Studio City to open on Oct 27, Melco hopes for 400 tables

Ai Weiwei says China promised he can return
Fork-wielding man stirs turmoil inside hospital

The police launched an investigation after a Filipino man barged into the Hospital Conde S. Januário wielding a 39cm long two-pronged fork yesterday, generating chaos inside the administration building. Around 4:30 pm, a watchman discovered the allegedly psychotic man inside the hospital hall and alerted hospital authorities. It was said that he acted abnormally and uncontrollably throughout the ordeal. Police arrived at the scene and subdued the man after a standoff. He was later taken to the police station in a wheelchair. His motive for entering into the public hospital is yet to be confirmed. According to the Health Bureau, the episode has caused no disturbance to the hospital’s operations. The authority has also denied any links to medical accidents.

Public tender for Islands Hospital's foundation

The government yesterday launched its calls for tenders for the construction project of the foundation and supporting facilities at the Islands Hospital. The bidding proposals will open on August 20 and the deadline for tender submission is September 17. According to a press release published today, the government is currently seeking the most appropriate tendering deal.

Gov’t and Sinosky Energy still at loggerheads over the setting of prices of natural gas

Arnaldo Santos, head of the Office for the Development of the Energy Sector (GDSE), noted that no consensus has been reached with Sinosky Energy over the setting of prices of natural gas.

City University of Macau appoints new rector

Zhang Shuo Guang will assume office as the new president of the City University of Macau next month. Aged 59, the Chinese scholar finished a bachelor’s degree in foreign languages and cultures at Nanjing Normal University before obtaining two Master’s degrees at Xiamen University and Ohio University in law-related social sciences.

Gov’t and Sinosky Energy still at loggerheads over the setting of prices of natural gas

Arnaldo Santos, head of the Office for the Development of the Energy Sector (GDSE), noted that no consensus has been reached with Sinosky Energy over the setting of prices of natural gas.

Costa Antunes remains head of GP Committee

The Grand Prix Committee Coordinator, João Manuel Costa Antunes, will remain in his post until the end of this year. According to an announcement published yesterday in the Official Gazette, the Portuguese engineer has been reappointed for the period between August 20 and December 31.

Photo exhibition reminisces about old Macau

Brook Yang

FROM fishermen constructing fishing nets and women delivering spring water, to florists fanning over the water and vintage cars racing at full throttle, a total of 73 photographs captured from the 1960s to the 1990s have been collated to provide a depiction of an old Macau before rapid economic growth caused the city’s urban landscape to transform beyond recognition.

Titled “Reminiscence - Macao Old Photos Collection Exhibition,” the collection features five renowned local photographers, namely Ao Peng, Ao Chi Keung, Carlos Dias, Tam Kai Hon and Kong Iu Lam. It was inaugurated yesterday at the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT), an event which marked the school’s 20th anniversary.

Running until November 30, the exhibition aims to offer the public an “opportunity to appreciate the old photos of Macau and also look into the future, while recalling the memories of the past.”

“The urban landscape has been changing rapidly in Macau along the economic boom and development by leaps and bounds in recent years. The traditional industries such as fishing, shipbuilding and fireworks which once were in great demand have been declining gradually and some have even ceased to exist. However, the demolition of buildings, the change of the coastlines, and the emergence of new industries have deeply affected the environment of the citizen’s lives,” stressed Dia- mantina Coimbra, IFT’s di-rector of the Tourism and Hotel School.

“The photographers walked through the streets and laneways of Macau and not only registered the historical change of the buildings and streets with their delicate camera lenses, but also captured won- derful cultural landscapes for life. The precious old photos are valuable historical materials, in addition to the image recordings. Besides, their advanced artistic techniques and exalted professional spirit also deserve admiration,” she added during the opening ceremony.

Mr Ao Peng, once a photo-journalist for over four decades, has witnessed and recorded the past half-century of changing society. He told the Times that his favorite scenes to capture in Macau are people in various practices of industries.

“I take all types of photographs: people, scenery, architecture, there’s no limit of types; anything that’s worth capturing, I would photograph it. In the past when we only used film, a shot would easily turn useless if your framing wasn’t satisfying. What I like very much is photographing all walks of life, whereby many of my photos are [of such things],” he said. The photographer cited reporters a frame that features spontaneously celebrating Chinese National Day during the Portuguese administration. He explained, “Today’s younger generation may have no idea how enthusiastic the Macanese compatriots in 60s and 70s would be when celebrating National Day every year. It was very lively during the celebrations, I have many photos of that.”

Mr Carlos Dias also mentioned that he selected photographs of streets and lanes for the theme of “old Macau reminiscence,” as many of them today no longer exist.

“I stopped photographing for some thirty years, and when I picked it up again in 2013, everything was already different. It’s very difficult to photograph what was in the past,” he concluded.

STATISTICS

Loans increase at a faster pace than deposits

TOTA L loans increased at a faster pace than total deposits, ac- cording to statistics released yester- day by the Monetary Authority. Concerning money supply, according to statistics released yesterday by the Monetary Authority, the total amount currency in circulation in Macau. Concerning money supply, the latest data indicates that the total amount in circulation has dropped by 1.8 percent. Resident deposits decreased by 0.9 percent from the preceding month to MOP47,744. Non- resident deposits grew by 7.1 percent to MOP266,700. Public sector deposits within the banking sector increased by 2.5 percent to MOP127.1 billion. As a result, total deposits within the banking sector rose by 1.9 percent from a month earlier to MOP865.0 billion. The shares of MOP, HKD, CNY and USD in total deposits were 18.3%, 41.3%, 13.7% and 22.5% respectively. The Monetary Authority also indicated that domestic loans to the private sector have increased by 2.4 percent from a month ago to MOP376.0 billion. Among these, MOP107.7 billion was MOP-denominated, MOP247.0 billion was denomina- ted in HKD, MOP3.1 billion was denominated in CNY and MOP22.8 billion was denominated in USD.

Macao Old Photos Collection Exhibition kicked off yesterday at the Institute for Tourism Studies, marking the school’s 20th anniversary. A total of 73 photographs captured from the 1960s to the 1990s have been collated to provide a depiction of an old Macau before rapid economic growth caused the city’s urban landscape to transform beyond recognition. The photographers walked through the streets and laneways of Macau and not only registered the historical change of the buildings and streets with their delicate camera lenses, but also captured wonderful cultural landscapes for life. The precious old photos are valuable historical materials, in addition to the image recordings. Besides, their advanced artistic techniques and exalted professional spirit also deserve admiration,” she added during the opening ceremony. The photographer cited reporters a frame that features spontaneously celebrating Chinese National Day during the Portuguese administration. He explained, “Today’s younger generation may have no idea how enthusiastic the Macanese compatriots in 60s and 70s would be when celebrating National Day every year. It was very lively during the celebrations, I have many photos of that.”

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Studio City to open Oct 27, Melco hopes for 400 gaming tables

ELCO Crown Entertainment remains hopeful that Macau’s government will allocate as many as 400 gaming tables to its new Hollywood-themed resort, Studio City, which will be opening on October 27, announced the casino operator’s co-chairman and CEO Lawrence Ho.

Melco, which is currently under the control of Stanley Ho’s son Lawrence Ho and Australian billionaire James Packer, yesterday revealed the opening date of their USD3.2 billion property - the first of a second wave of casino resorts due to open on the Cotai Strip.

Mr. Ho told a media conference yesterday that the company is "actively" in talks with the government regarding gaming table allocations.

Galaxy Entertainment Group was awarded 150 gaming tables for its phase II projects, which opened last May.

