Kipsiro and local coach Peter Wemali appears to date back to accusations last year that Wemali sexually harassed female runners. Kipsiro was one of the athletes that accused Wemali then.

## SAILING

## America's Cup teams vote to downsize boats



Emirates Team New Zealand maneuvers with Oracle Team USA, left, before the 14th race of the America's Cup sailing event in San Francisco

Bernie Wilson  
AP Sports Writer

**A**MERICA'S Cup teams have voted to reduce the size of boats to be sailed in the 2017 regatta in Bermuda, a cost-cutting move that could lead to the two strongest challengers dropping out.

In a statement Tuesday night, organizers said a majority of teams favored the move from 19-meter catamarans to 14.65-meter cats.

They also said a majority of teams supported having the entire race take place in Bermuda, eliminating a qualifying regatta in Auckland, New Zealand — a move that could cost Team New Zealand its primary funding source.

It's believed Italy's Luna

Rossa and Emirates Team New Zealand voted against the unprecedented proposal to change the size of the boats in mid-cycle.

Luna Rossa said last week it "will be obliged to withdraw" if the race boat was downsized. Team New Zealand supported the Italians.

On eliminating the Auckland regatta, Emirates Team New Zealand said on its Twitter account that it has filed for arbitration to reinstate the qualifier based on a signed and accepted bid.

"We are fighting to keep Auckland as a qualifier," Team New Zealand general manager Grant Dalton told New Zealand media on Wednesday. "This isn't about government funding, this is not the

end of Emirates Team New Zealand, it's about enforcing a contract and bringing America's Cup racing to New Zealand as agreed by ACEA (America's Cup Events Authority)."

New Zealand Prime Minister John Key has said if the Auckland regatta doesn't take place, government funding will likely be withheld. That would make it difficult for Team New Zealand to continue competing since it doesn't have corporate sponsorship.

The decision by two-time defending champion Oracle Team USA to contest the America's Cup in Bermuda rather than in the United States has also made it difficult for some teams and the event

itself to raise sponsorship money.

There's some question how much the downsizing of the boats will save considering some teams have already spent several months and tens of millions of dollars designing 62-foot (19-meter) catamarans. As it was, the larger cats were said to be a cost-saving measure over the 72-foot (22-meter) catamarans used in the 2013 America's Cup.

And while smaller boats would mean reduced costs and a smaller crew, they could also mean less excitement for spectators. The 48-foot (14.65 meter) catamarans will be the smallest boats in America's Cup history and aren't that much bigger than other one-design classes sailed in less-prestigious regattas.

If Italy and New Zealand drop out, Oracle Team USA would conceivably have an easier shot at retaining the Auld Mug trophy.

Oracle Team USA rebounded from a cheating scandal and an 8-1 deficit to defeat Emirates Team New Zealand in the 2013 America's Cup, winning eight straight races in one of the biggest comebacks in the event's history.

America's Cup czar Russell Coutts, a New Zealander who heads both Oracle Team USA and the America's Cup Event Authority, has verbally sparred with both the Kiwis and Italians in recent years.

In a landmark victory, Coutts led Team New Zealand to a five-race sweep of American skipper Dennis Conner off San Diego in 1995. He then guided the Kiwis to a sweep of Luna Rossa in the 2000 America's Cup before jumping ship for a bigger paycheck from Alinghi of Switzerland, leading it to a sweep of Team New Zealand. **AP**

## RUGBY

## North out of club's biggest game of season after head injury

Mallinder said he would follow guidance by medical experts.

Past and present medical advisers to the sport's governing body, World Rugby, have urged North to take a break for the good of his career.

Dr. Barry O'Driscoll, who was on the organization's medical committee until 2012, told the BBC: "Somebody who has four (head knocks) and is going back to such a brutal game as rugby should be having a long rest from rugby under the care of a neurologist."

Dr. Willie Stewart, who sits on World Rugby's concussion advisory panel, said he would be surprised if North plays again this season.

"If he does play again too soon, it could be the end of his World Cup or even his career," Dr. Stewart told British news-

paper The Mail on Sunday.

"I know at this time of year we're getting into the thick of it for trophies and championships, but it's also getting into the sharp end for George's brain."

Ireland flyhalf Johnny Sexton had a 12-week break from rugby after suffering four concussions last year.

North was given three weeks off in February after his double head knock against England.

