



SIX NEW ROUTES

Six routes will be launched this year between the Macau airport and various short and mid-haul destinations

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HO'S FORMER DRIVER CALLED TO TESTIFY

Ho's former driver, surnamed Mak, was presented in court to provide his testimony on the former prosecutor's habits

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CY LEUNG WARNS ON INDEPENDENCE PUSH

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS



MALI A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle attacked a camp in northern Mali yesterday, killing more than 50 people and wounding more than 100 soldiers and former fighters now trying to stabilize the region. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, suspicion quickly fell on the Islamic extremist groups operating in the area.

CAMBODIA's exiled opposition leader is facing two new defamation lawsuits stemming from a Facebook post that accused Prime Minister Hun Sen of offering a young political operative USD1 million to attack the opposition.



MALAYSIA's foreign minister says the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is expected to call for a halt to violence against Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority and for the safe return of refugees. Malaysia is hosting a meeting of the organization in Kuala Lumpur today to discuss the crisis.

THAILAND Police say they have arrested a Czech man in Phuket who is believed to be infected with HIV and is wanted by Interpol for alleged sexual offenses against minors back home.

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PRISON INITIALLY SLATED TO OPEN IN 2014

Inauguration date unknown

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MGTO: More people visited Macau in 2016 but they spent less

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Continuation of delays on Ka Ho prison's construction

Lynzy Valles

THE long-delayed Ka Ho prison is expected to commence operations within five years' time.

Cheng Fong Meng, director of Correctional Services Bureau, admitted that there are still no concrete dates on when the new prison would open its doors.

The second phase of construction commenced last year and Cheng told the press that it has been running according to the expected schedule.

The director indicates that the second phase should be concluded in 2018.

Since the contract was first signed in 2010, the prison

construction has faced several delays and missed its original completion date of 2014.

The new facility – which will expand the current prison's capacity of 1,500 inmates to over 2,700 – commenced construction in August 2010.

"We need to reinforce communication with related authorities. We want to conclude [the prison construction] as soon as possible and start to operate," Cheng told the press on the sidelines of the Macau Prison's (EPM) annual Chinese New Year party.

However, when questioned whether the delayed project would function by 2019, the director admitted that they do not have a concrete forecast for its opening.

He explained that the prison is still subject to public tenders and unpredictable factors which means that he is unable provide a timeline for completion.

The director noted, however, that 2019 is the deadline for the finalized construction of the first two phases.

The third and fourth phases of the construction involve the possibility for alterations that may be required in addition to establishing an electric supply.

Meanwhile, the director did not disclose the project's budget, noting that he did not have the relevant information with him.



Cheng Fong Meng

According to media reports, the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) indicated that the amount granted for the first phase of

the new prison was MOP130 million.

The second phase has an estimated cost of MOP1.1 billion.

Cheng also suggested that the estimated population of the current prison would increase to some 1,500 prisoners this year.

Currently EPM accommodates 1,271 convicted and remand inmates – of which 30.5 percent and 42.8 percent are from Macau and mainland China respectively. Drug-related offences account for the highest number of inmates.

The prison's annual Chinese New Year (CNY) Party for inmates, held yesterday, was organized by the Correctional Services Bureau and Caritas Macau.

The event was held in the playground within the Male Detention Zone.

Around 130 inmates entertained guests in performances such as a lion dance, martial arts, magic tricks and singing.

The bureau hoped that such activities would allow inmates to develop strong determination for self-reform.

The CNY party will be held for three consecutive days. Inmates are arranged to attend in five groups.

Dog maltreatment by PJ officer 'not a serious crime'

SPEAKING on the sidelines of the event, Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak indicated that he was saddened by the maltreatment of a dog by a Judiciary Police (PJ) officer.

In an uploaded video currently circulating on social media, a man is shown to be throwing and continuously spanking the dog.

The secretary stressed that the Public Security Police is still in the preliminary stage of investigating the case and would handle the case accor-

dingly.

However, Wong argued that the PJ officer might have been stressed from work, which led to such actions.

"I feel sorry about the situation and this should not have happened," he said.

Wong added that the PJ officer did not commit a "serious crime."

"According to the law, that kind of behavior doesn't constitute a serious crime," said Wong.



The Ka Ho prison is currently under construction

A delegation made up of former NBA star Zack Jones and other basketball players from Germany visited several local schools and a Christian organization in the region recently.

Organized by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Macau, Jones was given the opportunity during the two-day visit to share his personal story about the challenges he experienced on the court to become an NBA player.

He told students that

Ex-NBA player visits students at local schools

despite being cut three times in two different continents within one and a half month, he continued on to finally become an NBA player, according to a press release issued by the YMCA.

A team made up of three basketball players visiting from Munich, Germany, and

YMCA members from Hong Kong and Macau played games against local school teams.

Through this experience, the local student players were given the opportunity to play against professionals and hear the former NBA player's story.

This two-day event had a total of over

1,000 participants, including students and teachers from Macau Baptist College, Sheng Kung Hui Choi Kou School, and Christian Sheun Tao Church Hong Kong & Macau District Union Association.

Jones, together with his wife and the German basketball players, will



continue sharing their inspirational speeches and carry out a basketball exchange in mainland China later this week.

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Tourism Master Plan to be concluded in July

ral stakeholders about certain projects so we can finalize [it]. [This should happen] around July," said Fernandes at the press conference that MGTO organizes yearly to announce relevant developments and results achieved during the previous year, as well as inform about the Office's plan for the year ahead.

Regarding the year of 2017, the head of MGTO emphasized the centrality of completing the Tourism Master Plan.

The document outlines four main focal points to be addressed in order to meet the tourism development goals set out in the MSAR's Five-Year Development Plan (2016 – 2020): develop a diversity of tourism products, evaluate event effectiveness and initiate new projects; enhance industry service quality and optimize industry incentive system; unleash synergistic effects and

enhance destination promotion; strengthen multilateral cooperation mechanisms, actively participate in international organizations.

In relation to the first point (develop a diversity of tourism products, evaluate event effectiveness and initiate new projects), Fernandes noted the tourism related studies that will be undertaken include a study on the feasibility of the Cultural Tourism Project in Ká Ho, an evaluation on the results from the so-called "mega events", and a review of the new tourism products made available last year. Furthermore, a new market study that aims to address Brazil as a potential tourism market for the region will also be conducted.