"We’re extremely concerned about the gaming table allocation that they [Galaxy] have had. We hope the government will reward us more for the hard work we have put in over the last ten years. We certainly hope to get more than 150 tables. We hope to get 400," he stressed.

Mr. Ho added that, "400 is a realistic figure," unlike "ridiculous requests" from other competitors who have asked for over 400 tables.

Melco’s Hollywood-themed resort features Asia’s highest Ferris wheel, along with other family entertainment elements developed by Time Warner Inc. The resort will feature a flight simulation with Batman flying through Gotham City and a 40,000 square foot indoor play center, which is set to include rises and interactive facilities with DC Comics characters like Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny.

Although the local casino industry’s downward spiral appears to have abated, gaming revenue dropped for the 14th straight month in July. Gross gaming revenue fell 34.5 percent to MOP18.6 billion in July according to data released this week by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau.

Mr. Ho foresees a rough second half of 2015 but he is hopeful that Studio City can catalyse the market.

"In the second half of the year it will be tough because we are going through a transition. Some gaming rooms have closed down and a number of employees have been laid off. I think this is just inevitable and this is really happening," he acknowledged.

Mr. Ho is nevertheless confident that in the longer term, more tourists will be heading to Macau wanting more than just to gamble.

"If ten years ago Macau’s gaming industry relied mostly on the VIP market, now mass gaming and non-gaming elements are starting to take center stage. According to Mr. Ho, the market has changed immensely and the company has prepared itself for such a change.

Studio City features a hotel boasting 1,600 rooms, a theater for magic shows, a 5,000-seat entertainment center and a TV production studio. Mr. Ho highlighted the resort’s excellent location, as it is situated right next to the Lotus Border Checkpoint, which links Macau to Hengqin island.

Mr. Ho said that his company will take full advantage of Studio City’s remarkable location, and of its uniqueness. "This is going to be a very independent and unique integrated resort," he recalled that further infrastructure projects, including the Hong Kong-Macau-Zhuhai Bridge and the LRT, are the key to helping Macau’s gaming industry develop.

Melco Crown Entertainment’s CEO said that they didn’t want to rush Studio City’s opening, thus choosing October 27 – a date that the company also regards as “auspicious.”

The casino operator yesterday opened Studio City’s doors to media representatives for the first time. Local and international media were invited for a tour of the property, which included an inspection of the casino’s mass gaming floor, in which at least nine smoking rooms have been installed, a ballroom, several hotel suites and the much-anticipated Ferris wheel.

The resort also features the House of Magic - a magic theater where magician and illusionist Franz Harary is expected to perform regularly - and a Pacha nightclub, in addition to 5,000-seat multipurpose entertainment center.

"THE AUDITION,' a short film promoting Studio City, will premiere on October 27, coinciding with the opening date of the resort, announced Melco Crown Entertainment’s co-chairman and CEO Lawrence Ho. The 16-minute promo – directed by Martin Scorsese and starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Robert De Niro, and Brad Pitt – will screen at the prestigious Venice Film Festival next month. A 30-second teaser of the short film was launched on Studio City’s official Facebook page last month.
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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”
New company capital comes mainly from China

A total of 1,294 new companies have been incorporated in the second quarter of the year, signalling a decrease of 160 year-on-year. Information from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEIC) indicates that the majority of new companies are operating primarily in the wholesale and retail sector (499), followed by the business services sector (328).

Analyzed by the size of registered capital, there were 941 new companies (65 percent of the total) registered with capital under MOP50,000, with a combined total capital of MOP22 million. On the other hand, there were 30 new companies registered with capital of MOP1,000,000 or over, and the total value of their capital amounted to MOP286 million (77 percent of the total). In the second quarter of 2015, companies in dissolution totalled 116, and the value of their registered capital amounted to MOP10 million.

The statistical data reveals that the capital of the new companies came mainly from mainland China (MOP234 million), which includes MOP150 million from the 9 provinces of the Pan-Pearl River Delta Region. Local capital amounted to MOP89 million. Analyzed by combinations of shareholders, there were 826 new companies established solely by Macau shareholders, along with 155 joint ventures between local shareholders and other countries or regions. At the end of the second quarter of 2015, the number of registered companies totalled 51,103, an increase of 5,055 from a year earlier.

With the gaming revenue drop easing, local developers are regaining confidence in promoting the real estate market. Nevertheless, Jacky Shek, senior director of the Centaline Macau Property Agency Limited, noted yesterday during a press conference that the forecasts for transaction volume in the third quarter of the year remain low.

Against the background of current stabilized housing prices, Shek said the media that properties were recently being sold for prices slightly higher than those in the first quarter, using this to predict that the stability they would stay towards the last quarter. Although the overall transaction volume continued to stand low, no more downward adjustment in prices would be observed in the current quarter or near future, stressed Shek.

The director added that the company saw no “worse circumstances” which could lead to markdown decisions amongst local sellers. “In July, if the offers given didn’t match the already down-adjusted price, the sellers would basically wait rather than sell right away,” he said.

Quiet trading in July, in which volume was half that of the previous months, was partly due to the month with the outbound traveling season, a period in which buyers and sellers were believed to be abroad. The situation is similar to that which took place in the beginning of the year. Besides, Shek noted that current rut in Hong Kong’s stock market did not benefit trading. “We didn’t see any collective down-adjustment or those cases where the proprietors hastened to sell their flats after losing money in the stock market,” he said.

According to the Financial Services Bureau, a total of 602 transactions were recorded last month. The director also believed that the gaming revenue would incrementally return to a “healthy number” of between 18 billion to 20 billion, which he said was “encouraging to everyone.”

“After the gaming earning returns to a steady level and the property prices remain stable, the developers would be more likely confident and proactive with pushing their properties for sale,” said Shek.

Although domestic demand was comparatively more crucial than gaming revenue when it came to the property market, according to him, the latter was more or less still influential. Staff reporter

## Alert over soaring phone fraud

CENTALINE has urged local citizens to stay vigilant against suspicious telephone calls as the region experiences involving property brokerage scams from time to time.

The agency representatives also praised the two-year-old real estate agency law for effectively safeguarding the interests of realtors, proprietors and buyers through legal agreements.

Jacky Shek said that many people have already become accustomed to the regulations, which were implemented in July 2013, after learning more about their content and objectives.

“We think to support the legislation is to protect everyone’s rights and interests,” he said, adding that the scams were of a far more serious nature on the mainland. He stressed that such regulation did not simply target the agencies, dismissing the shutdown of small-scale firms owing to the law’s enforcement.

Despite no previous hoaxes being identified, Shek noted that similar crimes have happened occasionally in Macau. The number of phone scams especially soared these past few months.

Advanced technology nowadays also serves to constrain illegal activities, as any individual case would immediately be posted online, alerting society.

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New Macau president resigns in pursuit of further education

Chui Sai On will answer legislators’ questions on the topic of government policy and social issues at a plenary session of the Legislative Assembly scheduled for Wednesday 12 August. According to a statement issued yesterday by the Government Information Bureau, the Chief Executive “pays great attention to communication with the Legislative Assembly.” Besides attending the plenary session at the end of every year in order to deliver the Policy Address, Mr Chui also attends sessions every April and August. The session, starting from 3 pm, will be broadcast live on TDM and can be live-streamed on several government websites.

Brook Yang

SULU Sou, the president of Macau’s pro-democracy group, the New Macau Association (ANM), has announced his decision to resign from his post in order to pursue further education in Taiwan. The group’s current vice-president, Scott Chiang, will assume the role next month, deferring his university study to commit full-time to the civic group.

Sou was elected the ANM leader a year ago, after the group jointly initiated a remarkably large protest that pressured the government into retracting an egregiously compensation bill for top officials. Succeeding young activist Jason Chao as president, the then 23-year old pledged he would participate more in social movements and would strive to unite the association, which dates back to 1992.