"I'm not concerned for him," Mallinder said. "We've got to look after him. We've got to make sure the medical experts are happy and satisfied that he is fit to return to play, and as soon as they say he is, then we'll be happy to pick him again."

The Rugby World Cup starts on Sept. 18.



Washington Nationals' Emmanuel Burriss is tagged out by St. Louis Cardinals shortstop Pete Kozma

## BASEBALL

# Study projects average MLB salary tops USD4m

Ronald Blum, New York

**E**VEN before the first pitch of the 2015 season is thrown, an eye-popping baseball record will be set. The average salary when opening-day rosters are finalized Sunday will break the \$4 million benchmark for the first time, according to a study of all major league contracts by The Associated Press. Dodgers pitcher Clayton Kershaw tops players at \$31 million

and Los Angeles projects to open the season with a payroll at about \$270 million, easily a record.

"We're enjoying a tremendously bountiful season in baseball," said Toronto pitcher R.A. Dickey, the 2012 NL Cy Young Award winner with the New York Mets.

Fueled by the largest two-year growth in more than a decade, the average salary projects to be about \$4.25 million, according to the AP study, with the final figure

depending on how many players are put on the disabled list before the first pitch is thrown. That is up from \$3.95 million on the first day of last season and \$3.65 million when 2013 began.

"MLB's revenues have grown in recent years, with the increase in national and local broadcast rights fees being a primary contributor," said Dan Halem, MLB's chief legal officer. "It is expected that player compensation will increase as club reve-

nues increase."

Baseball's average was approximately \$50,000 in 1976, the last year before free agency. Back then, many players took off-season jobs to pay their bills.

Now almost all of them do their heavy lifting in gyms, not warehouses.

In a \$9 billion industry propelled by ballpark luxury suites and premium tickets, regional sports networks and streaming video, more than half the major leaguers are millionaires.

The average broke the \$1 million mark in 1992, topped \$2 million in 2001 and reached \$3 million in 2008.

By comparison, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers has risen slightly less than fourfold since the first class of free agents started negotiations in November 1976. And the average U.S. wage in 2013, the latest figure available, was \$44,888, according to the Social Security Administration, up 1.28 percent from 2012.

"It isn't just the TV deals," union head Tony Clark wrote in an email to the AP. "From the parity on the field to the fan support & business off it (including the national TV contracts), the industry has never been healthier."

Last year, the Dodgers opened at \$234 million and ended the New York Yankees' 15-year streak as baseball's biggest spenders. Still seeking their first World Series title since 1988, Los Angeles is No. 1 by a huge margin. The Yankees project to be second at about \$215 million, followed by Boston at around \$185 million.

Detroit is fourth at roughly \$170 million — about \$100 million less than the Dodgers. Coming off its third World Series title in five years, San Francisco is fifth, about \$1 million behind the Tigers.

The low rollers are led by Miami (about \$65 million), with Houston

a few million dollars higher. The large-market Mets are right around \$100 million, a mark they haven't reached since 2011.

"The industry is doing very well," Yankees outfielder Carlos Beltran said. "The owners are making a lot of money and the salaries for the players are going up."

Following Kershaw are Detroit pitcher Justin Verlander (\$28 million), Dodgers pitcher Zack Greinke (\$27 million) and injured Angels outfielder Josh Hamilton (\$25.4 million). Hamilton has a lengthy history of drug and alcohol abuse, and has been suspended in the past.

The AP's figures include salaries and prorated shares of signing bonuses and other guaranteed income for players on active rosters, disabled lists and the restricted list. For some players, parts of deferred money are discounted to reflect current values.

Payroll numbers factor in adjustments for cash transactions in trades, signing bonuses that are the responsibility of the club agreeing to the contract, option buyouts, and termination pay for released players. San Diego is receiving \$18 million from the Dodgers to cover most of Matt Kemp's salary, and the Marlins are getting about \$12.68 million from Los Angeles as part of the seven-player trade that sent Dan Haren to Miami. **AP**

Kyungji Cho

**S**OUTH Korea's soccer team was heckled and pelted with sweets when it returned from Brazil's 2014 World Cup after failing to win a single match. Kwak Hee Soon, a housewife inspired to buy the Latin American nation's bonds by the tournament, was also disappointed.