"The village of Our Lady of Ká Ho will become one of our tourism attractions, as we hope that this place becomes known to tourists," the MGTO director said, informing also that the annual events in 2017 will see the third edition of the Macau Light Festival as well as the second edition of the Macau Film Festival.

In relation to the enhancement of quality services, MGTO will continue to promote training for several activity sectors, primarily through an online learning platform that will allow industry workers to receive training at home or in their

workplace. Fernandes also announced that the Tourism Awards would expand this year to include the Travel Agencies and Services.

In relation to the third focal point (unleash synergistic effects and enhance destination promotion), the Office has set a target to increase promotion in order to attract more tourists from mid-haul markets such as Malaysia and Indonesia for 2017.

Last but not least, in an effort to place the region on the map of world tourism, MGTO will seek to host major tourism-related conferences and exhibitions, such as the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Travel Mart that will be held in the territory this September.

In the pursuit of this goal, MGTO is also working on an application to UNESCO in order to become a Creative Cities Network member in the field of Gastronomy.

The budget for 2017 will total MOP1.44 Billion, which will be drawn from the MSAR budget, PIDDA and the Tourism Fund.

"The general budget suffered a cut of about two percent from last year... We hope to manage it more effectively," Fernandes said. At the same time, the budget that PIDDA commands has increased about sixfold, which is related to the high number of overseas projects.



MGTO head Helena de Senna Fernandes

Renato Marques

A master plan for the tourism sector will be concluded in July 2017, informed the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) director Helena de Senna Fernandes

during the bureau's annual press conference held yesterday morning at the Macau Tower.

"This year our major project is to evaluate and finalize the Macau Tourism Industry Development Master Plan. We have been talking with sev-

Year closes with more visitors but less spending

FOLLOWING an evaluation of the tourism sector in 2016, the director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, acknowledged that the year brought another record in terms of visitor arrivals. According to preliminary figures, this figures reached a total of 30.95 million.

Fernandes mentioned that from this total, 28 million arrive from Greater China markets, a figure that equaled 2015. Growth in the International visitor arrivals appeared to surge by 7.9 percent.

Another of the achievements of 2016 was the fact that it was the first time over the last ten years that overnight-stay visitors (15.7 million) outnumbered same-day visitors

Such a result contributed to the growth of the average length of stay for overnight-stay visitors that stood at 2.1 days, while the average length of stay for visitors in general remained stable at 1.2 days.

Although the figures on the number of visitors have grown, this did not happen in relation to figures regarding visitor expenditure.

As mentioned also by the MGTO head, the expenditure between January and September last year suffered a decrease of 7.1 percent, led mostly by the fall on gaming related expenses (- 8.7 percent) but also due to a decrease in general spending that fell by 2.6 percent year-on-year.

Leading the countries of origin of the visitors continued to be South Korea, recording an impressive surge of 19.5 percent (662,000), followed by Japan which recorded 6.5 percent (300,000) and the Philippines (+ 3.7 percent).

The largest increase was recorded by the number of visitors from Thailand which grew an impressive 30.6 percent.

The average hotel occupancy over the year remained in between 82 to 84 percent of capacity, figures that Fernandes explained on the sidelines of the press conference event, which were related to several factors, among them "the fact that the hotel rates have decreased."

All facts led the director of MGTO to state that she is "cautiously optimistic" for the year ahead.

THIRTY percent of interviewed restaurants and similar establishments in November 2016 had reported to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) that a year-on-year growth in revenue has been recorded for that month, according to a statement published yesterday by the government department.

DSEC notes that this is an improvement by 4 percentage points com-

Restaurant revenue sees slight increase

pared to the records in October 2016 and this may have been due to the Macau Grand Prix and Food Festival in the city in November.

Amongst the sector, 55 percent of Chinese restaurants showed a year-on-year rise in revenue, up by 6 percentage points over the previous

month. Meanwhile, 35 percent of Western restaurants and 25 percent of Japanese and Korean restaurants registered revenue month-to-month gains in November of nine and 13 percentage points respectively.

However, half of the interviewed restaurants in November recorded

an annual decline in revenue, similar to the results of the previous month.

The results originate from a monthly survey conducted by DSEC, titled the "Business Climate Survey on Restaurants and Similar Establishments and Retail Trade", which also contacts

retailers in the MSAR. Some 167 restaurants and 135 retailers were contacted to participate in the survey.

With regards to retail trade, around 39 percent of those interviewed reported a year-on-year growth in sales in November, up by 4 percentage points

over the previous month. Fifty-three percent recorded a year-on-year decline, down by 5 percentage points month-to-month, indicating an overall improvement.

Retailers said in November that they expected no significant change in their businesses in December.

ANIMA'ART NAM VAN TO OPEN BIDDING THIS YEAR

DURING THE Q&A session that followed the MGTO press conference held yesterday, the director of the bureau informed that Anima'Art Nam Van will open bidding this year. As the Times reported in October last year, the management

of IFT Café, located in the space, will be under public tender that at the time was being prepared by the cultural authorities. It is not clear whether the bidding will only be related to the F&B space or if other shops might be included too.

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MACAU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Six new routes this year as expansion kicked up a notch



CAM Director of Marketing Eric Fong (center)

Daniel Beitler

SIX routes will be launched this year between the Macau International Airport (MIA) and various short and mid-haul destinations, including a renewed route to Moscow that will commence operations in May 2017. The announcement of the new routes comes as the airport's expansion project draws closer to completing its first stage; the opening of the Passenger Terminal Building – North Extension.

The information was disseminated during a press conference hosted yesterday afternoon by the Macau International Airport Company (CAM) which provided an update on the airport's infrastructure development works.

The new routes, which will be launched at various points throughout the year, are Macau-Harbin, Macau-Taichung, Macau-Hanoi, Macau-DaNang, Macau-Siem Reap and the Moscow route.

According to representatives of CAM, the new routes will help to increase the volume of passengers using Macau's airport as well as "change the current passenger market structure."

The routes will be complemen-

ted by a general improvement in the airport's ability to handle passenger volumes, aided by the opening of the Passenger Terminal Building – North Extension this year. The extension will constitute a four-storey building with a floor area of 14,000 square meters, which will enable the airport to handle an annual passenger volume of around 7.5 to 7.8 million.

A further study is being conducted in line with the Civic Aviation Authority's "Macau International Airport Master Plan", to examine the possibility of opening an ad-

ditional southern extension along with a multi-storey car park. In concert with the northern extension, this would permit the airport to facilitate the travel of between nine and 10 million passengers per year.