Referring to his experience in ANM as “the first window for him to learn about Macau society,” Sulu Sou explained that “the past two years participating in the group were like a practical before attending courses at the National Taiwan University’s Department of Political Science.” He claimed he hoped to “continue contributing to the association and to the general public after returning from the study with deepened knowledge and enhanced organizational skills.” In 2013, the then-fresh graduate partnered with ANM’s incumbent lawmaker Au Kam San to run the Legislative Assembly’s direct election, while his alumnus Scott Chiang teamed up with Jason Chao. Sou said he had to twice defer his admission to National Taiwan University’s Masters program, firstly for being eager to probe the AL election, and later for deciding to “take over the hot potato when the ANM’s leadership transition was experiencing turbulence.”

“Luckily, my admission has been retained, but it cannot wait indefinitely,” he explained of the resignation. He stated he believes that the time is now to pick up the postponed study opportunity, as the association’s operations have “gradually gotten on track, despite facing many challenges from both inside and outside.”

Some people might think there’s nothing special about the ANM, as it’s only one of the thousands of associations in Macau. But if the association disappears, it will be a big loss to civil society,” the young leader concluded, suggesting that differences within the group would take time to rectify while the priority should be to renew a commitment to act in the public interest.

To fill in the remaining year of Sou’s tenure, Scott Chiang, a 34-year old who has been a member of the association for over a decade, will head the ANM starting next month. Aiming to be fully engaged in the association’s operations, Chiang has decided to defer his current undergraduate study in International Relations. In addition, Jason Chao, who currently holds no post in the association, announced yesterday that he would run for the by-election of vice-president, to be held in the upcoming weeks.

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IMF signals delay on adding China to currency basket

The IMF staff is recommending that China wait until at least October 2016 to join an exclusive club of the world’s top currencies. China wants its currency, the yuan, included in a basket of currencies used in IMF operations along with the U.S. dollar, euro, British pound and Japanese yen. It was hoping the yuan could be added this Jan 1. The IMF board will consider later this month the staff’s recommendation for a delay until Oct. 1 of next year.

China believes it deserves to be included because it boasts the world’s second-biggest economy. But the yuan is not as widely used or freely traded as the other four currencies.

The IMF staff said in a report released Tuesday that it was also worried that adding a new currency Jan 1. might rattle financial markets on the first day of trading next year.

“The ultimate assessment by the board will involve a significant element of judgment,” the IMF report said.

There have been estimates by some private economists that the Chinese make this a priority, it’s pretty certain the Chinese make this a priority, it’s pretty certain the Chinese make this a priority, it’s pretty certain the Chinese make this a priority.

This is a virtual currency the IMF can use for emergency loans and IMF member countries can use to bolster their own reserves in times of crisis.

The postponement sets the stage for the IMF to add the yuan to the SDR just before Chinese President Xi Jinping hosts a meeting of Group of 20 leaders next year, said David Loevinger, managing director of emerging-markets sovereign research at asset manager TCW Group Inc. in Los Angeles.

“The end game is obvious,” said Loevinger, former senior coordinator for China affairs at the U.S. Treasury Department. “If the Chinese make this a priority, it’s pretty certain President Xi will have his deliverable at the G-20.” AP/Bloomberg

Genting Singapore shares dip as currency losses hit profit

Netty Issam and Jonathan Burgos

GENTING Singapore Pte fell the most in six years after the casino operator warned of a significant fall in second-quarter profit on derivative and currency losses, amid a downturn in gambling by mainland Chinese.

Genting Singapore fell as much as 11 percent, the biggest slump since May 2009. The shares were down 6.1 percent as of 9:50 a.m. yesterday in Singapore, against the 0.3 drop in the benchmark Straits Times Index.

The profit slump is mainly due to “fair value loss on derivative financial instruments” following unfavorable market conditions and unrealized foreign-exchange translation losses, Genting Singapore, which operates the Resorts World Sentosa, said in a statement. It expects adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization for the quarter ended June 30 to be comparable with the previous three months.

“Currency headwinds has been plaguing Singapore gaming operators for quite a while from all their primary segments such as China, Indonesia and Malaysia,” said Grant Goertzen, an analyst at Union Gaming Group in Macau. “That has been impacting results over the past several quarters.

Gaming revenue in Singapore and Macau has slumped as Chinese high rollers curb spending to avoid scrutiny amid President Xi Jinping’s crackdown on corruption. Genting Singapore’s net income plunged 73 percent to $862.7 million (USD45.4 million) in the three months ended March 31.

Separately, Landing International rose 2.7 percent in Hong Kong trading after announcing it would buy out cruise operator Genting Hong Kong’s 50 percent stake in Magical Gain, an owner-operator of a casino on Korea’s Jeju island. Genting Hong Kong, a sister company of Genting Singapore, fell 2.9 percent.

Genting Singapore will remain Landing’s joint venture partner on another project on the Korean island, to be named Resorts World Jeju. Landing said in the statement late Tuesday. Bloomberg

Corporate bits

**GRAND HYATT MACAU MDP PARTICIPANTS COMPLETE 3-DAY FIELD TRIP**

Thirty leaders-in-training enrolled in Grand Hyatt Macau’s Management Development Program (MDP) completed a three-day, two-night field trip to Guangzhou and Shenzhen in July. The annual field trip is a key component of the yearlong program, which is developed by Grand Hyatt Shenzhen, Hyatt Place Shenzhen and Grand Hyatt Guangzhou, to learn more about each hotel’s operations, and gain insights into different regional characteristics and service culture.

**THE BLACK SHEEP BAR-RESTAURANT OPENS**

Craft beer house The Black Sheep officially opened its doors on July 31, a brand new spot for citizens to chill out and for beer lovers to indulge in flavorful brews from around the world.

The bar-restaurant is transformed into a dance floor with rising EDM star DJ Reyguy.

“We hope that citizens in Macau can not only relax here, but also learn more about beer, especially artisanal craft beer,” said Mr. Damien Loi, representative of The Black Sheep. “Traditional artisan brewing has existed for centuries, so craft beer is actually something traditional rather than new.”

Located at Rua da Peneta Oriental Areal Pietta Macau, The Black Sheep is open from Tuesday to Sunday from 6 p.m. to 3 a.m.

**HARBOURVIEW HOTEL AUGUST PROMOTIONS**

Starting from August 1st until August 31st, Harbourview Hotel at Macau Fisherman’s Wharf is launching F&B promotions. Praha Bar will have a 20/30% promotion between 5pm and 7pm. Signature cocktails include Harbour Pun-Ch, which uses homemade grog mix to create a spicy flavor; and Oliver Twist, a citrus flavored drink. Other special cocktails are named after local tourist attractions, such as Red Market and San Mali Pims Cup. In addition to cocktails, a variety of beers, including Budweiser and Carlsberg, as well as house wines and house spirits, while bar snacks are also available.

Furthermore, every Saturday Praha Restaurant is hosting a Seafood Extravaganza with fresh and baked oysters, king crab legs, Iceland mussels and New Zealand shrimp.
PORTUGAL'S AICEP Global Trade and Investment Agency plans to open offices in Dili, East Timor and Seoul, South Korea, this year and in Mumbai, India, and Astana, Kazakhstan, by the end of 2016, the agency's head, Miguel Frasquilho, recently said. Following a four-day visit to China, Frasquilho told Lusa news agency that Asia continues to be the most economically dynamic part of the world, "which justifies our reinforced presence."

In Asia, besides three offices in China (Beijing, Shanghai and Macau), AICEP is represented in Japan, Saudi Arabia, India (New Delhi), Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Thailand and Singapore.

