



**MAY 2014 PROTEST BACK IN THE LIMELIGHT**

P5



**HUMAN TRAFFICKERS' CAMPS SHOCK MALAYSIA**

Abandoned jungle camps used by human traffickers contained 139 suspected graves as well as pens likely used as cages for migrants

P12



**MASSIVE HEAT WAVE KILLS 500 IN INDIA**

At least 500 people are reported to have died in a heat wave sweeping India, with temperatures reaching 48C in some areas

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**May 2015**  
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# Times

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

**WORLD BRIEFS**



**NEPAL** Hundreds of people held a candlelight vigil in Nepal's capital yesterday evening to mark one month since the earthquake that killed thousands of people and affected millions. About 200 people gathered at the Brikutimandap grounds in the heart of Kathmandu to remember the dead. They held a minute of silence, lit candles and signed messages in memory of those killed.

**PAKISTAN** The son of Pakistan's president escapes unharmed from a roadside bomb attack that killed three people and wounded 15.

**AFGHANISTAN** A suicide truck bomb blast at the gate of a provincial council compound kills at least five people and wounds 62, authorities say.

**JAPAN** A magnitude-5.5 earthquake shakes buildings in Tokyo and temporarily stops trains but causes no apparent damage or injuries.

**AUSTRALIA** moves to increase cooperation between its security agencies against the threat of Islamic State group militants by appointing two new counterterrorism coordinators.

**AUSTRALIA** announces it will repatriate the remains of up to 25 Australian soldiers killed about 50 years ago during the Vietnam War.

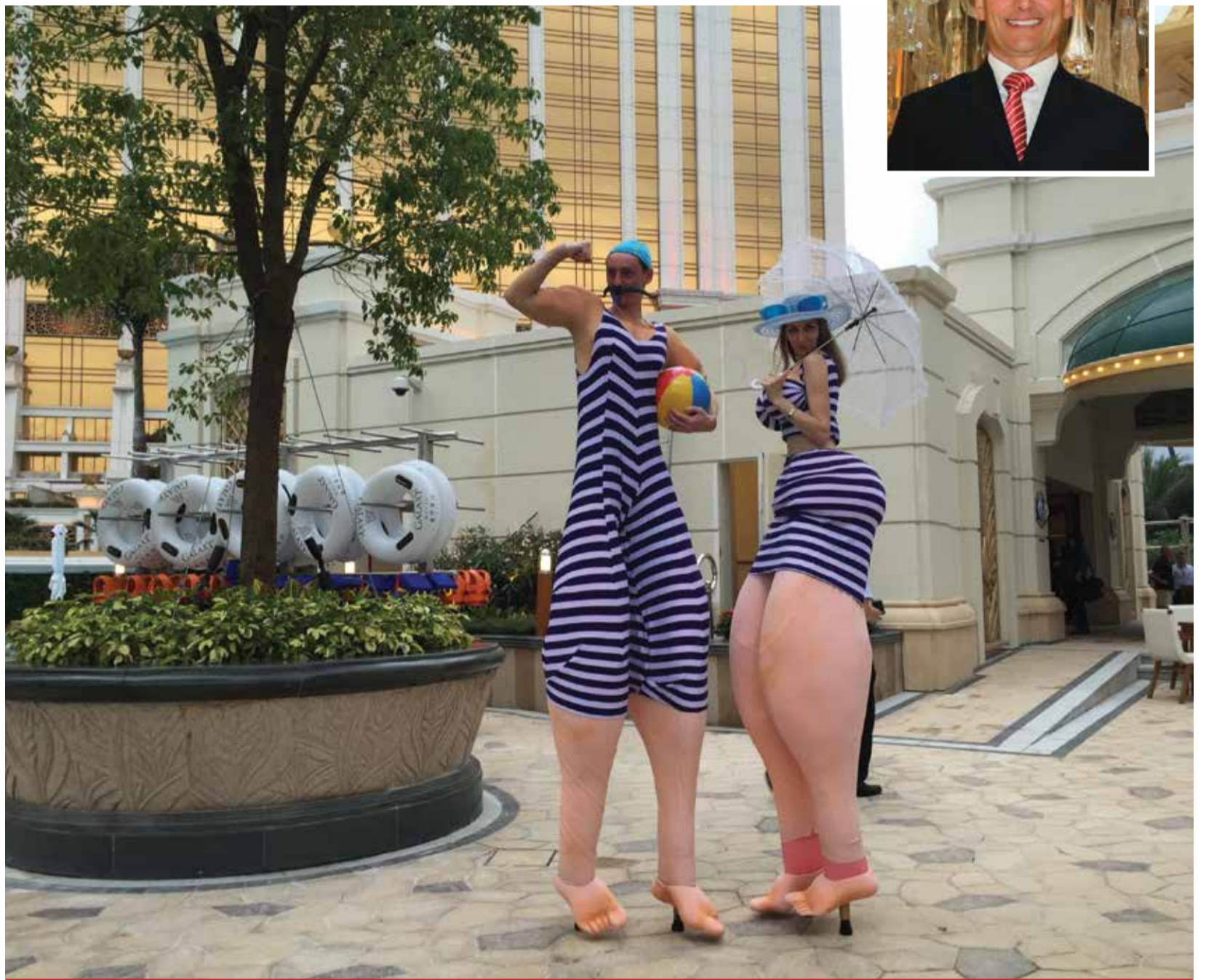
**INDONESIA's** anti-terrorism squad kills two suspects and arrests seven others in raids on a jihadist organization with possible links to the Islamic State group, police say.

More on backpage

KEVIN CLAYTON, CMO GALAXY

# '95 pct of our investment has gone into non-gaming'

Galaxy phase 2 and Broadway Macau open tomorrow P2,3,20



# China's mega-tours draw attention abroad, critique at home

P10 TOURISM

Paulo Coutinho

KEVIN CLAYTON, CMO GALAXY

**F**ACING a “new norm”, gaming operators are adapting to the latest and decisive push by the government to diversify the economy, which for casinos means an order to expand their offerings from their core business as Cotai 2.0 starts to shape up. Galaxy is the first to “test the waters” with the opening tomorrow of their Galaxy II and Broadway properties.

“We’re the first new property to launch since 2012, Sands Cotai Central. And we are the first property to launch across a number of properties that’ll be launching over the next two to three years. We are excited, no doubt. We’re genuinely excited about the vision for Macau. We’ve got the greatest confidence in this marketplace,” Kevin Clayton, Galaxy’s Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) told Macau Daily Times in an exclusive interview a couple of days ahead of the opening.

As we walked past Galaxy Macau to the new properties, we had to cross through the huge “backstage” operations area where hundreds of staff were conducting their business or taking a lunch-break at the canteen and food-stalls area, in order to reach the premises of The Marriot Macau where the interview would take place. For the untrained eye, it seemed like (orderly) “mayhem” descending upon us.

At the same time, the newest addition to the world class JW Marriot brand looked like it

RENATO MARQUES



Kevin Clayton

was in operation already, with “guests” queuing up at reception, while others were being escorted to their rooms or elsewhere by supportive attendants, valets and concierge staff. It was simulation day and all seemed to be going smoothly – a thousand smiles welcomed us, as we entered Cotai 2.0, a crucial test of Macau’s gaming and hospitality industry, which has to adapt to a “new norm” where non-gaming is the name of the game.

So far so good. According to Mr Clayton percentage occupancy rates are “in the high 90s” and “the take up in the [new] hotels for the first few weeks of launch is already reaching a point where we’ve got

demand that exceeds supply.”

“And for good reason,” says a confident CMO. “Ritz Carlton is a world-class hotel. JW Marriott is a world-class brand in its own right. And we’re one of the first destinations in Macau that has six world-class hotels in a single destination. But not just the hotel stock, also the diversity of experiences that can be had in our property here. We’ve got to feel bullish about the market. I think the market needs people to feel bullish about [it].”

Lately, however, investors have been all but bullish on Macau. The almost year-long decline in revenues, the caps on visitors and on tables along with the government determi-



Simulation day at JW Marriot

nation towards a full smoking ban in casinos have dragged confidence down and raised doubts about the rate of return from the large investments on the Cotai Strip.

Mr Clayton recognizes that the days of “open it and they will come” are over, but “we believe that we generate a sufficient return for our shareholders at this moment in time. And we don’t see that as shifting into the future. We believe that we’ll continue to deliver a good return to our shareholders and shareholder value.”

The cap on tables imposed by the government resulted in Galaxy’s new properties being allocated only 150 gaming tables.

Mr Clayton sees that as “a

challenge” that must be “actively” addressed.

“We will now actively work towards yielding those assets [gaming tables] in the best way that we can. That will mean utilization; it will be key across the main gaming floor as well as other rooms across the property. And we will continue to optimize our assets by moving those assets around depending on where we get the greatest return. That will be a continuous process.”

With less gaming comes a new balance for the integrated-casino-resorts: the gross floor area (GFA) ratio at Galaxy stands now at “about a 90:10 split, in terms of the GFA associated with non-gaming and gaming,

Catarina Pinto

**T**HE first of a new wave of casino resorts and projects taking shape in the Cotai Strip will be opening tomorrow, as Galaxy Macau phase 2 and Broadway Macau are now nearly ready to open

their doors. The resorts will feature three additional hotels, a casino and 100,000 square meters of gross retail area.

At a media preview yesterday, Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) team members unveiled what’s behind the curtain, taking

## Galaxy Macau phase 2 and Broadway

reporters to some of the new resort’s hotels, restaurants and bars.

The group has invested HKD43 billion of a planned HKD100 billion commitment to Macau in its 1.1-million-square-meter resort. Galaxy Macau will now feature six hotels offering 4,000 rooms, suites and villas, as well as two spas. Luxury hotels Ritz-Carlton (over 250 suites), JW Marriott (1,000 rooms) and Broadway Hotel (320 rooms) have now been added to the already exist-



Galaxy phase II's new casino

### GALAXY HOSTS TEAM-BUILDING EVENTS AHEAD OF OPENING

**AROUND 6,000** Galaxy Macau employees have gathered for team-building exercises ahead of the opening of Galaxy Macau phase 2 and Broadway Macau. Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) said that the events

were aimed at boosting team members’ morale. Vice chairman of GEG Francis Lui thanked employees for their efforts and contributions to the opening of Galaxy Macau phase 2 and Broadway Macau tomorrow.

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# into non-gaming'

RENATO MARQUES



in favor of the non-gaming assets.”

And at Broadway Hotel some 90 meters away - linked to Galaxy Macau by a footbridge - “the actual footprint for the casino is incredibly small relative to the size of the property and once you go in there you’ll be amazed at the sheer size of the property, and the diversity of its offering for food and entertainment.”

This diversity in offering that operators, especially concerning their properties on Cotai 2.0, have to promote in order to compensate for the lower gaming receipts is meant to give visitors reasons to stay longer in Macau. In 2014, the average overnight stay was as low as 1.8

days per visitor, but that paradigm has to change dramatically.