Kwak spent 50 million won (USD45,230) of her savings on Brazilian sovereign bonds in June 2013, enticed by tax-free yields three times greater than at home and speculation the country would get a boost from the championship. The investment has soured as the host failed to make the final, the economy shrank for three straight quarters and the real plunged more than 30 percent against the won amid slumping commodity prices.

"It was a tempting offer back then given the high interest

## Brazil World Cup fever delivers Korean bond buyers reality check



**■ Kwak spent USD45,230 of her savings on Brazilian sovereign bonds in June 2013**

rate and tax benefits," said Kwak. "I'm disappointed with the outcome. I was told I wouldn't lose money unless the real fell. I'll need to be more careful next time when investing in overseas securities."

Brazil's central bank has raised its target rate by 5.5 percentage points to 12.75 percent from a record low 7.25 percent in April 2013 as the nation battled soaring inflation. Those yields lured South Korean retail investors who bought at least 6.8 trillion won of Brazilian real sovereign bonds by the end of 2014, according to estimates from Korea's seven brokerages. Most of those investments weren't hedged against the currency fluctua-

tions.

"The losses are huge though part of them might be offset by the high coupon," said Kim Sang Hoon, Seoul-based fixed-income analyst at Hana Daetoo Securities Co. "Investors were expecting a gain from both the exchange rate and interest rates back then as the real had appreciated against the Korean won for a couple of years with the commodity boom since the global financial crisis."

The real appreciated about 30 percent against the won in the three years from the end of 2007 through 2010 amid soaring demand for the country's commodities. The currency has depreciated 17 percent

this year against the dollar, the biggest loser among 24 emerging-market currencies tracked by Bloomberg, amid concern the country may lose its investment-grade credit rating.

Brazil holds the lowest investment-grade from Standard & Poor's, which said in a March 24 report that waning public support, the economic contraction, and a widening corruption scandal at Petroleo Brasileiro S.A. are challenging President Dilma Rousseff. S&P estimates Brazil's economy will contract 1 percent this year before real gross domestic product expands by 2 percent in 2016 and 2.3 percent in 2017. **Bloomberg**

opinion

**HK Observer**

Robert Carroll



**ASIA'S WORLD CITY, ASIA TV AND THE SINGAPORE FACTOR**

The Hong Kong International Film Festival is one of the few remarkable cultural events in the calendar here, in terms of a solid declaration that we are truly Asia's World City as Brand HK has long proclaimed. Another phrase for a city that punches above its weight, and spells it out better, is Alpha City.

The HKIFF is remarkable not only in terms of having audience figures into the six-hundred-thousands, making it by far the largest cultural event of the year in terms of citizens participation, but that its panopoly of cinema also reaches out in a far richer and more diverse way than anything else on the calendar. Coming soon after Art Basel, this time of year puts HK on the map, especially in Asia. And by catering more to its home continent as much as the rest of the world, it takes advantage of the human resources and bridgehead to the mainland available to it.

Reaching out to the world is how another former British colony, with little land, no natural resources and even fewer advantages than Hong Kong, found its way not just out of poverty but to great prosperity, all under the leadership of the late Lee Kwan-yew. Although he was authoritarian and tolerated little opposition, the man had a vision, and he pulled the tiny backwater of a country up by its bootstraps and into the 20th century.

Under his watch, what had once been called a pestilential swamp became a mighty force in one generation, with living standards equal to those of the West. It was hardly a foregone conclusion; in fact, Yew himself had grave doubts that he could succeed when the tinderbox of racial tensions exploded in violence in street riots. It may not have the freedom of expression we have here, but the system has produced a largely middle-class society with high quality government-provided homes, arguably on par with the private sector standards that housed 60% of the population, and provides better birth to death care than we have. I would not swap the freedom and sheer energy of Hong Kong – not to mention the landscape and seasons – for the Lion City, but its achievements under Founding Father Yew must be given their due.

The big surprise of the day is that there was, reportedly, supposed to be a cure for the long drawn-out public saga; the painful and near fatal malady of mismanagement of Asia Television, or ATV as it's generally known. But there was a catch. The "White Knight" the owner had been looking for, who appeared on snorting steed, sword in hand, was not just there to throw down the gauntlet to market forces, but to his arch-enemy Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying, and – even worse, according to conventional wisdom – to opponents in Beijing. Surprise again soon after: it wasn't the Bogyman after all, trying to sneak into bed with poor stricken ATV, but the AID Partners Capital firm that saved HMV from ruin.