Also in the works this year is an "optimization" project for the current parking stands of aircraft based at MIA. Currently, the airport accommodates 24 parking stands for both passenger and business aircraft, however a project that will launch later this year will begin the process of converting the space into 25 spots for passenger aircraft and 15 spaces for business planes.

The airport's Master Plan will cover the strategic vision of CAM until 2040, it was informed at the press conference. For last year alone, the total investment into the airport improvement program amounted to more than MOP248 million, 68 percent of which was spent on the extension project.

It was also stated yesterday that over the next few years, the com-

pany will continue to encourage growth in the number of routes and a greater frequency of flights.

Over the last few years, a number of new routes have opened and closed after operating for less than a year, and in some cases just months. Asked about the ability of the expanded airport to prevent such sudden closures as the facility becomes more prominent in the region, CAM Director of Marketing Eric Fong said that, despite the route closures, "for the past few years passenger and [flight] movement growth has been very stable."

"We cannot control that airlines open and close these routes," he added.

The company executives also stated that they had no information to provide on rumors that suggested the merging of the airports of the Pearl River Delta region. They said that they are unaware of the source of these rumors but have confirmed with their counterparts in mainland China that there is no substance to them.

Lisbon-Macau flight back in discussion

ON the sidelines of the press conference yesterday, Eric Fong told reporters that the company is currently in discussion with two airlines over the possibility of reopening a direct route between Macau and Portugal.

"We have started to talk to some airlines though there are some limitations [with establishing this route]," said Fong. "It would be a popular route but the airlines need to start their own analysis. We are still working on that."

Pressed further on the topic, Fong would not identify the carriers in question and said that the proposal was being driven by CAM. "It is

an initiative from the airport company," he said, "not the airlines."

Meanwhile, direct flights between Beijing and Lisbon are scheduled to commence from June this year, according to an announcement made by Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa during a visit to China last year.

While the route has been a long-standing objective of the governments of both Portugal and China, few further details have been revealed so far.

There is also speculation that an additional flight will offer a route between Lisbon and Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang Province.



Zhang meets with MP

The deputy procurator general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, Zhang Changren, headed a delegation from mainland China when they visited the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday. The delegation met with Macau's Prosecutor General, Ip Son Sang, to exchange views on the work of the judicial institutions in Macau and the mainland.

Indian tourists found dead inside hotel room

Two Indian tourists were found dead yesterday afternoon in a hotel room inside the Galaxy Macau resort. Two other people were found unconscious inside the room and were taken to the hospital. According to TDM, the deceased are a man and his eldest son, while the two in hospital are a woman and a younger man (who are mother and son). The hotel was partially closed to facilitate the police investigation. Police have already announced that pills and letters were found inside the room and the case is being treated as a suicide.

Guangdong Cantonese textbook triggers debate

A Guangzhou primary school adopted a Cantonese Chinese textbook, according to Guangzhou Daily, which triggered online discussions on China's social media network Sina Weibo. A post from a Weibo account reveals that some people reported the situation to the Ministry of Education of China because "the pride in using Cantonese is an obvious spreading of localism and is extremely harmful for the country's stability and unification." The most liked comment below the post reads: "You can choose not to learn, but we can't forget our traditional culture, and our language." The top comment below Guangzhou Daily's original report reads, "It is OK to treat dialect just as a hobby [...] after all, Mandarin is the national language."

REAL ESTATE

Property prices past low-point say JLL

ACCORDING to a report published by the Macau division of real estate and investment management company Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), the local property market reached its low-point during the first half of last year, having rebounded slightly in the second half with the launch of several new residential projects.

The summary of the local property market was presented in JLL's "Macau Year-end Property Review 2016", released

yesterday during a press conference.

The total transaction volume of Macau's residential market rebounded in 2016, noted the report, albeit remained at a relatively low level. Transactions were dominated by residential units worth less than MOP6 million which made up about 70 percent of the total residential sales.

During the second half of last year, the capital values for high-end and mass-to-medium resi-

dential properties rebounded by 14.6 percent and 12.4 percent year-on-year, and 7.8 percent and 5.3 percent year-on-year respectively in 2016 as a whole.

"Supported by the launch of several new residential projects Macau's residential property market regained momentum with growth registered in both sales volume and value. The mass-to-medium residential market is expected to be supported by continued demand,

however, the sell-through rate will likely slow down due to the increasing competition caused by the ongoing supply," said Jeff Wong, Head of Residential at JLL Macau, according to the report.

Meanwhile, in the rental sector, the reduced number of expatriates in the MSAR coupled with extra supply from the residential completions of 2015 continued to exert pressure on the market, the report noted. Rental values for high-end and mass-to-

medium residential properties registered negative growth of 9 percent and 7.6 percent year-on-year for the whole of 2016.

At the same time, the office market in Macau continued to be subdued last year due to weak sentiment and cost-saving measures adopted by some companies. The retail property market remained "quiet" with the number of transactions in the first three quarters of 2016 falling to a 10-year record low. **DB**

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COURTS

Ho's former driver called to testify



Julie Zhu

THE trial of the city's former top prosecutor, Ho Chio Meng, resumed yesterday for a 12th session at the Court of Final Appeal. Several witnesses have already been called into court to provide their testimonies, and more people were present in yesterday's session, including two current employees at the MP's financial department as well as Ho's former driver.

Yesterday, the first witness who was questioned was Leong Lai Ha, head of the MP's finance department. During the time when Ho was in the prosecutor's office, Leong handled payment procedures concerning the MP office including reviewing receipts which were presented by MP employees.

The prosecution side opened by revealing several procurement proposal drafts as well as receipts for flight tickets and hotels booked through certain public relation companies.

According to Leong, the MP normally goes through a public tender process in order to select a company to book work trips for the MP.

Leong responded that when she needed to ordain the payment, she would normally receive proposal drafts and receipts from public relations companies. She then ensured that Ho's signatures were on some of these receipts.

Assistant Prosecutor General

Chan Tsz King asked the witness whether these expenses could have been covered by the MP. In reply, Leong noted that she had been required to act in accordance with the directions of her boss.

Leong further admitted she knew about the existence of the "Teacher's Resting Room" on the 16th floor of the Hotline Center. She added that she went there for training, but she claimed to not be aware that the entire floor belonged to the MP.

During her entire testimony, Leong repeated that when she came across a problematic receipt, she would report it to her superior, and act according to their instructions.