After 8 years working in the city’s gaming industry, Kevin Clayton sees an opportunity here, because “the Asian consumer is far more discerning than they were 5 or 8 years ago. They’re far more considered in terms of how they make their reservations and how they make their bookings; about the decisions that they make around their destination. You know, destination first, hotel second. And really what they’re looking for is value, no doubt, but when they’re looking for value, they’re also becoming more discerning. They want to go on the journey with brands. They want to go on the journey with resort brands. So they want to come to destinations where they can go on this journey of discernment around shopping, lifestyle, experiences around lifestyle associated with fun and entertainment. They want to go on the journey when it comes to cuisine, and the choice around cuisine; they want to feel as though they’re going to a destination that can provide them with a real sense of diversity, but quality at the same time, matched with authenticity. And we believe that Galaxy does that, and I think Broadway at Galaxy will do that

**The take up in the [new] hotels for the first few weeks is reaching a point where we’ve got demand that exceeds supply**

better than any other party in Macau,” Mr Clayton promised.

Along with offer diversification, Galaxy is also putting efforts on diversifying inbound markets. “At this moment in time Macau generally draws about 65% of its visitation from mainland China, approximately 15% from Hong Kong and then the vast majority of the remainder are from South East

Asia and North Asia. We are actively promoting Galaxy Macau and Macau across Taiwan, Korea, and Japan in the context of Okura.”

Mainland China is not to be left out. The day we talked to Mr Clayton he was just back from a road show touring 19 cities on the mainland. He found “enormous interest” there from people wanting to come to Ma-

cau, but “they think it’s not the proper moment to do it. It’s all about perceptions and sentiment,” he states.

For Mr Clayton, despite the recent crackdown on lavish lifestyles in China, “there’s always a place for prestige, there’s always a place for luxury goods. The market whilst facing some headwinds more recently - and I think headwinds generally are due to sentiment in China, not just to the crackdown [on corruption] - global sentiment has shifted in terms of luxury goods, not just in China. So we’re facing some headwinds globally as well as regionally at this moment in time. But think about this logically: what’s the size of the luxury and the prestige market now to what it was 5, 8 years ago? It’s still a huge market. It’s still a huge market in Hong Kong, it’s still a sizeable market in Macau.”

Kevin Clayton similarly talks the world about Galaxy’s association with top-end car brands. “We are the leader in Macau in terms of partners, and automobile partners in particular are quite selective in terms of where they do their major launches and they have selected Galaxy over the last 12 to 18 months - Galaxy as being their preferred destination. I think that’s testament to the partnerships that we build not just with automobile companies but in terms of technology companies as well as luxury goods in general.”

Moreover, “Galaxy Macau is and will be, at the forefront of indulgence, style, fun and privilege,” Clayton says.

## Hotel open tomorrow

ting Banyan Tree Macau, Hotel Okura Macau and Galaxy Macau.

Yesterday’s tour began at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, the brand’s first suite-only hotel, located within the top floors of the complex. Decorated with pastel and soft creamy colors, the venue is intended to become a luxury-wedding destination offering specialized services to couples, helping them at every stage of their wedding planning.

Also featuring Lai Heen restaurant, the Ritz-Carlton Café and a Ritz-Carlton Bar & Lounge, the luxury hotel comprises 12 floors, and has 254 suites including three sky villas.

As we walked through the corridors, Galaxy staff members noted that Portuguese-inspired small tiles have been used to add historic features to both the walls of the ho-

tel corridors as well as the suites’ bathrooms.

Meanwhile, Broadway Macau, one of the group’s major projects, is also opening tomorrow. Featuring 320 rooms and a 3,000-seat theatre, Broadway Macau will be Galaxy’s entertainment precinct. It also contains a street offering entertainment activities, food and beverage outlets, as well as boutiques showcasing local and overseas brands. Yesterday, the media preview wrapped up with a street party at Broadway Macau.

Adding to Galaxy’s current array of hotels is also JW Marriott, the brand’s largest hotel in Asia, featuring 1,015 rooms and suites. From classic Cantonese cuisine to international and regional delicacies, JW Marriott houses two main restaurants: Man Ho Chinese Restau-

rant and Urban Kitchen.

“It is the first major resort opening in Macau since 2012, marking a new milestone for the city. It also underlines the group’s commitment to helping the territory to fulfill its potential as a ‘World Center of Tourism and Leisure’, to nurture local talent and to promote local culture,” GEG said in a press release.

Galaxy is expanding into its phase 2, and also intends to increase its current retail area. “The Promenade” opens tomorrow, although some of the shops will only be opening their doors later on. Two hundred luxury and lifestyle retail brands will now be available to shoppers, including H&M, Burberry, Alexander McQueen, Moncler, Roger Viver, Maje, Queelin, Bvlgari and Louis Vuitton, among others.



Ritz Carlton suite

The operator’s expansion also includes a new casino. Galaxy Entertainment Group has been granted 150 new-to-market gaming tables for its property expansion, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, recently

confirmed.

The tour also explored Galaxy’s grand resort deck, which has been expanded to over 75,000 square meters to include more beach-like facilities, pools and tropical gardens. The Skytop Wave Pool will feature the new

Skytop Adventure Rapids: a 575-meter-long river-like ride with rapids, waterfalls and underwater jets catering specifically to families. Only guests will have access to the pool area but there will also be a membership program available.

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**DURATION OF THE EXHIBITION**  
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**OPENING HOURS**  
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SANTA CASA DA MISERICÓRDIA DE MACAU

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**Duration of the Exhibition**  
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# May 2014 protest back in the limelight

**T**HE New Macau Association held a photography exhibition yesterday afternoon at Tap Seac Square in cooperation with the editorial committee involved in the preparation of a book that reportedly went missing during its printing process in mainland China last week.

The exhibition, which is expected to run for two weeks across the city, features detailed information about how the controversial top officials compensation bill proposed by the government triggered youth-dominated protests throughout the city. The protest culminated with an outraged congregation at the Legislative Assembly last May.



Yesterday's event, which was supposed to be the presentation of the now missing book, was held on the first anniversary of the anti-bill march at the same venue where the demonstration started last year. Speaking of the political impact of the protest on the government over the past year, the author of the book, Sulu Sou, accused the mainland authorities of confiscating the tome, although the customs authority that oversees the Gongbei border denies the accusation.

Recalling the events of May 2014, he told the media that the officials seem to balk at any activities that may be linked to the protest, like the book he wrote.

"[The book] reflected that the 'anti-bill incident' was still like a sting to the SAR government even though it has passed," said the democracy advocate who was among the organizers of last year's citywide march.

He continued: "We expected last year that the government would improve its manner in [governing the city], yet no

salient changes have been observed. The authorities have grown even more unscrupulous."

TDM reported last Friday that none of the mainland manufacturers received the publication for printing. However, according to the author, the statement that he issued later that night addressing the issue has ended up "nowhere" in the mainstream media. TDM aired a story the following day reporting the mainland customs officials' denial of interference. But TDM reportedly censored Sou's personal response to those claims. The author described all of this as "unacceptable."

Since the media coverage of the alleged seizure last Friday, Sou has declined to reveal the name of the local publisher that processed his book's publication, due to fears of a possible political retaliation from the government, which is also a major client of the printing firm.

The two-and-a-half-hour event saw a low turnout despite the presence of several political activists. **Staff reporter**

## ANOTHER 1,000 BOOKS COMING SOON

**SULU SOU** expects that another batch of 1,000 copies of his book could be released to the public at a new presentation next month. The editorial committee is planning to turn to publishers in Hong Kong for publication. In addition, Sou said that they are also considering electronic publication options following the authorities' alleged interference.

# New Macau reflects on raising civic awareness

**T**HE New Macau Association held its regular social affairs forum during the weekend, where participants discussed how local society, in terms of civic awareness, has changed since a massive protest broke out against planned legislation on compensation for outgoing top officials last May.

The association's leader Jason Chao believes that local residents have been paying more attention to the city's legislative works ever since. He further stressed "true universal suffrage" is necessary to solve the root causes of Macau's problems. "That is [what] we've realized: ultimately we need to demand a true universal suffrage," he stressed, as quoted by TDM.

Lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong added that citizens' attitude toward political issues nowadays is significantly different from before the city's handover.

Ng thinks the protest reflected on the awakening of local youths' awareness of civil society. He stated Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan are influencing each other, as civic movements of these places occur in a ripple effect.

"For one reason, the young people's civic consciousness has started to rise; the other is the

changing trend in HK, Macau and Taiwan's movements. Prior to the protest against the compensation bill, the anti-national education movement in HK succeeded, followed by the success of Taiwan's 'Sunflower Movement,' and then the preparation for civil disobedience in HK started. That was clearly a rising tide in the trend," he explained.

On the other hand, educator Choi Chi U indicated local primary and middle schools have further tightened control over teachers' autonomy and the cultivation of students' independent thinking. He believes that is due to the schools receiving government funding.

"We have seen the frontline teachers being restrained within their autonomous space in class, [thanks to] the force of the schools' systems; they are requested to follow the rules strictly. I've also found myself that teachers' cultivating of [students'] independent thinking in the class is on the decline," he said.

Furthermore, current affairs commentator Tam Chi Keung says he is not optimistic on the city's outlook. He pointed out Macau is only harmonious on the surface and that there hasn't been a trigger point for a major problem. **BY**

## SURVEY

# Junket association says 99pct in favor of smoking rooms

**A**N association of junkets says it collected over 12,500 responses in a survey taken last week, where 99 percent of respondents believed that a full smoking ban will affect casinos' business and agreed to have smoking rooms inside VIP gambling zones.

Having no English designation, the association is listed in the Official Gazette with the Portuguese name "Associação de Mediadores de Jogos e Entretenimento de Macau." It organized a symposium on Saturday discussing the correlation between full smoking control and Macau's entire economy; most of the participants demanded for the government to allow smoking rooms to be set up in VIP gambling areas.

The association chairman Kwok Chi Chung said that the survey was conducted among the junket sector, related employees and other citizens, where nearly all of the respondents were worried about the impact a full smoking ban would have on gaming revenue and employment prospects and advocated the preservation of smoking rooms for VIP gambling provided it does not affect employees' health.

Lawmaker Zheng Anting, present at the symposium, was also among the advocates of smoking rooms. He suggested the revenue



from the mass gaming floor didn't decline but rather increased after setting up smoking rooms, which might be attributed to a better casino environment created by the smoking control.

Junket operator Neptune GD Group's chief operating officer Denton Io 姚思銘 stressed ninety percent of the group's VIP rooms are smokers and a full smoking ban will drive them away to Macau's competitors in Southeastern Asia.