It seems a pity that the man who was able to capture huge audiences with web series well above the quality of ATV and the second free-to-air TV station TVB, might for the third time to be denied the chance to raise up the dire standard of the local broadcasting duo that has dominated TV airwaves here for decades.

**THE BUZZ FOREIGN ADOPTIONS BY AMERICANS REACH LOWEST MARK SINCE 1982**

The number of foreign children adopted by U.S. parents dropped by 9 percent last year to the lowest level since 1982, according to new State Department figures.

The report for the 2014 fiscal year shows 6,441 adoptions from abroad, down from 7,094 in 2013 and about 74 percent below the high of

22,884 in 2004. The number has fallen every year since then – a trend that has dismayed many adoption advocates in the U.S.

As usual, China accounted for the most children adopted in the U.S., but its total of 2,040 was down more than 10 percent from 2013 and far below the peak of 7,903 in 2005.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	30-50 Good
High Density Residential Area	40-60 Moderate
Ambient	20-40 Good

SOURCE: D5M6

**WORLD BRIEFS**



**IRAQ** Iraq declared a "magnificent victory" Wednesday over the Islamic State group in Tikrit, a key step in driving the militants out of their biggest strongholds. Iraqi Defense Minister said security forces have "accomplished their mission" in the monthlong offensive to rid Saddam Hussein's hometown and the broader Salahuddin province of the militant group.

**UKRAINE** Russia-backed rebel authorities in eastern Ukraine have started paying pensions in Russian rubles. Yekaterina Matyushchenko, the finance minister in the Donetsk region's separatist government, said that pension payments for March will total 1.9 billion rubles (over USD30 million). She claimed that the money came from taxes paid by local businesses.



**NIGERIA** Former military dictator Muhammadu Buhari said yesterday it was time "to heal wounds," a day after Nigeria's president conceded defeat in a bitterly fought election. Calling for conciliation across the political divide, Buhari said Nigerians have put a one-party state behind them and embraced democracy. Nigerian civic groups suggest rigging in the election.

**PUERTO RICO** 32 people were charged with operating illegal gambling machines. The island's Justice Department said that the charges were filed after a 7-month investigation. Authorities previously confiscated 424 machines and seized nearly USD44,000 in cash. Officials have blamed illegal gambling machines for the closure of six casinos in recent years and causing some \$6m in losses.



Trekkers take an acclimatization hike to Nagarzhang peak above Dingboche valley on the way to Everest base camp, Nepal

**Nepal says climbers returning to climb Mount Everest**

Binaj Gurubacharya  
Kathmandu

**CLIMBERS** are returning to Mount Everest as the climbing industry recovers from last year's deadly disaster on the world's highest peak, a Nepalese mountaineering official said yesterday.

Climbers from four teams have already been issued permits allowing them to climb the 8,850-meter (29,035-foot) peak, another 11 written applications are pending and more applications are expected in the next few days, said Gyanendra Shrestha, an official at Nepal's Mountaineering Department.

The popular spring climbing season began last month and runs until the end of May.

"Last year's disaster has not deterred the climbers from coming back, instead, we are expecting more than 40 teams during the season," Shrestha said.

That compares with 31 teams last year.

It was feared that the deaths of 16 local Sherpa guides in an avalanche that led to the early end of the 2014 climbing season would keep climbers away. Following the accident, other guides refused to work and climbers had to abandon their bids.

**More than 4,000 people have climbed Mount Everest since 1953**

Nepal's government, which makes millions in permit fees, has been attempting to lure the climbers back. It recently said that mountaineers forced to abandon last year's climb would have their permits

extended to 2019.

As well, mountaineering authorities have pledged to improve weather forecasting, security and rescue efforts. More medical staff has been placed at Mount Everest's base camp, and the government has set up a full-time office tent at the camp, with officials providing security, settling disputes among climbers and monitoring the activities of the hundreds of climbers and guides at the camp.

Nepal was criticized last year for not having a rescue plan for disasters and for not having a government presence at the base camp despite charging climbers huge permit fees.

More than 4,000 people have climbed Mount Everest since 1953, when it was first conquered by New Zealand climber Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa guide, Tenzing Norgay. Hundreds of others have died while attempting the climb. AP



Yaks move towards Mount Everest's base camp ferrying supplies



Trekkers walk towards Everest Base camp



A trekker rests after reaching Everest Base camp