Similar questions were directed to a second witness. Similarly, he said that he had never received instructions from anyone telling him not to visit the 16th floor.

The court had a recess for two hours as usual between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Upon resuming, Ho's former driver, surnamed Mak, was presented in court to provide his testimony.

According to Mak, Ho occasionally visited an accommodation villa in Cheoc Van, in addition to the previously mentioned "Teachers' Resting Room." Mak additionally noted that he would drive Ho's guests to the Cheoc Van villa. These guests included provincial prosecutors from Guangdong province and former Liaison Office officials.

These individuals included

Wong Kuok Wai, Ho Chio Meng's older brother, and Mak Im Tai, the partner of Wong Kuok Wai in several of the companies which performed tasks privately for both the MP and Ho.

Mak admitted that he helped certain key people to rent out their car parking spaces, adding that the payment process was not completed by the property owners themselves but in fact by the driver himself. Mak said that he performed these actions at the request of Ho.

The prosecutors pointed out that Mak used his name more than 30 times to make hotel reservations in Macau, in addition to other bookings made in Zhuhai and Guangzhou.

In reply, Mak said that he normally forwarded the keys to Ho or to his secretary, and noted that he never stayed in any of these hotels.

The prosecution side also brought out a phonebook. The names on it were unable to be identified because only surnames were listed.

The prosecutors asked Mak whether he remembered or knew who the individuals were, and whether he had driven any of the women listed in the phonebook to the hotels that he had booked for Ho. Mak said he did not remember.

Cash transfers from Ho to mainland China were also revealed during yesterday's session.

Mak said that starting somewhere between 2005 and

2006 he began taking cash, that belonged to Ho, to mainland China. Mak had been asked to take the money to the mainland and deposit it in Ho's mainland bank account

Ho's cash transfers to the mainland were also revealed during yesterday's session

on about a monthly basis.

According to Mak, the amount of money was initially somewhere around MOP20,000. Later, more money in the vicinity of MOP200,000 and MOP300,000, was given to him to transfer.

The prosecutors then presented a phone call record which was obtained by the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) while monitoring Ho.

The recording indicates that Ho advised Mak what to say to the CCAC on the day following the call in question. Although no specific details regarding the case were mentioned in the conversation, Ho can be heard telling Mak to say, when asked by the investigation authority, that he does not remember or does not know.

However, Mak, in response to the question denied that he

was the person on the phone, adding that the phone number which called Ho was not his.

At that point, the presiding judge, Sam Hou Fai, reminded Mak that the court can forward the record to the judiciary police to test whether it was Mak's voice, and said that if the police confirms it was, Mak could be prosecuted for providing a false testimony.

The court then played the recording once more, and Mak said that he could not recognize whether or not it was his voice. Sam reminded Mak again about the consequences of a false testimony, upon which the record was played a third time. This time, Mak admitted that it was him talking on the phone.

During the remainder of yesterday's session, Mak was asked questions by Sam and Ho's lawyer regarding the previously mentioned phonebook. However, the conversation became unclear as Sam, Leong and Mak talked simultaneously.

Ho, at that moment, turned to Sam, saying, "you must let him [Mak] talk slowly, [...] you can't do this."

The other judges asked Mak for clarification. Before the trial finished, Ho informed the judges of his biggest problem.

The biggest trouble Ho is facing is that the "current Liaison Office's employees are unable to provide testimonies, and the addresses of those who left Macau and returned to the mainland cannot be found."

Joe McDonald, Beijing

BUSINESS GROUP

China preparing to retaliate on trade

CHINA is preparing to retaliate if U.S. President-elect Donald Trump raises duties on Chinese goods and already has toughened its stance, an American business group said.

Trump, who is due to be inaugurated Friday, threatened during his campaign to raise import duties on Chinese goods to 45 percent. American companies are frustrated by Chinese market barriers and want Washington to take a tougher stance toward Beijing but worry reckless action might trigger retaliation.

Already, China has ordered unusually high anti-dumping penalties against a U.S.-made agricultural chemical.

"China has indeed threatened to and is preparing to take steps in retaliation if such actions take place," said Lester Ross, a board member of the American Chamber of Commerce, at a news conference.

In an implicit rebuke to Trump, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphatically defended free trade in a speech Tuesday at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland. A "trade war" would harm all countries involved, he said.

On Jan. 11, the Ministry of Commerce raised duties on DGGs, an additive for livestock feed, to up to 53.7 percent, nearly double the 33.8 percent rate it recommended in September before Trump was elected.

The ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Officials have not said publicly that China is preparing retaliatory measures but state media have emphasized its importance as a market for U.S. soybeans and other exports and warned against starting a "trade war."

Asked at a Jan. 6 news conference whether Beijing would retaliate by hiking import

AP PHOTO



duties on U.S. goods, a deputy Chinese commerce minister, Wang Shouwen, said, "I believe mutually beneficial Sino-U.S. economic and trade relations will be further developed in the future and no one will destroy the win-win relationship."

The United States and China have one of the world's biggest and most complex trading relationships but American companies increasingly complain Beijing is blocking access to technology and other promising industries.

While Beijing has promised to open more industries to foreign companies, they also have issued new rules on electric car manufacturing, data

security, internet censorship and other fields.

In a reflection of companies' concerns, the American chamber's chairman, William Zarit, said it plans to send seven or eight businesspeople to Washington in February to meet lawmakers and Trump administration officials. Zarit said that is in addition to a delegation that makes an annual visit to Washington in April or May because this year is "special in many ways."

"We certainly are not going there to lecture the administration but we will share our ideas on a win-win path forward," Zarit said.

In a report released yesterday, the chamber said a survey

found American companies are increasingly unhappy with what they see as unfair treatment in China.

"We would recommend that the U.S. be more aggressive in talks," Zarit said. However, he said, "We don't want to do things that are counterproductive to both countries."

The chamber said 81 percent of companies that responded to a survey feel "less welcome" in China, up from 77 percent last year. It said one in four is shifting operations to other countries due to concern about the regulatory environment, higher costs and other reasons.

"Most respondents say China's environment now discourages investment," the report said.

Communist leaders have promised to make China's state-dominated economy more productive by opening more industries to private and foreign competitors. In December, the Cabinet promised to open fields including banking and motorcycle manufacturing.

Zarit and Ross said foreign companies welcomed such announcements but have yet to see significant changes in operating conditions.

Beijing also faces U.S. and European complaints it is threatening thousands of jobs abroad by exporting steel, aluminum, solar panels and other goods at improperly low prices.