Moreover, casino operator Melco Crown Entertainment's vice president in Strategic Marketing, Raymond Lo, predicted the policy, if implemented, would reduce the economic benefits by ten percent, as customers would need to leave the gambling tables for a smoke. **BY**

# Import export association marks 50th anniversary

Brook Yang

**T**HE Macau Importers and Exporters Association marked its 50th anniversary yesterday with a dinner gala celebration gathering political officials and leaders from across the sector.

The association's president, Tsui Wai Kwan, stated in an address that the sector has overcome hardships, boomed in a golden era, and now needs to step up to take advantage of new opportunities brought by the nation's strategic policy in order to grow sustainably.

Mr Tsui explained that the purpose of establishing the association was to protect the export industry's interests, as back in 1965 the sector was facing multiple barriers due to complicated export formalities. Moreover, the then-exporters found it difficult to recover payments from trades with Lusophone African countries due to their minimal foreign exchange reserves.

Macau's export processing in-

dustry has also witnessed a 30-year golden era, beginning in the 1970s when Western countries implemented garment import quotas. The sector was once the city's most important industry and drove growth in other sectors such as manufacturing, construction and finance.

Due to the liberalization of global trade since Macau's handover, many local factories have relocated to the mainland and overseas. Nevertheless, boosted by Beijing's preferential policies, Macau's external trade figure tripled from some MOP30 billion before the handover to nearly MOP100 billion in 2014, stressed the president.

"Today the country proposed the strategic 'Belt and Road' Initiatives and included Macau in that vision. Macau's small and medium-sized enterprises should promptly grasp this opportunity as Macau will once again become an intersection of East and West in the Maritime Silk Road," he stated to the guests.



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# Gov't may cut migrant workers' visas due to economic crisis

**T**HE Human Resources Office (GRH), which approves and oversees the city's importation of labor, has said that it may be more cautious when handling work permit renewals for migrant casino workers from now on.

The Assistant Coordinator of the Office, Chan Un Tong, said on a TDM radio show yesterday that the current law in Macau allows the government to dismiss migrant workers in certain sectors when the economy takes a dramatic downturn.

Chan indicated that a precedent was set during the financial crisis in 2008 when some industries' migrant workers were either denied a renewal of their work permit or had their renewal period halved. He said that his department, along with the Labor Affairs Bureau (DSAL), will pay close attention to the dynamics of the labor market so that when the economic situation shifts, the authorities can demand a reduction in the number of migrant workers.

The official also stressed that companies need to seek approval from the GRH when promoting a migrant worker, and that their applications will not necessarily be approved.

He explained that the Office's vet-



A worker pushes a cart in front of the construction site of the Lisboa Palace

ting process would first assess whether the company has a suitable candidate among its local employees, or whether it needs to hire someone from the local workforce.

In response to listeners' criticism that "local residents' employment and promotion prospects are being jeopardized due to the government's excessive import of migrant workers," Chan repeatedly stressed that "importing migrant workers is merely a supplement to the local workforce. A precondition of doing so is firstly ensuring local employees' sustainable job security."

"Some corporates have advertised in newspapers how many workers they expect [to recruit], but of course that number doesn't equal the number the government needs to approve. I can say that the amount of our approvals will be less, even much less, than that they advertised," he assured.

The official further clarified that the authorities do not follow any fixed ratio or quota when dealing with applications from migrant workers, but rather consider the employer's actual situation, such as their operational model, and the sale and location of their premises.

"Many citizens have this misunderstanding that the GRH will approve one quota [for migrant workers] for every three local employees hired. In fact, we don't have such a precondition or ratio stipulated in the law," he said.

Chan stressed that his department would take all reports from DSAL of breaches of employment law seriously, while the DSAL director Wong Chi Hong, who was also a guest on the radio show, said that the bureau would inspect if it receives evidence that a company only intends to recruit non-local workers or in other "unacceptable situations." **BY**

# Increase in number of suspension orders

**T**HE Labor Affairs Bureau (DSAL) issued a total of 13 suspension orders upon construction sites between January and April, a number that has already exceeded the total number of orders for the whole of 2014, according to the bureau director Wong Chi Hong.

Wong said on a TDM radio show yesterday that last year the Bureau issued 12 suspension orders to construction sites that had violated Macau's work safety regulations. The construction work found to be substandard on these sites was ordered to be halted immediately, and was not allowed to resume operation until safety conditions were shown to have improved to an acceptable level.

Last year, the number of fatal industrial accidents in the region rose to seven, three times more than in 2013, and this year April alone has seen another four casualties.

The director stressed that the social consequences of industrial accidents are very high, and that the bureau would work to increase awareness of work safety and health measures, such as providing training sessions to the sector in how to use safety facilities to prevent workers from falling when installing air-conditioners.

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# Greece rules out capital controls if bailout talks fail

**G**REECE'S government yesterday ruled out restricting access to bank accounts and the free movement of money if there is no breakthrough soon in tortuous talks with bailout creditors and its dwindling cash reserves dry up.

The possibility of imposing capital controls — part of a chain of events that could lead to Greece leaving the euro if things take a disastrous turn — “simply does not exist,” said Gabriel Sakellaridis, spokesman for the radical left-led government.

He spoke after a senior opposition conservative lawmaker was quoted as saying capital controls could be imposed this coming long weekend — June 1 is the Orthodox Pentecost holiday — or shortly later if the government is unable to make a loan repayment due to the International Monetary Fund on June 5.

Greece has survived for the past 5 years on rescue loans from the IMF and its European partners. But the creditors have



A man checks items at a shop in central Athens

held up the rescue loans as long as Greece does not agree to make new economic reforms. Officials in the governing Syriza party say salaries and pensions

have priority over loan repayments if push comes to shove amid a growing liquidity crisis. Experts say Greece could eventually have to impose ca-

pital controls to prevent a bank run, when depositors flock to bank branches and ATMs to withdraw their savings. An estimated 30 billion euros (USD33.5 billion) have already flowed out of Greek banks since elections were called late last year, but a more sudden surge in withdrawals would cause the banks to collapse.

Such a panic could be triggered by the country — which is already scraping together its last cash reserves — failing to make a payment to the IMF, or any other creditor, or being unable to fully pay pensions and public sector salaries. One Syriza official has said that Greece lacks the money to repay the IMF next week.

In turn, such a market panic would render worthless the government bonds and treasury bills Greek banks use to borrow vital capital from the European Central Bank. Bankrupt and without a functioning banking system, Greece would then have to dump the euro for a new, severely devalued version of its

old drachma currency.

“Such scenarios lack any foundation whatsoever, are malignant and are used in a completely irresponsible fashion,” Sakellaridis told a press briefing. “The possibility of us having capital controls, or any other development in the banking system, quite simply put, does not exist.”

He insisted that talks with bailout creditors, launched after the Syriza party won Jan. 25 elections on a promise to not make more budget-cutting reforms, would come to fruition “in a short time.”

“That is the government’s intention and the target we have set,” Sakellaridis said. “By the end of May, the start of June, to be able to have a mutually beneficial agreement.”

“This government has the duty to pay its obligations both in Greece and abroad,” he said. “The liquidity problems are known. We want to meet our obligations, which is why we are trying to achieve an agreement as soon as possible,” he added.

Officials in Athens say a deal is close despite an apparent deadlock on key issues, such as demanded pension and labor market reforms.

Greek shares were down about 2 percent in early afternoon trading yesterday. **AP**

AD

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Yuri Kageyama  
Business Writer, Tokyo

# Artsy coffee chain Blue Bottle brews long queues in Tokyo

**J**APAN, famous for green tea, is welcoming artisanal American coffee roaster Blue Bottle with long lines that have at times meant a four-hour wait for a cup.

The company, which began in Oakland, California in 2002, hopes its early popularity is more than a passing fad. Japan's consumer culture is littered with manias for Western food imports: pancakes, popcorn, doughnuts, even Taco Bell.

Success in Japan is important for Blue Bottle, which operates 17 cafes in the San Francisco Bay area, New York and Los Angeles. Japan is its first foray outside of the U.S. Blue Bottle raised nearly USD26 million last year to invest in expansion, including financing from Silicon Valley executives, setting the stage for a test of whether an artsy gourmet coffee chain can go big.

Founder James Freeman, a musician, was inspired by Japan's old-style "kissaten" coffee-shops: tiny dimly-lit establishments, with good music and a barista behind a wooden counter. Think places for quiet serious thinking and real drip coffee, not sweet, frivolous drinks.

"We care about every part of the coffee. We call it from seed to cup," said Saki Igawa, the business operations manager for Blue Bottle in Japan.

Attention to detail that dovetails with aspects of Japanese culture accounts for part of the coffee chain's early popularity. The spread of Starbucks internationally, which has created a cookie-cutter coffee culture that some people want to trade up from, is another factor. Blue Bottle is also benefiting from the image problems in Japan of fast food chains and highly processed foods.

"It's a new era in eating out,"



A barista brews coffee at a Blue Bottle Coffee shop in Tokyo

said food industry consultant Jotaro Fujii who contends that Blue Bottle's arrival and the decline of McDonald's in Japan is part of a bigger trend of consumer interest in the safety and quality of the entire food supply chain.

McDonald's is suffering declining popularity in Japan, a problem exacerbated after plastic pieces, and even a tooth, was found in its food last year, setting off outrage among consumers.

Upscale burger chain Shake Shack, which started as a hot

dog stand in New York, is expected to arrive in Japan soon, said Fujii.

Such chains, including Blue Bottle, are likely to aim for 50 or at most 100 outlets in Japan, not the thousands that fast-food eateries, such as McDonald's, has achieved here, he said.

Instead, they will focus on fortifying a brand image, which can lead to other kinds of lucrative businesses.

Although the prevalent image of Japan might be tea, it has long had plenty of affection for coffee.

Starbucks has been a hit since arriving in 1995. It now has more than 1,000 shops in Japan. Not a single prefecture (state) is without a Starbucks with one opening in holdout Tottori Prefecture this month — not surprisingly, welcomed with long lines.

Even convenience stores are serving freshly brewed coffee. Japan also invented "manga-kissa," or a cafe-cum-library, where you can curl up with a comic book and sip on coffee for hours.

Such newcomers have ham-

pered the once omnipresent kissaten. Their numbers have dropped by half from the 1980s, or to 77,000 in 2009, according to a Japanese government study.

But Blue Bottle's popularity is part of a rediscovery of cafes serving carefully prepared, quality coffee, a trend already long evident in the U.S.

Blue Bottle's first Japan shop, which has a roaster, is in Kiyosumi, an older part of Tokyo, chosen because it reminded founder Freeman, the founder of Oakland. It opened in February. The second shop, in a backstreet of Tokyo's fashionable Omotesando, opened in March.

A third, likely opening later this year in Tokyo's Daikanyama shopping area, will feature a menu that reflects Blue Bottle's recent acquisition of San Francisco-based Tartine Bakery, which serves croissants, sandwiches and pastries.