During his visit to China the AICEP chairman met with Chinese investors in Shanghai and visited the Huawei multinational's headquarters in Shenzhen, where a group of 12 Portuguese students finished a two-week training course.

The students from the High Technical Institute, University of Aveiro and Leiria Polytechnic Institute were the first covered by the five-year cooperation protocol signed in 2014 by AICEP and Huawei.

China has become one of the major investors in Portugal. Estimates indicate that nearly 10 billion euros of Chinese capital has been invested in the Portuguese economy since China Three Gorges won the tender to privatize 21.35 percent of EDP's capital in December 2011.

"Economic relations between Portugal and China at investment level and vis-à-vis trade have never before been so strong; China is currently among Portugal's ten main trading partners," Frasquilho said. MDT/Macauhub

AICEP boosts presence in Asia

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China and Angola sign mutual currency acceptance agreement

ANGOLA has signed a monetary agreement with China under which national currencies are now accepted in both countries, Angola's trade minister, Rosa Pacavira said Monday in Luanda.

"The kwanza will have a value in China, and the yuan will have a value here in Angola," said the minister, quoted by news agency Lusa.

Pacavira said that this agreement would increase imports of products made in China, since it makes it possible to overcome a lack of foreign currency, including dollars, resulting from the fall in the price of oil, Angola's main export.

"No other country agreed to this, only China did, so from now on the two currencies will be accepted in both countries," noted the minister at an event held Monday in Luanda, referring to the facilities arising from the new "monetary agreement."

Pacavira said her ministry was aware of the quality of products manufactured in China and added that "the agreement I mentioned will make quality products available in Angola."

The Angolan President, José Eduardo dos Santos, visited China last June and at the time announced China's financial support for Angola would increase. MDT/Macauhub
Severe crackdown on church crosses draws backlash

In this July 29 photo, lay leader Tu Shouzhe stands on his Protestant church's roof hours after government workers came and cut down the building's cross, in Muyang Village in Pingyang County, Zhejiang Province.

The Catholic Patriotic Association of Zhejiang has said it is illegal to remove crosses from legally registered churches. The Christian Association of Zhejiang warned the act has caused animosity toward the ruling party. Both groups called for an immediate halt.

Yang said the rare open opposition from the government-sanctioned Christian associations, which serve as liaisons between the authorities and rank-and-file Christians, means the authorities could lose this important conduit. “Now this bridge has been burned,” he said.

In targeting Christians, the party is worried that religion — especially versions of Christianity rooted in the West — could subvert its rule. The Communist Party has nearly 88 million members.

Almost every township has its own claim to a line of products — whether it be buttons, shoe soles, pet products or children’s toys. Almost every village has a church or two, joining the landscape of rice paddies, farmlands and factories.

Today, nearly most of the Wenzhou Christian Association is torn between fellow Christians, who want him to speak on their behalf, and local authorities, who want him to persuade churches to comply.

The party tried to wipe out religion altogether during the ideological fervor of the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, but later restored the right to worship. In ensuing decades, religious participation has grown as people seek to fill a spiritual void.

The massive campaign comes one year after the provincial leadership ordered the razing of several churches and hundreds of rooftop crosses deemed to be illegal structures.

This summer, Zhejiang banned rooftop crosses altogether. Despite criticism that the new rule violated China’s constitutional right of religious freedom, local enforcers are sending demolition crews to virtually all the province’s churches.

They have met with resistance. Parishioners have kept vigils and tried to block entrances to church grounds with cargo trucks, and many churches have re-erected crosses in defiance.

Since Xi came into power in late 2012, Beijing has hushed voices critical of its policies and practices in China’s social media, locked up members of the New Citizens Movement who had called for greater government accountability, and, most recently, rounded up rights lawyers who insist China’s law must be followed to the letter and applied equally to the people and the state.

“The authorities are especially worried that those with religious beliefs have a strong sense of identity and belonging, which cantranslate into huge social forces,” said Zhao Chu, an independent commentator.

In targeting Christians, the party is going after a group possibly bigger than itself. Yang said Christians probably number close to 100 million after more than three decades of rapid growth, though official figures are much lower. The Communist Party has nearly 88 million members.

In a troubling sign for the party, a sizable portion of its nominally atheist membership holds Christian, Buddhist, Muslim or other beliefs. The party is worried that religion — especially versions of Christianity — might overturn the West — could subvert its rule.

“The party tried to wipe out religion altogether during the ideological fervor of the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, but later restored the right to worship. In ensuing decades, religious participation has grown as people seek to fill a spiritual void.”

The massive campaign is underway in Zhejiang, where authorities are believed to be under a two-month deadline to remove crosses.

But Yang Fenggang, an expert on China’s religions at Purdue University, said the party may have miscalculated and could be creating the very instability it is trying to avoid.

“The crackdown has alienated the Christians in China, who are otherwise law-abiding citizens,” Yang said.

He said the campaign to assert state power over officially sanctioned churches has been ordered by the central government and is likely being carried out as a kind of experiment in Zhejiang, where the provincial party chief, Xia Baolong, is a trusted ally of Xi.

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Still, Beijing retains tight controls over all religious groups, requiring them to register with the state or be labeled illegal. It claims the exclusive right to appoint Catholic bishops within China, instead of the Vatican.

In the western regions of Tibet and Xinjiang, where Buddhist and Islamic beliefs mingle with ethnic identities, the government also has sought to curb some of the visible symbols of faith, including beards and veils, and installed surveillance cameras in and around monasteries and mosques.

The rules Zhejiang adopted in early July say crosses should be wholly affixed to a building’s facade and be no more than one-tenth of the facade’s height. No rationale has been provided, and the provincial government did not respond to an Associated Press request for an explanation.

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The massive campaign is underway in Zhejiang, where authorities are believed to be under a two-month deadline to remove crosses.
Chinese state media say minority Muslim Uighurs deported from Thailand to China remain in detention while authorities investigate whether some planned to join the Islamic State or other groups in the Middle East.

The reports yesterday also said some of the 109 Uighurs forcibly sent to China in a single flight had been encouraged by friends in the United States, want to allow a diplomatic solution by the U.S., want to end provocation by other claimants. He said all of Beijing’s activities are capable enough to work by other claimants. He said all of Beijing’s activities are capable enough to work by other claimants. He said all of Beijing’s activities are capable enough to

Kerry raises South China Sea disputes with FM Wang

Matthew Lee, Diplomatic Writer, Kuala Lumpur

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry yesterday urged China to end provocative land reclamation projects in the South China Sea and work out effective resolutions to territorial disputes with its smaller neighbors. A senior U.S. official said Kerry had earlier made a blunt case for easing tensions in a closed-door meeting with China’s foreign minister.

"The United States shares the frequently expressed desire of ASEAN members to preserve the peace and stability of the South China Sea," Kerry told the ASEAN foreign ministers.

Chinese land reclamation in contested waters has irked Southeast Asian nations who, like the U.S., want China to stop. Washington is calling for a halt to aggressive actions by China and other claimants to allow a diplomatic solution to the rift.

China rejects any U.S. involvement and insists it has the right to continue the reclamation projects. Beijing was opposed to the issue being raised at the security forum.

Kerry met earlier yesterday with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The senior U.S. official said the secretary had reiterated U.S. concerns about the rising tensions and “China’s large scale reclamation, construction, and militarization of features.”

The official said Kerry had “encouraged” China, and the other claimants, “to halt problematic actions in order to create space for diplomacy.”

Kerry told the ASEAN ministers that his meeting with Wang had been “good.” He said he hoped that over the course of the two-day forum we will find a way to move forward effectively, together, all of us.”