The American chamber said its survey found 83 percent of companies expect U.S.-Chinese ties "to remain the same or to deteriorate in 2017." It said the "big question" for them is "what steps both governments will take to ensure a positive business environment."

For their part, European companies also are increasingly frustrated with Chinese trade policy. They complain they are blocked from acquiring assets in China at a time when Chinese companies have bought leading brands including German robot maker Kuka in a multibillion-dollar global acquisition spree.

On Tuesday, German Ambassador Michael Clauss urged Chinese leaders to make good on promises to open wider to foreign investment and give foreign companies a "level playing field."

"Many companies keep telling us that their difficulties in these areas have increased," Clauss said in a statement. "It often appears that somewhere down the line, political assurances of equal treatment give way to protectionist tendencies." AP

corporate bits

MELCO CROWN ANNOUNCES BONUS PAYOUT FOR NON-MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEES



Melco Crown Entertainment Limited announced a one-month discretionary bonus for its non-management workers. The bonus will be paid out before the Chinese New Year.

"Through the continuous support and dedication from all of our colleagues, the Company has accomplished many good results in 2016. With the refined management structure, more efficient operations and the innovative, best-in-class hospitality offers in our three properties in Macau, I am confident 2017 will be another promising year for the Company as well as for our colleagues," commented Lawrence Ho, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Melco Crown Entertainment.

MLGTS LEGAL CIRCLE LAUNCHES NEW INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE AREA

MdME announced the launch of an International Gaming Law Practice in line with the advice of the Morais Leitão, Galvão Teles, Soares da Silva (MLGTS) Legal Circle.

With offices in Portugal, Macau, Angola, and Mozambique, the Gaming Law Practice of the MLGTS Legal Circle is in a unique position to advise gaming sector clients throughout the Portuguese-speaking world.

According to the law firm's statement, the group provides advice in relation to a diverse range

of situations spanning from the liberalization of the online gambling market in Portugal, to recent changes in legislation in Angola, and to the ever-evolving landscape of Asian jurisdictions.

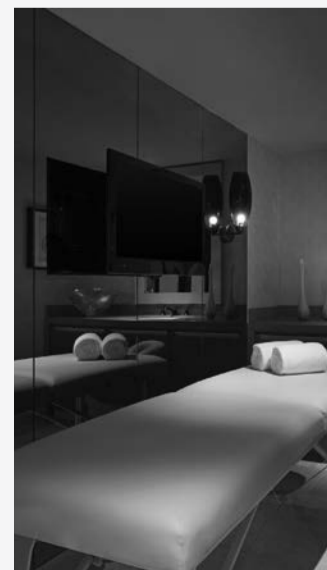
"The launching of an international practice in the context of the MLGTS Legal Circle will allow us to pair the specialized knowledge developed in Macau and other Asian markets with the recognized quality of the network's offices in benefit of our clients," said Rui Pinto Proença, a partner at MDME.

SHERATON LAUNCHES 'GIRLS GETAWAY'

Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel launched its exclusive "Girls Weekend Getaways" package at the start of the Chinese New Year.

Featuring hand-picked activities curated by the lifestyle experts at Sheraton Grand Macao, girlfriends can get together for the weekend in one of the best suites in the house, experience the in-suite "Manis and Pedis in Your Jammies", learn how to make cocktails with Sheraton Grand's in-house mixologist, and master new yoga skills from a private instructor in an outdoor class overlooking the 'Eiffel Tower' among various other opportunities.

According to a press release, ladies can choose either the "Presidential Suite Package" or an "Ambassador Suite Package".



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Honda Macau



Japan hotel chain under fire over denial of Rape of Nanking

Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo

A fast-growing Japanese hotel chain is facing criticism over a book penned by the hotel's owner that says the Rape of Nanking was fabricated.

APA Group, a Tokyo-based land developer and operator of 400-plus hotels, drew fire for spreading the revisionist views of company president Toshio Motoya by putting the books in hotel guestrooms and also selling them.

The issue is the latest flap between the Asian neighbors over unhealed wounds from Japan's aggression before and during World War II. It follows a diplomatic row with South Korea over a statue representing the "comfort women" who were used for sex in military-linked wartime brothels.

China has lodged a complaint, but APA says it stands by its owner's views.

The issue surfaced this week when contributors KatAndSid posted a video on a social networking site describing the English version of "Theoretical Modern History," a book Motoya wrote under the penname Seiji Fuji.



The video shows passages from the book calling the 1937 massacre an "imaginary" event concocted by China to blame Japan. The book also denies that Japan's use of "comfort women" involved forced prostitution.

The massacre of Chinese citizens by the Japanese military in what became known as the Rape of Nanking is one of the biggest flashpoints between

the two countries. China says up to 300,000 people were killed, while Japanese nationalists have said far fewer died or denied there even was a massacre.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has also expressed skepticism toward accounts of the Rape of Nanjing. The inclusion of Rape of Nanking documents on a UNESCO heritage list in October 2015 prompted Japan to suspend its contribution to the

United Nation's educational unit.

When asked about the book, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said that "some forces in Japan have been denying history from the outset and even attempting to distort it." Coercive recruitment of comfort women and the Nanjing massacre were crimes against humanity committed by wartime Japan and "an iron-clad fact recognized by the international community," she said.

"History can never change over time, and facts will not fade away despite deliberate evasion," she said.

APA hotel said in a statement that the book is meant to help readers learn "the fact-based true interpretation of modern history" and not aimed at criticizing a specific country or its people.

"We have no intention of withdrawing the book from our guestrooms even if we receive criticisms from those with different viewpoints," it said. "Japan guarantees freedom of speech, and no one-sided pressure should be allowed to cause a retraction of a statement."

In a statement on its website APA also reiterated its position that there is no documentary proof 300,000 people were massacred in the Rape of Nanking.

The hotel, however, did not respond to inquiries from the Associated Press earlier yesterday.

APA has expanded quickly in recent years, offering relatively reasonably priced, no-frills rooms across the country. About 5 percent of its guests are Chinese, according to local media. APA opened its first overseas outlet in New Jersey in 2015 and has since purchased a hotel chain in Canada.

Motoya is a vocal backer of Abe and is connected with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's ultra-conservative wing. He organizes lectures and invites leading revisionist historians, ideologues and politicians to speak.

The KatAndSid video, posted this week on the popular Chinese social media site Weibo, shows her buying the English-language version of Motoya's book at an APA hotel in Tokyo, opening it and showing passages to viewers. It is subtitled in Chinese.