Blends such as "Giant Steps," combining African and Indonesian-grown beans for a chocolate taste, sell for 450 yen (\$3.75) a cup. A latte costs 520 yen (\$4.30).

True to its inspiration, Blue Bottle is learning from Japan, said Andrew Smith, 29, of San Francisco, a barista and one of three Americans who came to work for the chain in Japan.

"People here have different ways of conceptualizing about coffee so they taste things differently," Smith said.

"They are looking for different kinds of things in coffee. And that is a fun way to learn how everyone in the world perceives coffee differently." AP

## corporate bits

### SANDS CHINA OFFERING STAFF NEW CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY



Sands China Ltd. is launching a new career development program for its team members. The program gives employees an opportunity to experience working in various non-gaming departments throughout the company's integrated resorts,

via voluntary six-month assignments.

Nearly 400 participants had already signed up within five days of the program's announcement, according to a press release.

The program is one of the latest initiatives of the Sands

China Academy, a platform that focuses on team member training and development, and the professional development of Macao locals, including non-employees.

"This is a great opportunity for our team members to equip themselves with additional capabilities, opening the door to more career opportunities," said Antonio Ramirez, senior vice president of human resources for Sands China Ltd. "Sands China understands the important role played by a well-trained workforce in supporting Macau's development into a world center of tourism and leisure. This pioneering program truly embraces the spirit of non-gaming diversification in Macau, and is the latest example of our commitment to the continued development of our local talent."

### SUNTORY BEV. BUYS JT'S VENDING MACHINES TO CLOSE GAP WITH COKE



Suntory Beverage & Food Ltd., which sells PepsiCo Inc. drinks in Asia, will buy Japan Tobacco Inc.'s vending machines for about 150 billion yen (USD1.2 billion) to add to its own, closing a distribution gap with Coca-Cola Co. in the country.

JT will sell its vending machine units and transfer two of its beverage brands to Suntory Beverage, the cigarette-maker

said in a statement yesterday. Suntory Beverage, which sells Pepsi alongside bottled green tea and carbonated juice, will acquire about 260,000 machines through the deal, its executive vice president Saburo Kogo said in a briefing in Tokyo.

Coca-Cola, the world's largest beverage company, has the most drinks vending machines in Japan, with 980,000

of the devices installed throughout the country. Adding JT's machines to Suntory Beverage's 490,000 will allow the latter to better compete, according to Kazuhiro Miyashita, a board member at researcher Inryosoken.

"I see Suntory is serious about overtaking Coca-Cola," Miyashita said yesterday. "Vending machines are the best sales channel for soft drinks and this would be the way that allows Suntory to win the competition."

Japan has a total of about 2.5 million vending machines that peddle more soft drinks than all the convenience stores nationwide, according to data from the Japan Vending Machine Manufacturers Association.



In this May 8, 2015 file photo, employees of the Tiens Group, a Chinese company which sells medicinal products, including via direct marketing, cheer as they attend a parade organized by CEO Li Jinyuan as part of a four-day celebration weekend for the 20th anniversary of his company, on the Promenade des Anglais, Nice, southeastern France

# Mainland mega-tours draw attention abroad, critique at home

Didi Tang, Beijing

**ALL-EXPENSES-PAID** trips to reward top salespeople aren't unusual, but direct marketing companies that are the Chinese versions of Amway, Avon and Herbalife are taking it to an extreme by sending thousands abroad on package tours.

One company is sending 12,700 salespeople to Thailand on a tour that continues until today. The Infinitus herbal supplement company has outfitted the sales reps with uniforms, the same luggage and even the same umbrellas.

Earlier this month, a medicinal products group sent 6,000 of its representatives to France where they set a world record by massing the most people to spell out a phrase that included their own firm's name. Yet another Chinese direct seller sent 7,000 people to California last year.

"We are making history!" vice-chairman Xu Guowei of the Perfect China cosmetics company crowed in California during the retreat and package tour. "We have taken 86 flights, stayed in 26 hotels," he said. "Our group's attendees have spent USD10,000 each this visit."

The tours are at the intersection of several trends in a

country with a predilection for package trips: an explosion in overseas travel, surging national pride and the phenomenal growth in the past decade of direct sales companies. The companies are splashing cash and seeking publicity following a period in which they were banned as pyramid schemes.

But they have also generated debate among Chinese who have become increasingly sensitive to how they are perceived overseas. Some see the tours as tacky ploys by the quasi-evangelical companies to entice new sales representatives to expand earnings.

It takes several months of advance work to book the hotel space and arrange the travel for the tours. A travel agency spent six months planning the France trip.

China's direct sales market began with the entry of Avon in the 1990s. But the industry plunged into chaos with rampant pyramid schemes, prompting the government to ban the industry altogether in 1998. The ban was lifted in 2005.

Direct selling cuts out shops to sell products or services directly to consumers, using teams of sales personnel who typically get most of their income from a cut of the sales.

Since the ban was lifted, direct marketing has expanded

**All-expenses-paid trips to reward top salespeople aren't unusual, but Chinese companies are taking it to an extreme by sending thousands abroad on package tours**

rapidly, with an average annual growth rate of 30 percent. China's direct sales market is likely the world's third or fourth biggest behind the United States, Japan and possibly South Korea, said Hu Yuanjiang, executive director for direct selling at China Health Care Association.

After 2005, the industry grew to employ 2.3 million salespeople within seven years. In 2012, the country had 32 licensed direct marketing companies with combined sales of nearly 20 billion yuan (\$3.2 billion), according to the Chinese Com-

merce Ministry.

The growth can be attributed to China's economic boom, a rising consumer culture and more favorable government policies, and also that direct selling provides low-threshold opportunities for people to start their own businesses, Hu said.

"It also fits into the Chinese culture, where kinships and personal relationships, such as being in the same class or from the same village, are highly valued. They help build trust quickly, which is important for direct selling," Hu said.

Perfect China's tour of California last year reportedly generated \$85 million in revenue for the local economy, and Anaheim Mayor Tom Tait wished them great memories.

The Tianjin-based Tiens Group, which sells medicinal products, including via direct marketing, sent 6,000 employees on a four-day, all-expenses-paid trip to France to celebrate the company's 20th anniversary. They formed the phrase "Tiens' dream is nice in the Côte d'Azur" on a waterfront in Nice. The French foreign minister met with the company president.

Infinitus is sending 12,700 sales associates to Thailand in shifts of two to three thousand for six-day trips to Bangkok and the beach resort of Pattaya.

They are taking 110 flights and shuttling in 400 coach buses until today. Thai tourism officials expect \$18 million in revenue.

The three mass tours have generated media buzz not only in host countries, but back home where some Chinese see them as part of their country's rise on the world stage. They relish the big spending and the warm welcome from host cities.

The tours also have drawn sneers for their ostentation at a time when Chinese tourists are gaining a reputation abroad for showiness and rudeness. China's National Tourism Administration has created a new black list to shame tourists who misbehave while traveling.

Hu Xingdou, an economics professor at Beijing Institute of Technology, said the mass tours reflect the desire of Chinese to show off wealth after decades of impoverishment, while the uniforms and shouting of slogans reveal the oddly militaristic corporate culture of China's direct marketing companies.

"It's also about brainwashing and instilling loyalty in the salespeople," Hu said.

Zhang Xiaoyan, a senior business director at Infinitus who went on one of the Thailand trips, recalled local people "gaping" at the travelers who were wearing uniforms, lugging suitcases and carrying umbrellas — all with the company logo.

"I think it helped a lot to advertise our company's culture and image," Zhang said.

"Some local TV network reported on us and they called us the largest tourist group in history in Thailand." AP

# FT: Party uses prison visits to scare officials straight



A police officer guards a corridor that is forbidden for visiting journalists to see during a government-organized tour of the Number One Detention Center in Beijing, Oct. 25, 2012

**C**HINESE officials are being sent on prison visits in a new, “scare-d-straight” approach to warn them of the perils of bribe-taking, the Financial Times reported yesterday.

According to an article by Charles Clover in Beijing, this month 70 officials from central Hubei province met former colleagues serving sentences for corruption during a day spent touring the inside of a local prison.

Under President Xi Jinping,

China has undertaken the largest anti-corruption crackdown in decades in an effort to clean up the sprawling Communist party bureaucracy.

Mr Xi has vowed to tackle high-ranking “tigers” as well as lowly “flies”. More than 100 high-ranking officials have been placed under investigation for corruption since 2012, while tens of thousands of lower-level officials have been arrested.

The party’s draconian Central Commission for Discipline

Inspection, which is spearheading the corruption campaign and has organized the prison visits nationwide, said they were part of an “educational approach” to fighting corruption, the FT revealed.

The tours featured visits of former officials now languishing in jail, such as Lu Xingguo, former head of land resources in Hubei’s Fang district, who used to be nicknamed “the three-plenty secretary... plenty of buddies, plenty of gambling parties and

plenty of cash”, according to the Qinchu Web, a provincial party-affiliated news website quoted by the British daily.

“The three-plenty secretary reminds all cadres to be mindful of their social circles, to purify their circle of friends and to rectify their work relationships,” the Chinese article quoted the tour guide as saying.

Participants reportedly met 15 former colleagues who are now behind bars, who admonished them to steer clear of a life of crime and to educate themselves about public service to avoid suffering the same fate.

“I will take this as a lesson, and always be on my guard,” the mainland newspaper quoted the head of one municipality as saying. “I must not err when it comes to self-discipline and integrity.”

However, the public, largely a jeering bystander on the sidelines of top-level party intrigue, found much to laugh at in the prison-visit scheme.

According to the Financial Times, Weibo, China’s equivalent of Twitter, was rife with ridicule yesterday.

“For them this is just a theme party. They are all thinking about where to go to have a banquet after cleansing their souls,” said one Weibo user, going by the handle Ladycheng.

In other provinces, prison tours similar to those in Hubei have been supplemented by visits to military bases, where officials and their spouses dress up in People’s Liberation Army Uniforms and chant revolutionary slogans.

## HONG KONG Survey: over 60 pct support constitutional reform package

More than 60 percent of Hong Kong people support the government’s constitutional reform package, Hong Kong’s largest political party announced yesterday. The survey, released by the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB), also showed that 32 percent of respondents oppose the reform package. Some 1,070 people were questioned for the poll. More than 80 percent of them think lawmakers should vote in accordance with public opinions. The DAB’s vice chairman, Horace Cheung, urged at the press conference that pan-democratic lawmakers respect the public’s wish to have universal suffrage in 2017.