However, Wang on Tuesday said all of Beijing’s activities are in Chinese territory and there should be no double standards on the issue, a reference to land reclamation work by other claimants. He said all parties should support China and ASEAN in speeding up negotiations for a code of conduct.

“It’s not a constructive move to exercise double standards on the issue,” Wang told reporters. “China and ASEAN are capable enough to work together to maintain the peace and stability in the South China Sea.”

Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei says govt promised he can return

Ai Weiwei says govt promised he can return

Ai Weiwei said in an interview published yesterday that Chinese authorities returned his passport with almost no strings attached and promised him he can return to China.

Ai traveled to Munich last week after having his passport returned, four years after it was confiscated, for a medical checkup and to see his young son. In an interview with the Munich-based daily Süddeutsche Zeitung published yesterday, the dissident artist said Chinese authorities now have a more positive attitude toward him.

“They know that I want to make China into a better country, that I am concerned about the young generation,” he quoted as saying. “There is a basis of trust, otherwise they would not allow me, the former enemy of the state, my exhibitions; otherwise they would not have returned my passport.”

Asked under what conditions his passport would be returned, he replied that “there were almost none,” without elaborating. “They promised that I could come back, which was very important to me, they said, you are a free person.”

Ai said that an anti-corruption campaign by President Xi Jinping is creating “enormous tension,” with authorities keen not to lose control and intervening at the smallest sign of unrest, the Sueddeutsche Zeitung reported. But he added that “this campaign was really necessary.”

Ai also said that he has to be cautious and work with the situation — “that is much more difficult than vilifying opponents.” He also said that he wants “not just to criticize but to offer solutions.”

He didn’t detail his future plans.

Uighurs deported from Thailand remain in detention

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At least 24 killed, 300 survive after trains derail in flooding

TWO passenger trains jumped off slippery tracks on a bridge near a rain-swollen river in central India, killing at least 24 people as two coaches hurled through mud and rested on one side at an embankment, officials said yesterday.

The Kamayani Express was on its way to Mumbai when it derailed late Tuesday night near the town of Harda in Madhya Pradesh state, while the Janata Express was traveling in the opposite direction when it slid off the tracks soon after.

The trains were crossing a small bridge near the Machak River, about 950 kilometers south of New Delhi. Another train had passed the same culvert 10 minutes before the first derailment without any problem, but then a flash flood caused part of the track to sink into the rain-soaked ground, said A.K. Mittal, a senior railway officer.

Six coaches from the Kamayani Express and the engine and four coaches from the Janata Express derailed just before midnight. Although rescue workers soon reached the site, they were slowed by darkness.

At least two coaches were partially submerged in the mud, said railway official Anil Saksena. While most people had been pulled to safety, rescue workers were still searching for passengers likely trapped.

“We are getting reports that there were flash floods and the tracks caved in. Most of the coaches had passed but the last few carriages were derailed,” Saksena said.

Television footage showed some train cars fell on one side and others were leaning in the mud. Tracks were broken, uprooted and scattered, and a detached train wheel was visible in one section.

At least 24 bodies have been recovered so far and one person was seriously injured, said Bijendra Kumar, a railway official in Bhopal, the main city in Madhya Pradesh state.

Junior Home Minister Kiren Rijiju said more than 300 people have been rescued. By yesterday morning, the unaffected coaches had been moved from the tracks and rescue operations were nearing a close, according to Kumar. He said that railway workers would soon start repairing the tracks so traffic can resume. Dozens of trains have been blocked from moving due to the accident, while others have been diverted to other routes.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: “The two train accidents in Madhya Pradesh are deeply distressing. Deeply pained over the loss of lives.”

Heavy monsoon rains have killed more than 100 people in western and eastern India in the past week, flooding rivers and fields, and forcing tens of thousands to take shelter in state-run relief camps.

The rain eased yesterday following two days of heavy downpour.

India has one of the world’s largest railway networks and carries more than 25 million passengers each day. However, many parts of the vast network are poorly maintained and accidents are common. Earlier this year, Modi’s government had announced plans for a USD137 billion overhaul of the railway’s crumbling infrastructure over the next five years.

While many trains are called express, they rarely travel faster than 50 kilometers an hour. The extensive train network remains the main means of transportation for people and goods.
UN reports rise in female, child war casualties

The United Nations said yesterday that an increasing number of women and children were being hurt or killed in Afghanistan’s war against the Taliban and other insurgents.

The total number of casualties in the almost 14-year conflict was up one percent in the first half of this year, compared to the same period last year, a new U.N. report said. However, the number of women casualties rose by 23 percent and children 13 percent.

Danielle Bell, director of the Human Rights Unit at the U.N.’s Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, said the alarming rise in casualties among women and children was due to ground fighting. UNAMA attributed 70 percent of civilian casualties to insurgent forces.

She said the U.N. was not able to verify whether the Taliban were using civilians as human shields, but that a large number of casualties caused by pro-government troops stemmed from exchange of fire in residential areas.

Afghanistan’s security forces have been fighting the Taliban alone since the withdrawal of U.S. and international combat troops last year. The Taliban have sought to take advantage by escalating their attacks, spreading their footprint from the south and east to the north, and joining forces with other insurgent groups.

Afghan officials have said other insurgent groups, as well as the Islamic State group — which controls about one-third of Syria and Iraq and has a small but growing presence in Afghanistan — have joined the anti-government war.

The UNAMA report said 4,921 civilian deaths and injuries were recorded in the first half of this year. The UN said 90 percent, or 90 percent, of all civilians casualties resulted from ground engagements, improvised explosive devices, complex and suicide attacks and targeted killings,” it said.

Heather Barr, a senior researcher on Afghanistan with the New York-based Human Rights Watch, echoed UNAMA’s calls for all parties in the Afghanistan conflict to avoid harming civilians.

The Afghan government “has to take responsibility for civilian casualties — it has to elevate its forces about what international law is on the protection of civilians and if there are deaths caused by government forces, they must be investigated,” Barr said.

Barr noted that the UNAMA report says civilian casualties caused by government forces are up 60 percent compared to the same period in 2014. AP

NORTH KOREA

Widow of ex-South Korean leader arrives in Pyongyang

The 92-year-old widow of late South Korean President and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kim Dae-jung arrived in North Korea yesterday for a four-day visit.

According to Lee’s official itinerary, she will visit a maternity clinic, an orphanage and a children’s hospital. Aides say it is not clear if she will meet top North Korean officials, such as leader Kim Jong Un, before returning to Seoul on Saturday.

Last year, Kim Jong Un invited Lee to visit after thanking her for sending condolences flowers on the third anniversary of the death of his father.

Relations between the Koreas have been testing in recent months over the opening of a U.N. office in Seoul tasked with monitoring North Korea’s human rights situation, and the North’s refusal to release several South Koreans detained there.

There are hopes among some South Koreans that Lee Hie-ho’s trip could help ease the tensions.

“Lee hopes that her visit paves the way for more dialogues, exchanges and cooperation” between the Koreans, Kim Sung-jae, deputy health minister, told reporters at a Seoul airport before boarding a flight to Pyongyang.

Kim Dae-jung, who died in 2009, was a strong supporter of rapprochement with Pyongyang and held landmark inter-Korean summit talks in 2000 with Kim Jong Un’s father and late North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il.

He won the Nobel Peace Prize later in 2000 for his efforts. The summit talks paved a flurry of cooperation projects, but most of them have been put on hold since conservatives took power in Seoul in 2008 and ended big aid shipments to North Korea.

North Korea is particularly keen on reopening the country to South Korean tourists, along with pursuing business and investment deals with its more affluent southern neighbors. AP

MYANMAR

Factions find common cause in fighting malaria

Setting aside decades of animosity and suspicion, senior Myanmar government and military officials have held unprecedented discussions with representatives of the main opposition party and ethnic minorities in Washington on fighting a common enemy — malaria.