The narrator, who does not give her name, says that while the hotel's owner has a right to express his views, people should be aware of his stance.

"People who give their money to this hotel deserve to know the truth about it," she said. AP

2,500 wartime Japanese chemical weapons destroyed



CHINA'S military said Tuesday that more than 2,500 abandoned Japanese wartime chemical weapons collected from northern China, including Beijing and the port city of Tianjin, have been destroyed in a four-year disposal process.

Japan and China have been working together on the biggest chemical weapon cleanup effort in history, a decades-long, diplomatically sensitive project that is seen in China as a reminder of the wartime atrocities it suffered during Japan's 1937 invasion and

subsequent occupation.

Under the terms of a 1997 treaty, Tokyo is responsible for cleaning up hundreds of thousands of chemical weapons left behind by its occupation troops at the end of World War II. China says thousands of Chinese have been killed or hurt since the end of the war in 1945 by accidents related to the buried weapons.

China's ministry of defense said Tuesday that the weapons' disposal at a facility in Shijiazhuang city in Hebei province, neighboring Beijing, had finished in a "safe, order-

ly and smooth manner." The weapons are generally burned in specially designed furnaces.

The remaining pieces of Japanese chemical weapons are difficult to find and destroy because they were scattered widely, the ministry said. It urged Japan to "increase manpower and resources" to finish the job.

China has repeatedly urged Japan to speed up the project, which was initially scheduled to be completed in 2007 but has hit delays.

China estimates that Japanese troops left behind more than 2 million chemical weapons, mostly in the northeastern region of Manchuria. The cleanup of the biggest cache — a site with nearly 700,000 chemical bombs at Haerbaling in Jilin province — is scheduled to be finished in 2022.

The Japanese government said in 2015 that it finished destroying another cache at a facility in the central Chinese city of Wuhan. AP

HONG KONG

In final speech, CY Leung warns on independence push



A scene from HK's legislative chamber yesterday

HONG Kong's outgoing leader warned in his farewell policy speech yesterday that independence for the Chinese-controlled territory is not possible.

In his annual address to the legislature, Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying said that Hong Kong is an "inalienable" part of China.

"There is absolutely no room for indepen-

dence or any form of separation," he said.

The latter part of Leung's five-year term has been marked by growing separatist sentiment following massive 2014 pro-democracy protests that failed to sway the government's position on restricting electoral reform.

He said that under the "one country, two systems" framework that allows Hong

Kong to have considerable autonomy and retain civil liberties not seen on mainland China, residents must comply with the city's Basic Law constitution "and safeguard national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity."

Last year, Leung's government took a tough stance against two newly elected lawmakers, taking legal action to disqualify them from office after they used their swearing-in ceremonies to mount apparent protests against China and express pro-independence views.

The unpopular Leung said last month he won't seek a second term in office after his current term ends in June, citing family reasons. AP

Gerry Shih, Beijing

Top judge attracts criticism with remarks

CHINA'S top judge has drawn criticism from legal professionals after he dismissed the concept of judicial independence as an "erroneous Western ideal," a statement seemingly aimed at emphasizing the ruling Communist Party's ultimate control over all areas of public life.

Zhou Qiang, the head of the Supreme People's Court, has at times been seen as a reformer keen on limiting the influence of government officials on the courts.

However, Chinese state media quoted him over the weekend as instructing leading judges to "draw your sword" against words and actions running counter to the ruling Communist Party's dictates.

Since seizing power in 1949, the party has maintained strict control over the government, judiciary and China's highly influential military despite the rapid social change accompanying breakneck economic growth. Leaders in recent years have firmly rejected calls for political reform, crushing the 1989 pro-democracy movement and harassing and imprisoning advocates of change, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo.

Responding to Zhou's comments, Chinese legal scholars including Peking University professor He Weifang said the public would lose confidence in a legal system seen to be in thrall to the party.

"If there is no judicial independence, the ultimate result can only



Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Aaron Persky

be injustice everywhere, sparking unrest. Calling judicial independence a Western concept and taking joy in its elimination is the sort of talk and action that leads to disaster for the nation and its people," He wrote.

Scores of lawyers also signed

an open online letter calling for Zhou's resignation. The concept of judicial independence is not a Western concept, but one recognized around the world, the letter said, and Zhou's remarks attacking the concept had "caused an inevitable, harmful effect on Chi-

nese society."

Despite his reform reputation, it was not the first time Zhou has criticized what he deemed to be ideas unsuitable for China's political system. In 2015, he told a party committee that the high court will "resolutely resist the influence of mistaken Western concepts and ways of thinking."

China rejects the notion of an American-style separation of powers and its constitution emphasizes the unassailable primacy of the Communist Party. But the same constitution also calls for courts to exercise judicial power independently and be free from "interference by administrative organs, public organizations or individuals."

In his remarks, first reported Saturday by the state-controlled China News Service, Zhou also urged China's judges to avoid the "trap" of judicial independence, follow the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics and "protect government leaders, the image of heroes, and the glorious history of the party and the People's Army" according to the law.

Following his ascension as party leader in 2012, President Xi

Jinping has emphasized the importance of governing through laws and regulations, rather than official fiat. Yet, that is widely seen as merely an attempt to codify party dominance, and legal and political experts say that party leaders have not only maintained their grip over the courts but increasingly wield the legal system as a lever of power.

Xi has also demanded strict ideological conformity within the party and repeatedly cautioned against liberal Western values seeping into China's political sphere and the classroom. His administration rounded up dozens of lawyers and civil society activists in 2015, leveling state subversion charges against many, while cracking down on any criticism of the party or attempts to openly question its history.

Last year, intellectual circles were alarmed when a Beijing court convicted a writer of libel after he challenged the veracity of a famous tale of Communist Party soldiers sacrificing themselves against the Japanese.

Zhou's weekend meeting with top judges came weeks after the party's powerful anti-corruption agency wrapped up an internal investigation of the Supreme People's Court. Zhou, who has a master's degree in law and took over as chief justice in 2013, has previously criticized the judiciary for the prevalence of wrongful convictions and warned against the use of testimony obtained through torture. **AP**

China calls on US to bar Taiwan from Trump inauguration

CHINA yesterday called on the U.S. to bar a Taiwanese delegation from attending Donald Trump's inauguration tomorrow, underscoring concerns that the incoming president could seek to redefine relations between Beijing, Taipei and Washington.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said the request had been passed to Trump's transition team and to the current administration of Barack Obama.