## 11 prostitution organizers jailed in Henan

Eleven people have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from ten years to life over organized prostitution in a nightclub in central China’s Henan Province between Aug. 2012 and Nov. 2013. Chen Jiagui and Wang Guofu, two managers from the Royal No.1 Nightclub in Zhengzhou, the provincial capital, were convicted of organizing sex trade and sentenced to life in prison, said the Xinxiang Intermediate People’s Court yesterday. Chen was also found guilty of illegally selling cigarettes of top domestic brands to make profits. Chen and Wang’s personal assets have been confiscated. Nine other defendants received sentences from ten to 15 years along with fines. The nightclub had employed more than 4,500 females in total before it was raided and forced to close on Nov. 1, 2013. The dossiers of 133 suspects were transferred to prosecutors in March last year, after a five-month investigation. The 11 defendants stood trial in February. No date has been set by four courts in Xinxiang City for the remaining verdicts. Eight police officers, including deputy head of the Zhengzhou Public Security Bureau Zhou Tingxin were implicated in the nightclub case. Zhou was later sentenced to six years for accepting bribes.

# Gov’t cuts taxes for imported sneakers, diapers

**C**HINESE shoppers may get better deals on items including sports shoes, face cream, and diapers after the government reduced import tax by half to boost consumption.

Import tariffs for some clothes, shoes, and skincare products will be cut by an average of more than 50 percent starting June 1, according to a statement from the Customs Bureau of the Ministry of Finance yesterday.

Tariff cuts will be “conducive to a reasonable expansion of imports,” said a Finance Ministry statement. “Expanding domestic consumer demand is an important measure for steady growth and structural adjustment.”

China is seeking to lift domestic consumption as it weans the economy from a dependence on exports and infrastructure investment. The government is also looking to protect jobs and help local in-

dustries upgrade amid the weakest economic growth since 2009.

Growth in retail sales declined to 10 percent in April, down from March’s 10.2 percent and below expectations of 10.4 percent. Imports plunged 16.2 percent compared with a year earlier in a sign of weak consumer demand.

Many Chinese enjoy shopping overseas because “prices for those items in the domestic market are unreasonably high”, said Yuan Gangming, an economist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

He added the outlook for consumption is poor as the slowdown hits wages and government revenue growth.

Import taxes for sneakers and boots will be cut to 12 percent from as much as 24 percent, tariffs on diapers will drop to 2 percent from 7.5 percent, and that for facial care products will be lowered to 2 percent from 5 percent.



Customers walk past a display of shoes at a shopping mall in Beijing, China

The move will satisfy local appetite for the goods and lift imports, according to the Customs Bureau’s statement.

The government announced an outline of the plan last month, with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang calling for better policies to give domestic shoppers more choice. Bloomberg/AP

## NEPAL

## Villagers return to homes after river gets unblocked



Thousands of villagers in northwestern Nepal were able to return to their homes yesterday after a mountain river swept away debris from a landslide that had blocked it, allowing waters to flow normally again. The landslide before dawn Sunday dammed up the Kaligandaki River and created a lake 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) long. Thousands of villagers fled their homes, fearing flash floods. It happened in an area north of Beni Bazaar, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) northwest of the capital, Kathmandu. Overnight, the river washed away rocks and other debris, and by yesterday morning, river was flowing at its normal level, said government administrator Tek Bahadur K.C. The landslide was not caused by an aftershock to major earthquakes that struck Nepal on April 25 and May 12, which together killed nearly 8,700 people and injuring 16,800 others. In 2012, dozens of people were killed when an avalanche held back the nearby Seti River, which then burst through the snow blockage and sent water gushing through villages along its banks.

## PHILIPPINES

## Aquino: Gov't to fly usual routes over disputed reefs



Philippine aircraft will continue to fly their usual routes over disputed reefs in the South China Sea, the country's president said yesterday, defying China's challenges to its planes and those of the United States. President Benigno Aquino III told reporters there is no declared air defense identification zone over the area and "we will still fly the routes that we fly based on international law." "We will still exercise our rights over our exclusive economic zone," he said, adding that the "bottom line is, it has to be clear, we will defend our rights to the best of our abilities." Aquino also pointed to the disparity in the military strength of China and the Philippines, saying China should not bully a smaller country because it would hurt its image as it tries to create good will with its trading partners. The Philippines is pursuing international arbitration and diplomatic efforts to try to resolve the territorial dispute with China.



Malaysian National Police Chief Khalid Abu Bakar speaks at press conference in Wang Kelian

## MALAYSIA

# Authorities find 139 suspected graves in human trafficker camps

Eileen Ng, Wang Kelian

**M**ALAYSIAN authorities said yesterday that abandoned jungle camps used by human traffickers contained 139 suspected graves as well as pens likely used as cages for migrants, shedding more light on a regional trade that preyed on some of Southeast Asia's most desperate people.

National police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said forensics experts were exhuming the suspected graves found at 28 vacated camps in the hilly jungle area on the border with Thailand where trafficking syndicates were known to operate.

"It is a very sad scene," Khalid told reporters in the northern state of Perlis at a police outpost several kilometers from the camps. "I am shocked. We never expected this kind of cruelty."

At one camp, police found "a highly decomposed body" that will be examined by forensics experts as teams began the work of digging up the areas believed to be graves — mounds of earth, covered with leaves and marked by sticks, Khalid said.

"We have discovered 139 of what we believe to be graves," he said. "We believe they are victims of human trafficking."

The finding follows a similar discovery earlier this month by police in Thailand who unearthed dozens of bodies

from shallow graves on the Thai side of the border. The discoveries have exposed hidden networks of jungle camps run by human smugglers, who have for years held countless desperate people captive while extorting ransoms from their families.

Most of those who have fallen victim to the trafficking networks are members of Myanmar's persecuted Rohin-

**■ At one camp, police found "a highly decomposed body" that will be examined by forensics experts**

gya Muslim community or impoverished migrants from Bangladesh, part of a wave of people who have fled their homelands to reach countries like Malaysia, where they hope to find work or live freely.

As Southeast Asian governments have launched crackdowns in recent weeks amid intensified international pressure and media scrutiny, traffickers have abandoned camps on land and boats at sea to

avoid arrest.

Khalid said at least two of the camps found in Malaysia appeared to have been abandoned within the past few weeks, based on the condition of items left behind such as vegetables, rice and almost new cooking utensils. Scattered personal possessions included a pink teddy bear and white children's sandals, he said, indicating the possible presence of children at the camp.

On three large whiteboards, police pasted dozens of pictures taken at the camps, which ranged in size, with the largest capable of holding about 300 people and smaller ones for just a few dozen. Some of the pictures showed large, crudely built pens made from wooden sticks, which were believed to be used as cages.

"We think the migrants were imprisoned in these wooden pens," Khalid said. "They were not allowed to move freely and traffickers kept watch at sentry posts."

Other items left behind were a rifle pouch, used bullets and bullet casings, he said. Police also found white muslin cloth, used by Muslims in Malaysia to wrap dead bodies, and a wooden stretcher believed to have carried bodies.

The findings were the result of an operation Malaysian authorities conducted from May 11-23, during which they combed

the steep jungle area along 50 kilometers of the border with Thailand. Due to the difficult terrain, Khalid said the investigation and forensics analysis could take a few weeks.

Human rights groups and activists say the area on the Thai-Malaysia border has been used for years to smuggle migrants and refugees, including Rohingya Muslims, a long-persecuted minority in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar.

In many cases, they pay human smugglers thousands of dollars for passage, but are instead held for weeks or months, while traffickers extort more money from families back home. Rights groups say some have been beaten to death, and The Associated Press has documented other cases in which people have been enslaved on fishing boats.

Since May 10 alone, more than 3,600 people — about half of them from Bangladesh and half Rohingya from Myanmar — have landed ashore in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. Thousands more are believed to be trapped at sea in boats abandoned by their captains.

Malaysia and Indonesia announced last week that they would provide temporary shelter for up to one year for migrants recently found or still stranded at sea. The U.S. has said it will settle some of them permanently. **AP**

At least 500 people are reported to have died in a heat wave sweeping India, with temperatures reaching 48C in some areas, the BBC reported yesterday.

INDIA

# Massive heat wave kills 500

Most deaths have taken place in the southern states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, where more than 140 people have died since Saturday.

Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh recorded 48C while temperatures rose to above 44C in the capital, Delhi.

According to the Associated Press, the worst-hit state has been Andhra Pradesh, where more than 100 people have died from the brutal heat in state in the last week, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, the state's top elected official, told reporters.

Health authorities have asked people not to go outside at midday to avoid getting sunstroke due to high temperatures and blistering winds.

"We are urging people to take all the necessary precautions and drink lots of water," Naidu said.

Meanwhile, in neighboring Telangana, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said the heat wave had killed 186 people in 10 districts, with 58 people dying since Saturday, the BBC noted.



An Indian man pours water on his face during a hot summer day in Hyderabad on Sunday

Day temperatures in Telangana's Khammam district soared to more than 48 degrees Celsius on Saturday.

Roads and markets were deserted in all of the major cities and towns in both provinces, with people staying indoors to avoid the heat.

Furthermore, according to the BBC, the northwestern desert state of Rajasthan has also recorded several deaths due to the heat, the PTI reported, including a woman who collapsed and died on a roadside in Bundi city.

The meteorological department

said the sweltering conditions were likely to continue for a few more days.

"No relief" is expected in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Delhi and other northern states for the next four days, and the "heat wave will continue," an official said.

Reports also said at least 10 people had died of the heat in the eastern state of West Bengal.

Non air-conditioned taxis will be taken off the road for five hours during the day in the main city in the state capital, Kolkata, after two drivers died from heat stroke.

Weather authorities said the high temperatures would likely continue for at least another week. The forecast is for a continuing "heat wave to severe heat wave" for the rest of the month. "It is hot. It will stay hot. People must stay inside and drink lots of water," Devendra Sharma, an official at the Indian meteorological office was reported as saying by the Guardian.

The highest temperature ever recorded in Delhi was 47.2C, in May 1944. The record India is thought to be 50.6C, recorded in 1956 in the northern town of Alwar.

Authorities said the situation should improve with the approaching monsoon rains, which usually reach the southeastern coast in the first week of June. MDT

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Ken Dilanian  
Intelligence Writer, Washington

IRAQ

# After fall of Ramadi, US defense chief's criticism raises questions

THE Islamic State group's takeover of the Iraqi provincial capital Ramadi prompted criticism from Defense Secretary Ash Carter and raised new questions about the Obama administration's strategy to defeat the extremist group.

The Islamic State group, which had already seized a strategically important swath of the Middle East, seized Ramadi in central Iraq a week ago, which has revived concerns about U.S. efforts to fight the group.

The Obama administration's approach in Iraq is a blend of retraining and rebuilding the Iraqi army, prodding the Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad to reconcile with the nation's Sunnis and bombing Islamic State group targets from the air without committing American ground combat troops.

President Barack Obama's strategy is predicated on Baghdad granting political concessions to the country's alienated Sunnis, who are a source of personnel and money for the Islamic State group. But there has been little visible progress on that front. Baghdad has continued to work closely with Shiite militias backed by Iran, which have been accused of atrocities against Sunnis, a religious minority in Iraq that ruled until Saddam Hussein fell from power.