Monday’s meeting, also attended by the U.S. government and military, scientific researchers and international foundations, comes amid growing concern over the spread of drug-resistant cases of the mosquito-borne disease in Myanmar and other Southeast Asian countries.

If resistance gains a foothold and spreads further, it threatens the effectiveness of the primary medicine used to combat malaria, artemisinin. Theories using artemisinin have helped cut global malaria deaths by a quarter in the past decade. The disease still kills about 600,000 annually.

Myanmar, which hosted the meeting at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank, said it was held in Washington to provide a neutral venue. She said the participants agreed to work together regardless of political situation in Myanmar, where landmark elections will be held Nov. 8.

Speaking after several participants addressed a news conference Tuesday, she said two factors had made cooperation possible: the opening in the country after five decades of direct military rule, and the potentially catastrophic public health consequences posed by artemisinin-resistance.

“Whoever wins the coming election, this malaria elimination program will go on, because there will still be this disease threatening our country,” Dr. Tin Myo Win, senior health adviser to Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the main opposition National League for Democracy, told reporters.

Deputy health minister, Thein Thein Htay, said malaria cases in Myanmar have decreased from more than 300,000 in 2013 to about 250,000 in 2014 but the nation’s porous borders leave it vulnerable. She said studies were still ongoing to determine how far drug-resistance has spread.

Research published in Lancet Infectious Diseases journal in February, based on blood samples from 940 people with malaria from 55 sites across Myanmar, showed resistance was widespread across the country. AP
Biden tries to reassure Abe after documents reveal spying

Josh Lederman, Washington

Working to prevent tension with a treaty ally, Vice President Joe Biden reassured Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Tuesday that the U.S. limits its surveillance of friendly nations, after leaked documents showed U.S. spying on Japanese officials and companies.

Abe had expressed deep concern about the documents—WikiLeaks published last week, and vowed to bring up the issue with the U.S. The response appeared to come in the phone call with Biden, who has an established relationship with Abe after years of in-person diplomacy.

“The vice president reaffirmed the United States’ commitment made by President Obama in a 2014 presidential directive to focus our intelligence collection on national security interests,” the White House said in a brief statement describing the call. The Japanese prime minister’s office said yesterday that Biden also apologized for causing trouble in Japan, without mentioning a specific incident. It added that Abe told Biden that if the allegations are true, it would threaten the trust between the two countries, so he expects the U.S. to investigate the reports and respond appropriately.

He called that assertion “utterly false,” saying Israel wants peace, not war. Participants in Obama’s meeting with Jewish leaders said attendees who oppose the deal raised with the president their concern over being painted as eager for war. They said while Obama appeared sympathetic to their concerns, he continued to argue that if Congress rejects the agreement, he or the next president would quickly face a decision on taking military action to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

The back-to-back sales of hundreds of millions of dollars in sanctions relief, calling it a “bad deal” that leaves Tehran on the brink of a bomb. “The nuclear deal with Iran doesn’t block Iran’s path to the bomb,” Netanyahu said in his remarks. Organizers said about 10,000 people participated in the meeting.

Netanyahu, one of the fiercest critics of the nuclear accord, also disputed Obama’s assertion that opponents of the diplomatic deal favor war. He seeks to bolster support for the deal in Congress.

A White House official said Obama would frame lawmakers’ decision to approve or disapprove of the deal as the most consequential foreign policy debate since the decision to go to war in Iraq. The official said Obama would also argue that those who backed the Iraq war, which is now widely seen as a mistake, are the same ones who oppose the Iran deal.

The White House is preparing for the likelihood that lawmakers will vote against the deal next month and is focusing its lobbying efforts on getting enough Democrats to sustain a veto. Obama spokesman Josh Earnest said Monday that the White House is confident it can sustain a veto “at least in the House.”

The president got a boost in Senate Tuesday with Sens. Barbara Boxer of California, Tim Kaine of Virginia and Bill Nelson of Florida announcing their support for the deal. However, the administration lost the backing of three prominent Jewish Democrats — New York Reps. Steve Israel and Nita Lowey and Florida Rep. Ted Deutch.
Billionaire businessman Donald Trump has made the cut for tonight’s leadoff debate of the 2016 presidential race, joined by former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and seven other Republican contenders.

Seven others will be excluded, including former technology executive Carly Fiorina and former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, relegated to a pre-debate forum and second-tier status in the party’s crowded field. Fox News announced the 10 Republican White House hopefuls who will take part in the debate.

Trump, after launching his campaign with a speech that labeled Mexican immigrants as “criminals” and “rapists,” was initially thought to have no chance in the race, but the latest polls show him far outdistancing the top-tier mainstream Republican candidates. However, his negative numbers in the polls are also high and most observers remain skeptical about his chances of securing the nomination.


The debate will be a key test for Trump. Some polls show his backing has grown to nearly double that of Bush, the brother and son of presidents.


The announcement comes after the Republican Party that worked aggressively to improve its debates ahead of the election season. Yet with the largest field of contenders in modern memory, organizers say something had to give to ensure the debate in Cleveland didn’t turn into a nationally televised circus.

“We never ever envisioned we’d have 17 major candidates,” said Steve Duprey, New Hampshire’s representative to the Republican National Committee who helped craft the debate plan. “There’s no perfect solution.”

Republican officials worked closely with TV executives, although the networks have the final say about which candidates will be allowed on stage for their televised events.

Fox News is the host of today’s event, the first of six party-sanctioned debates before primary voting begins in February. The network says it used a selection of national polls to make this week’s cut. AP
The first atomic bomb has been dropped by a United States aircraft on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. President Harry S. Truman, announcing the news from the cruiser, USS Augusta, in the mid-Atlantic, said the device was more than 2,000 times more powerful than the largest bomb used to date. 

An accurate assessment of the damage caused has so far been impossible due to a huge cloud of incomprehensible dust covering the target. Hiroshima is one of the chief supply depots for the Japanese army. The bomb was dropped from an American B-29 Superfortress, known as Enola Gay, at 0815 local time. The plane’s crew say they saw a column of smoke rising and intense fires springing up. 

President Truman said the atomic bomb heralded the “harnessing of the basic power of the universe.” It also marked a victory over the Germans in the race to be first to develop a weapon using atomic energy. 

President Truman went on to warn the Japanese the Allies would completely destroy their capacity to make war. The Potsdam declaration issued 10 days ago, which called for the unconditional surrender of Japan, was a last chance for the country to avoid utter destruction, the President said. 

“They do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of fire from the air the like of which has never been seen on Earth. Behind this air attack will follow by sea and land forces in such number and power as they have not yet seen, but with fighting skill of which they are already aware.”

The British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, who has replaced Winston Churchill at Number 10, read out a statement prepared by his predecessor to MPs in the Commons. It said the atomic project had such great potential the government felt it was right to pursue the research and to pool information with atomic scientists in the US. 

As Britain was considered within easy reach of Germany and its bombers, the decision was made to set up the project. 

“By God’s mercy, Britain and American science outpaced all German efforts. These were on a considerable scale, but far behind. The possession of these powers by the Germans at any time might have altered the result of the war.”

Mr Churchill’s statement said considerable efforts had been made to disrupt German progress — including attack on plants making constituent parts of the bomb. He ended: “We must indeed pray that these awful agencies will be made to conduce peace among the nations and that instead of wreaking measureless havoc upon the entire globe they become a perennial fountain of world prosperity.”