"We urge the U.S. side once again not to allow the Taiwan administration to send the so-called delegation to attend the inauguration and to avoid any forms of official exchange with Taiwan," Hua said at a daily briefing.

China firmly oppo-



Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen attends the inauguration ceremony of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega

ses "anyone from the Taiwan administration engaged in activities that interfere or undermine the China-U.S. relationship in the U.S. under any pretext," she said.

Delegation leader and former Premier Yu Shyi-kun departed for Washington on Monday together with politicians from both Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party and the opposition

Nationalists.

Along with attending the inauguration, the delegates plan to hold talks with politicians, academics and overseas Chinese community representatives.

Trump angered Beijing and upset decades of diplomatic precedent by talking by phone with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen shortly after winning November's presidential election.

Last week, he said in a newspaper interview that Washington's "one China policy" under which it recognized Beijing in 1979 was open to negotiation, and earlier questioned why the U.S. should be bound by such an approach without China offering incentives.

The U.S. has no formal relations with Taipei in deference to China, which claims the island as its own. However, the two maintain robust informal ties, while Washington sells Taiwan arms and is legally bound to regard any threat to the island as a matter of grave concern.

Tensions across the Taiwan Strait have risen since Tsai's election last year, with Beijing cutting off contacts and working to deepen Taiwan's diplomatic isolation. **AP**

Coal mine caves in, killing nine workers



The partial collapse of a coal mine in northern China has left nine people dead, state media reported yesterday, reflecting the stubborn persistence of safety problems despite years-long efforts to reduce deaths in the sprawling sector.

The people killed were doing maintenance work inside the mine shaft when it collapsed Tuesday morning, the state-run Xinhua News Agency said. Rescuers were able to save one person, who is now in stable condition at a hospital.

The cause of the accident on the outskirts of Shouzhou city in coal-rich Shanxi province was under investigation. Local government officials did not immediately re-

turn phone calls from The Associated Press.

China is the world's largest producer and consumer of coal. Its mining industry has long been one of the world's deadliest, even as the government has strived to improve safety inside the mines and phase out older operations with outdated safety standards. A heavy reliance on coal is also blamed for the serious air pollution and smog that routinely smother northern cities in winter.

China's work safety administration reported 931 coal mine accident deaths in 2014, the last year for which figures were available, although official statistics are often questioned for their accuracy. The head of the agency has acknowledged that some mines cut corners on safety standards under financial pressure, while operators sometimes cover-up deadly accidents to avoid prosecution. **AP**

Kristen Gelineau, Sydney

MH370

Australia defends end of missing plane hunt; investigation continues

AUSTRALIAN officials defended their suspension of the fruitless deep-sea sonar search for Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, insisting yesterday that the enormous costs involved played no role in their decision to halt the nearly three-year hunt.

Australia's Transport Minister Darren Chester also said that while the search had been called off on Tuesday, work behind the scenes would go on, with experts continuing to analyze data associated with the doomed aircraft's final hours and examining any future debris that washes ashore. But he declined to specify what kind of breakthrough would convince officials to resume the search for the Boeing 777's underwater wreckage.

"When we get some information or data or a breakthrough that leads us to a specific location, the experts will know it when they see it," he told reporters in the southern city of Melbourne.

Australia, Malaysia and China — which have funded the USD160 million search — have rejected pleas from family members of the passengers and some investigators that search crews be allowed to keep going. China is involved because more than half of the 239 people on board the plane were Chinese.

Late last year, as ships with high-tech search equipment covered the last strips of the 120,000-square kilometer search zone west of Australia, experts concluded they had been looking in the wrong place and should have been searching a smaller area immediately to the north. But by then, the three countries had already agreed not to search elsewhere without evidence of the plane's exact location.

Chester defended the decision to

AP PHOTO



call off the hunt without checking the new area to the north, saying, "No one is coming to me as minister and saying, 'We know where MH370 is.'" And he insisted the high price of the search had nothing to do with pulling the plug.

"It is a costly exercise, but it hasn't been the factor which led to the decision to suspend the search," Chester said. "We don't want to provide false hope to the fami-

lies and friends. We need to have credible new evidence leading to a specific location before we would be reasonably considering future search efforts."

Officials are facing a no-win situation, the transport minister said in an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corp. Call off the search, he said, and disappoint those who want resolution to the world's greatest aviation mystery.

Keep going, and face the wrath of taxpayers who have already spent millions of dollars with no result.

The new 25,000-square kilometer area to the north was determined with the help of drift modeling by Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, which attempted to calculate where debris that has washed ashore on coastlines in the western Indian Ocean originated.

Australia, Malaysia and China have rejected pleas from family members of the passengers and some investigators that search crews be allowed to keep going

Chester said that drift modeling would continue, and experts will scrutinize any further debris that washes up. Investigators will also continue to refine the satellite data that led them to conclude the pla-

ne went down somewhere in the Indian Ocean after it vanished on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on March 8, 2014.

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said he empathized with the families who want the search to go on, but said officials had done the best they could under extraordinary circumstances.

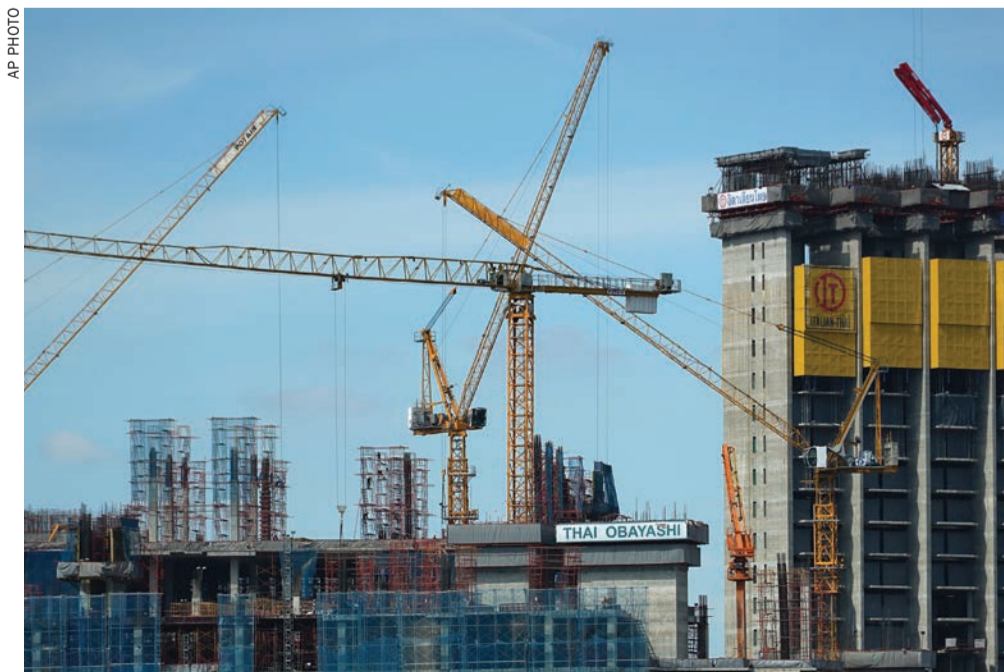
"We share their deep disappointment that the plane has not been found," Turnbull told reporters. "It is an unprecedented search. It's been conducted with the best advice over the areas that were identified as the most likely to find the location of the airplane. It is a shocking tragedy and we grieve and we deeply regret the loss and we deeply regret that the plane has not been found."