The U.S. has sought to reach out on its own to Sunni tribes and is training some Sunni fighters, but those efforts have been limited by the small num-



Local residents and Sunni tribal fighters welcome newly-arriving Iraqi Shiite Hezbollah Brigade militiamen, brandishing their flag, who are joining the fight against Islamic State group militants in Khalidiya, 100 km west of Baghdad

ber of American troops on the ground.

Carter said in an interview aired Sunday that Shiite-led Iraqi forces did not show a "will to fight" in the battle for Ramadi, a Sunni city.

Although Iraqi soldiers "vastly outnumbered" their opposition in the capital of Anbar province, they quickly withdrew a

week ago without putting up much resistance from the city in Iraq's Sunni heartland, Carter said on CNN's "State of the Union."

The Iraqis left behind large numbers of U.S.-supplied vehicles, including several tanks, now presumed to be in Islamic State hands.

"What apparently happened is

the Iraqi forces just showed no will to fight," Carter said. "They were not outnumbered; in fact, they vastly outnumbered the opposing force. That says to me, and I think to most of us, that we have an issue with the will of the Iraqis to fight ISIL and defend themselves."

The White House declined to comment on Sunday.

A spokesman for the Iraqi government said yesterday that Carter's remarks were surprising and that the U.S. defense chief had been given "incorrect information." In a statement, Saad al-Hadithi said the fall of Ramadi was due to mismanagement and poor planning by some senior military commanders in charge of Ramadi.

American officials say they are sending anti-tank weapons to the Iraqi military. But they also noted that Iraqi forces were not routed from Ramadi — they left of their own accord, frightened in part by a powerful wave of Islamic State group suicide truck bombs, some the size of the one that destroyed the federal building in Oklahoma City two decades ago, said a senior State Department official who spoke to reporters last week under ground rules he not be named.

A senior defense official said that the troops who fled Ramadi had not been trained by the U.S. or its coalition partners. The official was not authorized to address the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Carter defended the use of U.S. airstrikes, but he said they are not a replacement for Iraqi ground forces willing to defend their country. AP

ISRAEL

# Ex-Premier Olmert sentenced to 8 months in prison

Aron Heller, Jerusalem

FORMER Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was sentenced yesterday to eight months in prison for unlawfully accepting money from a U.S. supporter, capping the dramatic downfall of a man who only years earlier led the country and hoped to bring about a historic peace agreement with the Palestinians.

Olmert was convicted in March in a retrial in Jerusalem District Court. The sentencing comes in addition to a six-year prison sentence he received last year in a separate bribery conviction, ensuring the end of the former premier's political career.

Olmert's lawyer, Eyal Rozovsky, said Olmert's legal team was "very disappointed" by the ru-



Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert speaks to the media after hearing the verdict in his trial, in Jerusalem's District Court

ling and would appeal to Israel's Supreme Court. They were granted a 45-day stay, meaning the former Israeli leader will avoid incarceration for now.

Olmert also was given a suspended sentence of an additional eight months and fined USD25,000.

A slew of character witnesses had vouched for Olmert, including former

British Prime Minister Tony Blair and former Israeli Mossad chief Meir Dagan in written statements read aloud yesterday. The verdict stated that it recognized Olmert's vast contributions to Israeli society and sentenced him to less than the prosecution had demanded. Still, it ruled that "a black flag hovers over his conduct."

Olmert was forced to resign in early 2009 amid the corruption allegations. His departure cleared the way for hard-liner Benjamin Netanyahu's election, and subsequent peace efforts have not succeeded.

Olmert, 69, was acquitted in 2012 of a series of charges that included accepting cash-stuffed envelopes from U.S. businessman Morris Talansky when Olmert was mayor of Jerusalem and a Cabinet minister. Olmert was found to have received about \$600,000 from Talansky during his term as mayor, and additional amounts in cash during his term as a Cabinet minister, but a court did not find evidence the money had been used for unlawful personal reasons or illegal campaign financing.

Talansky, an Orthodox Jew from New York's Long Island, had testified the money was spent on expensive cigars, first-class travel and luxury hotels, while insisting he received nothing in return.

The acquittal on the most serious charges at the time was seen as a major victory for Olmert, who denied being corrupt. He was convicted only on a lesser charge of breach of trust for steering job appointments and contracts to clients of a business partner, and it raised hopes for his political comeback.

But Olmert's former office manager and confidant Shula Zaken later became a state's witness, offering diary entries and tape recordings of conversations with Olmert about illicitly

receiving cash, leading to a retrial. In the recordings, Olmert is heard telling Zaken not to testify in the first trial so she would not incriminate him.

The judges concluded that Olmert gave Zaken part of the money in exchange for her loyalty, and used the money for his own personal use without reporting it according to law. They convicted him on a serious charge of illicitly receiving money, as well as charges of fraud and breach of trust.

In a separate trial in March 2014, Olmert was convicted of bribery over a Jerusalem real estate scandal and was sentenced to six years in prison. He appealed and has been allowed to stay out of prison until a verdict is delivered. AP

USA

# 'A Beautiful Mind' mathematician John Nash dies in taxi crash

Bruce Shipkowski, Trenton

**B**ORN to an electrical engineer, and later a precocious and dashing young man who attained an Ivy League education, John Nash seemed destined for a life of stunning success. That he achieved, winning a Nobel Prize in 1994, but not without a struggle with mental illness that would make him a household name even more so than his achievements in mathematics.

Nash had read the classic "Men of Mathematics" by E.T. Bell by the time he was in high school. He planned to follow in his father's footsteps and studied for three years at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh — now Carnegie Mellon University — but instead followed his passion for math.

He then went to Princeton, where he worked on his equilibrium theory and, in 1950,



AP PHOTO  
In this Oct. 11, 1994 file photo, Princeton University professor John Nash speaks during a news conference at the school in Princeton, N.J., after being named the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for economics

received his doctorate with a dissertation on non-cooperative games. The thesis contained the definition and properties of what would later be called

the Nash equilibrium.

But it was while teaching at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1959, when his wife, Alicia, was pregnant with their son, that schizophrenia began to emerge, a yearslong fight that was chronicled in the Academy Award-winning blockbuster "A Beautiful Mind." The Nashes died in a car accident late Saturday on the New Jersey Turnpike. He was 86; she was 82.

"John's remarkable achievements inspired generations of mathematicians, economists and scientists who were influenced by his brilliant, groundbreaking work in game theory, and the story of his life with Alicia moved millions of readers and moviegoers who marveled at their courage in the face of daunting challenges," Princeton President Christopher Eisgruber said in a statement.

In an autobiography written for The Nobel Foundation website, Nash said delusions caused

him to resign as a faculty member at MIT. He also spent several months in New Jersey hospitals on an involuntary basis. However, Nash's schizophrenia diminished through the 1970s and 1980s as he "gradually began to intellectually reject some of the delusionally influenced lines of thinking," he wrote.

2001's "A Beautiful Mind" was based on an unauthorized biography by Sylvia Nasar, who wrote that Nash's contemporaries found him "immensely strange" and "slightly cold, a bit superior, somewhat secretive." Much of his demeanor likely stemmed from mental illness.

"A Beautiful Mind" won four Academy Awards, including best picture and best director, and generated interest in John Nash's life story.

Russell Crowe, who was nominated for best actor for playing Nash, tweeted that he was "stunned" by news of the couple's death.

"An amazing partnership," he

wrote. "Beautiful minds, beautiful hearts."

Jennifer Connelly, who won the Oscar for best supporting actress for her portrayal of Alicia Nash, called the couple "an inspiration," and the film's director, Ron Howard, tweeted that "it was an honor telling part of their story."

The Nashes split in 1963 then resumed living together several years later and finally remarried in 2001.

John Nash held a research post at Brandeis University before eventually returning to Princeton. Known as brilliant and eccentric, he was associated with Princeton for many years, most recently serving as a senior research mathematician.

He was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics for his work in game theory, which offered insight into the dynamics of human rivalry. It is considered one of the most influential ideas of the 20th century. **AP**

AD



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## what's ON



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TIME: 9am-9pm

UNTIL: June 7, 2015

VENUE: Temporary Exhibitions Gallery of IACM, Av. Almeida Ribeiro, 163

ADMISSION: free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4100

ART OF INK – MIO PANG FEI CALLIGRAPHY EXHIBITION

TIME: 10am-7pm (Closed on Mondays, no admission after 6:30 pm)

UNTIL: July 5, 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

AFA 8TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION – NEW WORKS BY MEMBERS

TIME: 12pm-7pm (Closed on Sundays and public holidays)

UNTIL: May 30, 2015

VENUE: Estrada da Areia Preta No. 52, Edifício da Fabrica de Baterias N.E. National, 3rd Floor, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6064

CUBA TOUCH – INSIGHT INTO THE DAILY LIVES IN CUBA

TIME: 10am-6:30pm

UNTIL: July 20, 2015

VENUE: Dare to Dream Gallery, Calçada Da Barra No. 16 R/C LJ A, Edif. San Chak, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 2820

ORGANIZER: Dare to Dream

## Offbeat

## TURKMENISTAN UNVEILS MASSIVE GOLD-LEAF STATUE OF PRESIDENT



People gather for the monument unveiling ceremony in Ashgabat

Turkmenistan has unveiled a grandiose gold-leafed statue of the president carrying a dove and riding atop a horse – a move aimed at burnishing the leader's burgeoning personality cult.

The 21-meter monument presented to the public yesterday in the energy-rich but isolated Central Asian nation includes a statue of President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov mounted on a towering pile of marble.

Turkmenistan is dotted with gold-leaf statues to Berdymukhamedov's eccentric predecessor, Saparmurat Niyazov, who died in 2006, but this is the first such monument to the current leader.

Elevating its leader to virtual demi-god status has for two decades served as a way for the government in Turkmenistan to enshrine its legitimacy.

Officials, however, insist the new statue in the capital, Ashgabat, was built in response to overwhelming public demand.

"My main goal is to serve the people and the Motherland. And so, I will listen to the opinion of the people and do as they choose," Berdymukhamedov said in 2014, responding to the statue proposal.

## TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
17:35	Brazil Avenue (Repeated)
18:30	TDM Sports
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:45	Happy Endings S2
22:10	Brazil Avenue
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

## cinema

## CINETEATRO

21 MAY - 27 MAY



## TOMORROWLAND

ROOM 1  
2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.45 pm

Director: Brad Bird

Starring: George Clooney, John Walker Britt Robertson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 130min



## MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

ROOM 2  
(3D) 7.15 pm

(2D) 2.30, 4.45, 9.30 pm

Director: George Miller

Starring: Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron, Nicholas Hoult

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 120min

## DRAGON BALL Z: RESURRECTION "F"

ROOM 3  
2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Tadayoshi Yamamuro

Starring: Ji-tae Yu, Yūsuke Iseya, Ye-ryeon Cha

Language: Japanese (Chinese/English)

Duration: 93min

## PITCH PERFECT 2

ROOM 3

(23-25 MAY) 7.30 pm

Director: Elizabeth Banks

Starring: Anna Kendrick, Skylar Astin, Rebel Wilson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 141min

## MACAU TOWER

21 MAY - 10 JUN

## TOMORROWLAND

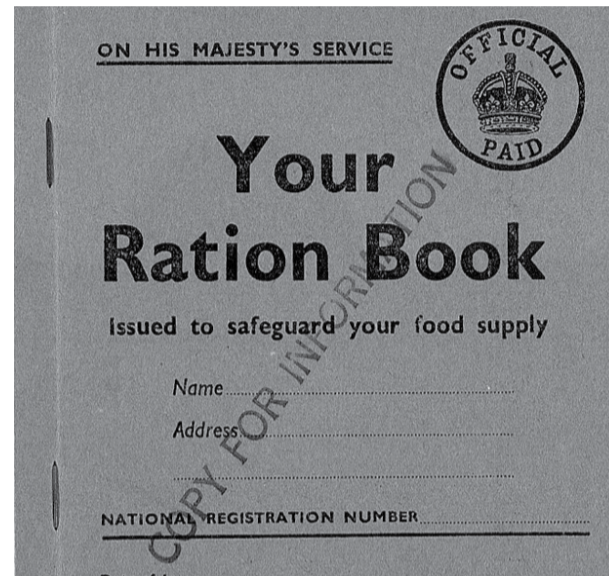
Director: Brad Bird

Starring: George Clooney, John Walker Britt Robertson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 130min

## this day in history



## 1950 UK DRIVERS CHEER END OF FUEL RATIONS

Long queues have appeared at garages this evening and motorists have torn their ration books into confetti after the government announced an end to petrol rationing.

The Minister of Fuel and Power, Philip Noel-Baker, told the House of Commons rationing would be abolished because two American companies had agreed a deal to supply oil in return for buying British goods.

"This is indeed VP [Victory for Petrol] day for the motor users' campaign," said a spokesman for three motoring organizations - the RAC, AA and Royal Scottish Automobile Club.

"The effect on the industrial, commercial and community life will be electric. Ration books now become as obsolete as the man with the red flag." Under a deal agreed earlier this month, Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and the California Texas Oil Company will be paid in sterling and in turn they have agreed to invest the money in British equipment, services and oil tankers.

It is hoped the policy will attract more dollar-spending tourists - which may offset the amount of dollars paid for the new fuel supplies from America.

The government estimates an increase in fuel consumption of one million tons a year. About 430,000 tons of this will be supplied by the US firms. The rest will come from newly expanded refineries in Britain.

But the poor quality of petrol in this country will not improve until refineries - such as those at Southampton and Cheshire - have been completed, probably in 1952.

Discounted driving licenses, known as half-rate licenses - issued to drivers using basic petrol - will also be abolished.

The Treasury will benefit from £26m in revenue from full-rate licenses, a new rate of petrol tax and savings on administration costs. More than 2,000 officials who run the rationing system will lose their jobs.

The practice of putting red dye in commercial petrol to curb black market sales will also stop.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

**Petrol** rationing was first imposed at the onset of World War II in September 1939 and its continuation five years after the war ended was a hotly debated issue, especially during the 1950 general election campaign.

The Conservatives in opposition had long argued it was no longer necessary but Labor said the nation had a severe dollar shortage and could not afford to buy US supplies. After the 1950 election - which saw Labor's majority slashed - the government realized the public would no longer tolerate rationing.

Petrol rationing was reintroduced in January 1957 for five months during the Suez Crisis when Egypt and Syria blocked supplies.

It was almost brought back again during a world fuel crisis in 2000 when Opec squeezed supplies to stop fuel prices coming down.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19
If you haven't tried a new restaurant or been out with someone new in a while, you are no doubt craving novelty by now.

Taurus April 20-May 20
Your finances are driving you to distraction today, so see if you can get them in line and at least on the way toward progress by the end of the day.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21
Your actions today determine how things are for the rest of the year - no pressure! The good news is that your energy is ready for anything.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You feel selfish - maybe legitimately so - but that doesn't mean that you should stop what you're doing!

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22
You have no trouble finding new and clever ways to say what needs to be said - and you have no fear of upsetting the powers that be!

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22
This is not the time to be a stick in the mud - your life should be more of an adventure! It may feel awkward, but you are sure to find that things get a lot better if you just find a way to rebel.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22
You need to deal with your people in one way or another today - and that could mean tracking down a few of them electronically or reaching across continents in some other way.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
An impulsive purchase may lead you in a very odd new direction - but it's one that you need to follow up all the way.

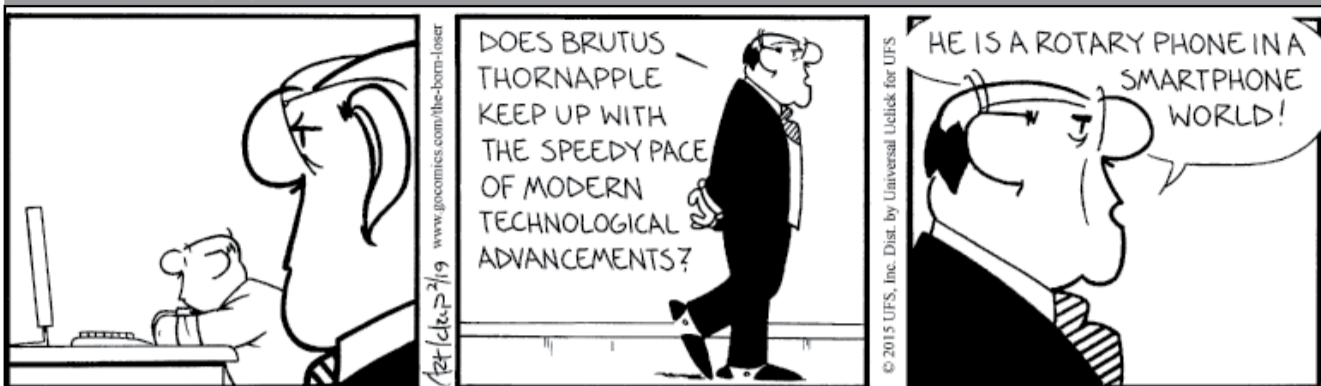
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Your happiness is not dependent on others, usually - but today your people definitely enhance your mood! Remember to share your feelings with them so they know that whatever they're doing is working.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Nothing really seems to be going your way today, but that just means that you need to redouble your efforts. Nothing is impossible - even things that seem to have already failed can be revived.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Your people are practically lining up to help you out today - even if you don't think you need anything! It's a good time to dream up group tasks and ask for the help you are sure to get.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20
You may get riled up over something small today - make sure that you're taking it out on the right people! Someone needs to hear your righteous fury, but you need to limit it to them.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles categorized as Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each category contains a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION. It lists weather for various cities in CHINA and the WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Remains of a fire; 6- Fork part; 10- On \_\_\_ with; 14- Orange Bowl site; 15- To \_\_\_ (exactly); 16- Bond classic; 17- Member of the nobility; 18- Pill bottle; 19- cava; 20- Rash; 22- Canvas-like fabric; 23- River of Flanders; 24- Prayers; 26- Printer's measures; 29- Feminine suffix; 31- Clamor; 32- Pops; 33- Sibyl; 34- Mother of Calcutta; 38- What there oughta be; 40- Chafe; 42- Palm starch; 43- Title of the emperor of Japan; 46- Milne creation; 49- RR stop; 50- Unburden; 51- Whig opponent; 52- -speak; 53- Underwater missile; 57- Sneakers brand; 59- Met highlights; 60- Everlasting; 65- Wise men; 66- Antitoxins; 67- Wearies; 68- North Carolina university; 69- Rocker Clapton; 70- Bucky Beaver's toothpaste; 71- Spanish muralist; 72- Face covering; 73- Dissuade;

DOWN: 1- Prefix with dextrous; 2- Former name of Thailand; 3- Heavenly strings; 4- Atlanta university; 5- Nasal cavities; 6- Person behind bars?; 7- Pack \_\_\_ (quit); 8- Cool!; 9- Sushi choice; 10- Counselors; 11- Ragu competitor; 12- Kofi of the U.N.; 13- Some horses; 21- Sand hill by the sea; 22- Broad; 25- Double-croser; 26- Mild cheese; 27- Former French colony of north-western Africa; 28- Neb. neighbor; 30- Go off; 35- Freedom from need, labor, or pain; 36- Cpls.' superiors; 37- Bang-up; 39- Face decoration for a brave; 41- Support for an open dictionary; 44- \_\_\_ Irae; 45- Singular; 47- City near Provo; 48- Cyst; 53- Subdues; 54- Papal garment; 55- Strictness; 56- Musical drama; 58- Marsh bird; 61- Goddess and sister of Ares in Greek mythology; 62- Quod \_\_\_ demonstrandum; 63- Panamanian baby; 64- Romanov ruler; 66- Religious sch.



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## Big spending Guangzhou playing for Champs League survival

**G**UANGZHOU Evergrande has spent over USD100 million since 2010 on Italian coaches like Marcello Lippi and Fabio Cannavaro and on South American talent such as Dario Conca and Ricardo Goulart, so leaving the 2015 Asian Champions League at the second round stage is certainly not part of the plan.

Cantonese club, which has won the last four Chinese Super League titles and the 2013 continental crown, said goodbye to Lippi in November 2014 as the World Cup-winning coach returned to Europe after two and a half years of success. Cannavaro, the 2006 World Cup-winning captain was hired as his replacement.

Under Cannavaro, Guangzhou topped a tough group in round one of the Asian Champions League, eliminating the 2014 champion Western Sydney Wanderers along the way.

The first leg of the knockout stage did not go to plan however as, last Wednesday, the cashed-up Chinese club lost the first leg to South Korea's Seongnam FC 2-1. The mid-table K-League team won the game thanks to a controversial penalty in the 96th minute after Guangzhou had a player sent off earlier in the second half.

At home on Wednesday, Guangzhou needs a win to stay in the competition. After reaching at least the quarterfinals in all three of its previous appearances, bowing out at this stage would be perceived as failure in Cannavaro's debut season as a head coach.

The former defender has told his players to channel the disappointment and frustration of the first leg in front of what should be a crowd of over 40,000 at the Tianhe Stadium.

"They are angry because it was a tough match and we had a red card and a penalty, but I trust they will use this anger in the second match when we play at home in Guangzhou," Cannavaro said. "We scored an away goal and that is very important, and we will look to prepare and we will see who passes to the next round." **AP**

# Platini: FIFA led by Blatter will always lack credibility

Graham Dunbar, Geneva

**F**IFA lacks credibility while Sepp Blatter is president, according to UEFA leader Michel Platini, saying his former mentor fears the "emptiness" of life after leaving football's world governing body.