Courtesy BBC News

### Offbeat

**UNDERWATER SEARCH ENDS FOR FREE DIVER MOLCHANOVA OFF SPAIN**

Spain’s rescue services called off their underwater search for missing free diving great Natalia Molchanova yesterday after spending more than two days looking for her off the Balearen Islands. 

The country’s maritime rescue service and the police specialist underwater team both said they were limiting their operations to monitoring the Mediterranean Sea surface for any trace of the 53-year-old Russian. 

AIDA, the international diving federation, said in a statement that Molchanova, who was diving on Sunday without fins at a depth of 30-40 meters off the coast of Formentara when she failed to resurface, was “very complicated” because Molchanova could have become trapped by weights she was wearing at the time of the dive.

A remote-controlled submersible robot hired by her family would continue an underwater search, police said. 

Molchanova ranks among the greatest free divers, having set 41 world records, and earning 22 gold medals at world championships. AP

### In Context

The Hiroshima bomb, known as “Little Boy,” a reference to former President Roosevelt, contained the equivalent of between 12 and 15,000 tons of TNT and devastated an area of 13 square kilometers. More than half of the buildings in the city were destroyed.

Official Japanese figures at the time put the death toll at 118,131 civilians, but later estimates have put the final toll at about 140,000, of Hiroshima’s 340,000 population, including military personnel and those who died later from radiation. Many have also suffered long-term radiation effects. 

Three days later, the United States launched a second, bigger atomic bomb against the city of Nagasaki. The device known as “Fat man,” after Winston Churchill, weighed nearly 4,290 kg. 

Nagasaki is surrounded by mountains and because of this the level of destruction was confined to about 6 square miles or 6.7 square kilometers. 

Nearly 74,000 were killed and a similar number injured.

The two atomic bombs, with the Soviet declaration of war against Japan on 8 August 1945, finally left the Japanese no choice: Japan surrendered to the Allies on 14 August 1945.
ACROSS:


THE BORN LOSER

by Chip Sansom

WON DARE YOU BELittle ME! I’LL HAVE YOU know I HAVE MANY POSITIVE TRAITS.

I AM AS WISE AS AN OWL, AS LOYAL AS A DOG, AS STRONG AS AN ox, AS BRAVE AS A LION!

AS STUBBORN AS A MULE, AS LAZY AS A SLOTH, AS FAT AS A PIG, AS BOLD AS AN EAGLE!

THE LANDSCAPE IS ENTIRELY NEW BUT THE BOTTOM LINE WON’T CHANGE IT. ADJUSTING YOUR ATTITUDE COULD BE YOUR MOST PROFITABLE APPROACH. TRYING SOMETHING NEW WOULD SIMPLY BE ADMITTING Defeat.

THAT HAS BEEN THE MOST PROFOUNDLY DIFFERENT. OF ALL THE THINGS IN IT, YOUR ENTIRE LIFE HAS HAD AN EXTREME MAKEOVER. OF ALL THE THINGS IN IT, THIS ONE IS THE MOST ELOQUENT.

THE ROOMS APPEAR TO BE RENOVATED, BUT BEING BROKE HAS NOT INTERFERED WITH YOUR LOVE LIFE ITSELF. IT MAY NOT BE AS ROMANTIC, BUT BEING BROKE HAS PLENTY TO RECOMMEND IT.

A LIFE’S WORK? THERE IS NO NEW PROJECTS, AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE. YOU CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON THE SAME OLD SONG AND DANCE.

YOUR ENTIRE LIFE HAS HAD AN EXTREME MAKEOVER. OF ALL THE THINGS IN IT, THIS ONE IS THE MOST ELOQUENT.

OK, SO IT’S NOT YOUR TYPICAL FANTASY. BUT DON’T FRET A LACK OF MONEY INTERFERE WITH YOUR LOVE LIFE ITSELF. IT MAY NOT BE AS ROMANTIC, BUT BEING BROKE HAS PLENTY TO RECOMMEND IT.

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**Brady testimony in NFL ‘Deflategate’ released**

**Jim Armstrong, Tokyo**

**Tom Brady denied under oath to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell that he tampered with footballs before the AFC title game, and investigator Ted Wells said in a transcript that he never warned the New England Patriots quarterback he would be punished if he didn’t turn over his cellphone.

In a 457-page transcript released on Tuesday, Brady maintained his innocence in the NFL scandal known as “Deflategate.” He denied discussing air level with the ballboys or even thinking about how inflated the footballs were when he selected them. He also said he’s never asked anyone from the Patriots to tamper with footballs.

Brady was suspended for four games and the team was docked USD1 million and two draft picks after an NFL-sanctioned investigation by Wells found the Patriots supplied improperly inflated footballs for the conference championship game against the Indianapolis Colts, which New England won 45-7.

Brady appealed the punishment. Goodell decided to hear the appeal himself and upheld the penalty. Both sides went to federal court, and U.S. District Judge Richard Berman told the sides to work out a settlement. Goodell decided to hear the appeal himself and upheld the penalty. Both sides went to federal court, and U.S. District Judge Richard Berman told the sides to work out a settlement. To encourage them, Goodell also said he’s never asked anyone from the Patriots to tamper with footballs.

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Brady appealed the punishment. Goodell decided to hear the appeal himself and upheld the penalty. Both sides went to federal court, and U.S. District Judge Richard Berman told the sides to work out a settlement. To encourage them, he ordered Brady and Goodell to appear in court in person during the NFL preseason.

The transcript filed by the NFL Players Association included the appeal testimony from Brady and Wells on June 23. Wells explained that he did not believe Brady had nothing to do with the ball deflation because the quarterback refused to provide all of the documents that were requested.

“In my almost 40 years of practice, I think that was one of the most ill-advised decisions I have ever seen because it hurt how I viewed his credibility,” Wells testified. “It hurt my assessment of his credibility for him to begin his interview by telling me he declined to give me the documents.” Wells’ investigation found text messages between Brady and a pair of equipment managers — one of whom referred to himself as “the Deflator” — discussing the preparation of footballs for the Jan. 18 game. The Patriots advanced to the Super Bowl and beat the Seattle Seahawks 28-24 for Brady’s fourth NFL title.

Although Wells asked repeatedly for Brady’s cellphone, the investigator also testified: “I did not tell Mr. Brady at any time that he would be subject to punishment for not giving — not turning over the documents. I did not say anything like that.” Brady’s lawyers have said that the league made up its rules without proper notice to Brady, and that it didn’t follow its rules at all in some cases. They have also questioned whether Goodell was independent enough to conduct a fair hearing, even though the collective bargaining agreement gives him that authority. AP

**Japanese designer rejects plagiarism claims in Olympic logo**

**Jim Armstrong, Tokyo**

**Japanese** designer Kenjiro Sano rejects claims he copied the emblem of a Belgian theater when he created the official emblem for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

At a news conference yesterday, Sano said his design was original and that he is surprised and shocked by claims he plagiarized.

“I am extremely surprised to hear the remarks of the Belgian designer,” Sano said, adding he was saddened and shocked by claims he plagiarized. “I would like to take this opportunity to state that his claims are completely groundless.”

Sano said his geometric design uses a widely available font for the letter “T,” which stands for Tokyo, team, and tomorrow. He said the red circle in the logo was inspired by designer Yusaku Kamekura’s emblem for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

The 2013 logo for the theater has a similar “T” in white against a black backdrop.

Tokyo organizers said they researched trade-marks inside Japan and abroad before deciding on the logo. The emblem for the Belgian theater is not a registered trademark. Hidehoshi Maki, the executive director of marketing for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, said sponsors were already using the logo.