Blatter is clinging to power "at all costs," Platini told French sports daily L'Equipe in an interview published yesterday.

Ahead of the FIFA presidential election on Friday, Platini said the 79-year-old Blatter had no grand plans for FIFA and it was "not credible" to claim he needed a fifth four-year term to complete an unfinished mission.

"No, he is simply scared of the future, as he has given his life to the institution, to the point where he now identifies himself fully with FIFA," Platini said. "I understand the fear of that emptiness that he (Blatter) must have, it's natural. But if he really loves FIFA, he should have put its interests ahead of his own."

Though Platini said he likes Blatter on a personal level, his explicit criticism of the FIFA chief points to a deep rift between the two men. Blatter seeks to extend his 17-year reign at an election many saw as a natural time for the former France great to get the top job.

He opted last August not to challenge Blatter in the election of 209 FIFA member federations and now supports the only opponent: FIFA vice president Prince Ali bin al-Hussein of Jordan.

"I am firmly convinced that



Angela Merkel, left, and Michel Platini, right, attend the Women's Champions League Final football match between FFC Frankfurt and Paris Saint-Germain in Berlin, Germany, May 14

## Blatter is strongly favored to win another vote with widespread support in five of FIFA's six continental regions

Ali, whom I have known on a personal level for years, would make a great FIFA President. He has everything it takes," Platini said of the prince, praising his "great freedom of spirit and independence."

However, Blatter is strongly favored to win another vote with widespread support in five of FIFA's six continental regions. He noted his longevity in office in

a newspaper interview in his native Switzerland on Sunday.

Blatter compared himself to a mountain goat, telling the Neue Zürcher Zeitung he "cannot be stopped, I just keep going."

Platini, now 59, was a key campaigner helping Blatter become FIFA president in 1998 and then a long-time heir apparent.

"I have nothing against Sepp. I like him as a person and I respect him," Platini said in an interview transcript provided by UEFA. "We have had some good times together, and nothing and no one can take that away."

Still, Platini has not forgiven Blatter for going back on a promise at the 2011 UEFA Congress in Paris that the current FIFA mandate would be his last. Blatter has since said he had the right to change his mind.

"And now here we are again, as if none of it had ever happened," said the

UEFA president, adding he felt he asked his members four years ago to support Blatter "on the basis of a lie."

Then, Blatter was in a battle with Mohamed bin Hammam of Qatar who withdrew days before the election when accused of offering Caribbean voters \$40,000 bribes.

FIFA and Blatter have spent much of the past four years handling fallout and reputational damage from scandals involving Bin Hammam and other senior executive committee members, plus the controversial choices of Russia and Qatar as World Cup hosts in 2018 and 2022, respectively.

Platini reiterated his call for "a breath of fresh air" at the top.

"And while he remains in place, whether he likes it or not, and whether it is fair or not, FIFA will lack credibility and its image will be tarnished, and so it will lack authority.

"Moreover, it will be football that suffers," Platini said, though acknowledging that Blatter had "done some very good things."

"FIFA will not disappear the moment he steps down. On the contrary, it would give FIFA the chance of a new lease of life," he said.

Prince Ali offers that chance, "is always very positive and fights for what he believes in," Platini said. "(H)e is honest and humble and comes from a country that bridges different cultures and traditions. He can bring real added value, and he is also someone who knows how to work in a team." **AP**

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opinion

**Macau Matters**

Richard Whitfield



**HOTEL GUEST SIMULATION**

I participated in a "guest simulation" at the new Marriott hotel in the Galaxy Macau in Cotai on Wednesday-Thursday (20-21 May). It was a very interesting and instructive experience.

I had not really thought about it previously, but clearly, you need to know that everything is working well before a new hotel opens its doors to accept paying guests. And the only real way to carry out this test is to invite a lot of people to stay and try everything out. These simulated guests do not pay to stay, and reciprocate by carrying out a set of tasks to test the hotel's systems.

We were asked to arrive before 10am and were given an information kit and a short briefing of what we were expected to do during our stay. We were asked to do specific things in different parts of the hotel and be at specific restaurants and other places at specific times. We were also asked to complete several questionnaires about our experiences. We were also given fake money (and credit cards) to pay for things and to gamble with.

One particularly interesting activity was the "stress test" where we were asked to turn on all the water, electric appliances and to turn up the air-conditioning and try out all the power sockets, etc in all the hotels rooms at 8am to see if the hotel could handle the load. It seemed to pass with flying colors.

Understandably, many of the hotel staff had limited English, but they were uniformly friendly and pleasant so that this problem did not become annoying. Also understandably, few staff knew much about Macau outside of the resort. This seems to be a general problem - most of my Macau born students also have little knowledge of Macau's very interesting history, and its important place in the world.

The hotel was clearly having teething problems, but seemed to be handling the load well, and I did not see or hear about any "show-stopper" problems. Overall, the facilities looked good. The rooms and other facilities were good, but the finishes in places were a bit rough. There also seemed to be a distinct lack of signage, but this is a relatively easily resolved problem. Overall the simulation exercise also seemed to be well thought out and managed, but the amount of information was confusing so that a more extended briefing at the beginning could have been worthwhile.

The whole exercise made me realize how complex hotel operations are, and how many things there are that can go wrong in so many ways - there is a huge amount of training and testing to be done before a hotel can open. Clearly several million patacas were spent on the exercise where hundreds of people stayed in the hotel and were fed in its restaurants and gambled in its casino over several days to complete the testing.

I talked to one senior staff member who has been involved in five hotel openings in Macau, and he noted how challenging they were. Most people trained in hospitality in the region can expect to be involved in many openings during their careers and I actually think it could be very interesting and fruitful work. Unfortunately, and stupidly, given the large numbers of hotels to be developed in Asia in the coming 20+ years, it is not part of the curriculum of most hotel management degrees. I have actually agreed to teach a course in project management for new hotel openings at the Macau University of Science and Technology, and there are very few places where this is taught as a degree course anywhere.

Overall, I enjoyed my stay and enjoyed participating in the testing, and I would be happy to join a similar exercise in the future. Anybody know where I can sign up?

**THE BUZZ** **PLAYER DIES IN SECOND-DIVISION MATCH IN ARGENTINA**

Cristian Gomez, a player with Argentine club Atletico Parana, died on Sunday after collapsing during a second-division match. The Argentine Football Association match supervisor for the game, Ramon Gomez, said the 27-year-old defender collapsed on the field in the first half of the match against Boca Unidos. The official said the player was taken to General San Martin hospital in the city of Corrientes, where doctors were unable to revive him. The cause of death was not immediately known. Alfredo Schweitzer, the pre-

sident of Boca Unidos, confirmed the death but offered no details. "We are awaiting the medical report," he said. Boca Unidos player Jose Vizcarra said Gomez seemed to die almost instantly. "When they took him off the field, it seemed he had already died," Vizcarra said. The defender is the second player to die in just under two weeks in Argentina. Emanuel Ortega, a player for fourth-division team San Martin de Burzaco, died after hitting his head on a post used to support fencing at the stadium.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	45-65 Good
High Density Residential Area	65-85 Moderate
Ambient	50-70 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**TUNISIA** A Tunisian soldier opens fire on fellow troops at a military barracks in an unusual attack in the capital, and the state news agency says the gunman and three others were killed.

**YEMEN** A United Nations-sponsored peace conference that was to take place at the end of the month is indefinitely postponed, senior Yemeni politicians say.

**ISRAEL** Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is sentenced to eight months in prison for unlawfully accepting money from a U.S. supporter, capping the dramatic downfall of a man who hoped to bring about a historic peace agreement with the Palestinians. **More on p14**

**Montoya beats Power for second Indy 500 win**



Juan Pablo Montoya, of Colombia, leads the mythical race

Jenna Fryer, Indianapolis

**HIS** career at a crossroads, his confidence shot, Juan Pablo Montoya received a lifeline from The Captain. Roger Penske called the driver in late 2013, when Montoya found himself without a job after seven frustrating seasons in NASCAR that had turned one of the baddest drivers on the planet into a struggling also-ran.

The catch? Penske's offer was a return to Indy cars, which Montoya had left behind years ago. The Colombian jumped at the opportunity and cashed in on it Sunday [U.S. time] with his second Indianapolis 500 victory. The first one was 15 years ago and a stepping stone to Formula One. The second one came for a 39-year-old man who proved JPM is back.

In a moment of sincerity following his win, flanked by Team Penske President Tim Cindric, Montoya briefly suggested how much this one meant to him.

"I'm glad I am proving them right, that they made the right choice," he said, pausing and lowering his eyes. "I'm loving racing right now."

Oh, that was evident for two weeks at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, where Montoya confidently boasted to his three teammates that he'd win the race.

On Sunday, he twice drove from the back of the field and fearlessly charged into the final few laps as the leader in a race where few wanted to be out front with the checkered flag looming, and held off teammate Will Power.

That 2000 victory was easy, he's always said so, and when a driver leads 167

of the 200 laps, it clearly was a relaxed Sunday drive.

Win No. 2 was a battle from the very beginning. Montoya started 15th but an accident on the first lap brought out the caution and Montoya was hit from behind by Simona de Silvestro under yellow. He had to pit to repair the damage and restarted second-to-last in the field.

After working his way back through the field, he was penalized for running over his air hose during a pit stop — and again was sent deep into the pack.

"Montoya coming from all the way in the back — I'll tell you, you give that guy the bit and put it in his mouth... he doesn't give up," Penske said.

His victory gave Penske his 16th Indianapolis 500 win, and first since Helio Castroneves in 2009. Penske also joined Chip Ganassi as the only owners to win the Daytona 500 and the Indianapolis 500 in the same year. Ganassi did it in 2010; Joey Logano won the Daytona 500 for Penske in February.

The 15 years between Indy 500 victories are a record for a driver, surpassing A.J. Foyt, who needed 10 years between his third and fourth wins. **AP**

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon



The opening ceremony of the Feast of the Drunken Dragon was held yesterday at Senado Square.

AP PHOTO



**FRANCE's** president says his country's strong showing at this year's Cannes film festival is no accident — suggesting it's partly thanks to government subsidies. France has had long dry spells without prizes at Cannes. This year, unusually, five French films were selected for competition. The jury, led by American directors Joel and Ethan Coen, handed three prizes to French winners, including the top prize for Jacques Audiard's migrant drama "Dheepan."

AP PHOTO



**POLAND** Voters have sent a strong signal that they are unhappy with the country's direction, unseating a president despite the country's years of fast economic growth and unprecedented stability. Challenger Andrzej Duda, a right-wing member of the European Parliament, won the country's presidential election Sunday with 52 percent of the vote to 48 percent for the incumbent, Bronislaw Komorowski.

**USA-IRAQ** The Islamic State group's takeover of the provincial capital Ramadi prompts criticism from Defense Secretary Ash Carter that raises new questions about the Obama administration's strategy to defeat the extremist group. **More on p14**