The logo controversy is another setback for Tokyo organizers, who last week apologized to the IOC over the scrapping of the original design for the Olympic stadium amid public criticism over the cost. AP
Britain’s Hunt wins world high diving championship

Gary Hunt of Great Britain swept to victory in the final of the high diving at the world championships yesterday. Hunt, the silver medalist two years ago, held on to his lead from Monday’s first three rounds to take the gold medal with a total score of 629.30 points. Going into the last round with a 53-point lead, Hunt was desperate to avoid a repeat of the 2013 worlds, where he blew a 3-point advantage to lose by less than a point.

“That stuck with me. I had to live with that for two years,” he said. “I just told myself, ‘Don’t do it again.’”

Jonathan Paredes of Mexico, who won bronze in 2013, was second on 596.45, while Arturym Silchenko of Russia pleased the home crowd on the banks of the Kazanka River, winning the bronze with 593.45. Hunt’s huge lead left his rivals feeling they were in a separate competition, Paredes said.

“This medal means a lot to me,” he said. “Today, we were not fighting for gold, we were fighting for the silver.”

U.S. diver David Culter was in silver-medal position after the first three rounds, but slipped to fourth. Attempting the most difficult dive of any of the 12 finalists in the last round, he landed awkwardly and finished seven points behind Silchenko.

Defending champion Orlando Duque of Colombia was 11th after Monday’s first three rounds, but finished sixth with the highest score of the final round, a 321.20-point dive.

Three athletes and a coach from Niger went missing from the games in Ireland in 2003. Two Moroccan athletes and two Dominican Republic athletes disappeared from the games in the Raleigh-Durham area in 1999.

Delegations are required to come with a ratio of one coach to four athletes, and the coaches are responsible for managing their participants, said Jeff Carr, chief operating officer of the Special Olympics World Games Organizing Committee.

Nonetheless, the burden of proof is on China. As important as Beijing 2022’s small construction footprint will be, the bid’s lasting impact on the people of Beijing and the surrounding region is potentially even more so. In particular, the city’s commitment to cleaning up the air in advance of the games - though it echoes similar promises from 2008 - is far more credible now. In 2008, the anti-smog provisions were focused specifically on mitigating problems in Beijing, and polluting facilities were oftentimes simply moved out of the city into surrounding regions. After the games, the smog returned with a vengeance. That won’t be an option in 2022. First, China already has an anti-smog program underway that has nothing to do with the Olympics, and in seven years it’ll probably be producing considerably better air. Second, the skiing events will be held in the mountains of Zhangjiakou, a small town in Hebei, China’s most polluted province. They require long-term regional solutions. If successful, those solutions could have a lasting, positive effect for all of north China.

After years of running bloated Olympic Games criticized for their environmental records, the International Olympic Committee decided to make sustainability a goal, using sport as a way to promote better development. Under IOC President Thomas Bach in 2014, it inaugurated Olympic Agenda 2020, a set of 40 reform principles designed to make the Olympics a “plug-and-play” event. Host cities would be chosen in part because the games already fit into their environments and would do minimal damage.

At first glance, Beijing - a city perhaps best known for its smog, not for its snow - is an unlikely showcase for this approach and for the 2022 Winter Olympics, which it was awarded Friday. In 2008, the Beijing Summer Games were a major construction project that permanently transformed the landscape. But it’s precisely that history that allows the IOC to further its green goals.

Agenda 2020’s influence on the bids considered this week at the IOC’s meetings in Kuala Lumpur was unmistakable. Both Beijing and its competitor, Almaty, Kazakhstan, emphasized the minimal amount of construction they’d undertake. Beijing promised to reuse 11 of 12 venues built for 2008, including the iconic Bird’s Nest stadium and the Water Cube swimming center, which will be used for curling. Unlike Almaty, which already had the ski slopes, Beijing will need to build them on land just outside a national park. But that’s nothing compared with the 2014 Sochi Games’ massive construction program and USD5 billion budget. In contrast, Beijing 2022’s USD3.1 billion budget is shockingly modest.

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Nonetheless, the burden of proof is on China for 2022, and the narrow 44-40 vote is a reminder that many people are far from convinced that China can meet it. For now, Beijing stands as the torch-bearer for a new kind of Olympics.
**Change involves work**

Diversifying the economy is an issue which has long been pursued by local economists and Beijing alike. While traditional pillars of the economy such as trading and shipping are in decline - and manufacturing is all but gone - financial and other services, as well as tourism, are flourishing. That base, however, is not wide enough for future prosperity. Successful governments have recognized the need for economic diversification, so implementing policies which foster diversification shouldn't be a problem, right? Wrong.

There are several areas in which Hong Kong could be expanding. One could be as an arts hub, another as an educational hub and perhaps even another as a medical tourism hub. There should also be much more activity in technological and other start-ups and we should be holding regional sports and major entertainment events with more frequency.

Of these, only the establishment and maintenance of the arts and start-ups are being encouraged by the administration, with the latter a recent phenomenon. While there is an admirable push to create the necessary infrastructure for the state-of-the-art West Kowloon Cultural District, the project has suffered repeated delays since its inception in the 1990s.

Ominously, the District is now under its third chief executive. The first two chief executives, of leading international firms as arts centre directors, resigned before their contacts finished, citing health and personal reasons respectively. The current opera chief is a long-serving Hong Kong civil servant with considerable experience in construction and housing and little-to-no background in arts or cultural management. The Chief Executive has one of the world's top museum curators, who has said he may also leave before the construction of the much-vaunted M+ Museum is completed. Dealing with local officialdom may be possible in other advanced economies for these world leaders in their field, but Hong Kong officials, relative beginners in cultural matters, seem to know better.

As an educational hub, the city now boasts an arts college, an offshoot of an American institution. The city has regretfully lost out to a bid from much smaller Singapore to feature a more prestigious arts college, an offshoot of an American institution.

The West Kowloon Cultural District, the project has

**Gaming**

**MGM Resorts rises as CEO outlines plans to boost stock price**

MGM Resorts International rose the most since March after reporting better-than-expected quarterly results and outlining plans to boost the stock price. The shares advanced after Chief Executive Officer James Murren made his most favorable comments yet on the potential for a real-estate investment trust for MGM Resorts’ casinos. The company will decide by year end. He also said MGM Resorts was planning to expand the Crystals Mall in Las Vegas, with an eye toward selling the retail property and other non-gaming assets there at City Center.

“Based on the structure,” Murren said on a call Tuesday with investors when asked about putting MGM Resorts’ casinos in a REIT. The company is under pressure from Land & Buildings Investment Management LLC, which has called on Murren to sell casinos or spin off properties into a REIT. The CEO is also contending with the potential sale of a 16 percent stake in the company held by MGM Resorts’ largest shareholder. Kirk Kerkorian, who died in June, left a will that directs his estate to sell the stock in an orderly fashion.

The predictability of cash flows at regional resorts and growing profit in Las Vegas boost the potential for a REIT structure, Murren said. “Which is why for the first time, we’re willing to say that we’re months away from coming up with a conclusion to our board,” Murren said.

MGM Resorts unveiled an initiative it said will boost adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization by $800 million annually through 2017. The plan, which will increase revenue and cut costs, is expected to show results starting in the second half of this year. Second-quarter earnings excluding some items totalled 19 cents, the Las Vegas -based casino operator said in a statement. Analysts predicted 11 cents a share, the average of estimates compiled by Bloomberg.

Sales declined 7.6 percent from a year earlier to USD2.39 billion, also topping estimates, as gains to USD2.39 billion, also topping estimates, as gains in Las Vegas tempered a slump in Macau. MGM, like other casino operators in Macau, has seen a slide in business as Chinese high rollers cut back amid economic weakness and a government crackdown on corruption. Murren said Tuesday the company isn’t actively trying to sell the Mirage hotel and casino. Bloomberg