Tony Abbott, who was Australia's prime minister when the Boeing 777 disappeared, suggested the search should continue. Abbott pledged on the first anniversary of the tragedy: "It can't go on forever, but as long as there are reasonable leads, the search will go on." On Tuesday, he tweeted: "Disappointed that the search for MH370 has been called off. Especially if some experts think there are better places to look."

If the plane is never found, the reasons for its disappearance and crash will probably never be known, though Malaysia has said the plane's erratic movements after takeoff were consistent with deliberate actions. **AP**

UN REPORT

Asian growth outlook bright despite uncertainty



Dake Kang, Bangkok

A United Nations report says Asia's economic outlook for 2017 is strong despite slowing global growth due to sluggish international trade and investment.

The world economy grew 2.2 percent in 2016, the slowest pace since the end of the 2008 financial crisis. Britain's plan to leave the European Union and the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president are adding to uncertainty.

Despite a slowdown in China, Asia remains a "bright spot," co-authors of the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) said in the report released this week.

Strong consumer demand and government

spending helped make up for weak exports, as East and South Asia grew at a steady pace of 5.7 percent in 2016, level with the year before.

"Most economies in East Asia and South Asia, led by China and India, saw robust growth driven by strong expansion of domestic demand," the report said.

South Asia is the world's fastest-growing region, with 6.7 percent growth in 2016 projected to reach 6.9 percent in 2017 and 2018. India's economy is projected to expand by 7.7 percent and 7.6 percent in 2017 and 2018, respectively. Since its exports are small relative to the size of its economy, India is largely insulated from global trade volatility.

China is making progress in shifting from

export-oriented growth to tapping domestic demand, the report said. It estimated the Chinese economy grew 6.6 percent in 2016, despite a 6.8 percent contraction in exports for the year, as reported by the government.

Services are growing in importance in China, says Sompob Manarangsan, an economics professor at Thailand's Chulalongkorn University. "There's still quite some room for China to further develop by using their own domestic demand," he said.

Trump has railed against existing free-trade agreements and threatened to impose punitive tariffs on some imports at a time when Asian economies have been gradually committing to wider opening of their own markets. **AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Seoul court considers arrest of Samsung de facto head



Youkyung Lee, Seoul

A South Korean court is considering whether to approve the arrest of Samsung Electronics vice chairman Lee Jae-yong, one of the country's wealthiest business leaders, on charges of bribery and other offenses.

Lee, the only son of Samsung's chairman, did not speak to a crowd of reporters waiting while arriving and leaving the Seoul Central District Court yesterday. After the four-hour hearing he was taken to a detention center near Seoul to await the court's decision.

If Lee's arrest is approved, prosecutors can detain him for up to 21 days before formally charging him, said the court's spokesman Shin Jae-hwan. The judge will announce a decision on the arrest warrant early Thursday morning, Shin said, though the exact timing was unclear.

Samsung is South Korea's biggest family-controlled conglomerate, or chaebol, with businesses encompassing consumer electronics, shipbuilding and life insurance. Samsung Electronics, the group's crown jewel, is the world's biggest maker of smartphones and computer memory

chips. Samsung Electronics and its affiliated companies account for about a third of the market value in South Korea's main stock market.

The company had no comment on the hearing.

Samsung Electronics had a challenging year even before getting drawn into an influence-peddling scandal that led to the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye. In 2016, Samsung Electronics had several product recalls, including the discontinuation of Galaxy Note 7 smartphones that tended to overheat or catch fire.

Prosecutors requested Lee's arrest for allegedly bribing Park and a confidante of hers, Choi Soon-sil, who is on trial for meddling in state affairs.

Lee, 48, faces allegations of giving bribes worth 43 billion won (USD36 million) to Choi and the president in hopes of winning government backing for a contentious Samsung merger in 2015.

Prosecutors also suspect Lee of embezzling Samsung's corporate funds and of lying under oath during a parliamentary hearing last month.

Lee has been serving as the de facto head of Samsung since his father suffered a heart attack in 2014.

Educated in South Korea, Japan and the United States, he is the crown prince of the country's richest family, one South Koreans often liken to royalty.

Before the scandal Lee had kept a low profile compared to some other third-generation members of the founding families of chaebol. In one of the most notorious cases, an heiress of the Korean Air founders' family threw a tantrum over nuts served to her on one of the carrier's flights, forcing its return to an airport.

Before he was interrogated by lawmakers last month on national TV during the scandal investigation, Lee's first formal public

speech was in 2015, when he apologized for a Samsung hospital's role in the spread of a contagious disease.

The public reaction to Lee's implication in the scandal is divided.

Some business groups and newspapers have urged caution out of concern that arresting Lee could hurt the economy due to Samsung's huge role in South Korean industry.

Some civic groups have urged the court to arrest Lee to show that all are equal before the law. Many are angered over the allegations that the national pension fund was pressured to support the Lee family's succession plan.

Lee joined Samsung Electronics' board in October, shortly after the Galaxy Note 7 recalls. Analysts say the company's day-to-day smartphone, semiconductor and TV businesses are unlikely to suffer if he's arrested because other executives run those businesses. But major investments or strategic planning could be put on hold.

Prosecutors also plan to summon Park to question her about the bribery allegations. She is awaiting a court's decision on whether to uphold her impeachment.

A former health minister, Moon Hyung-pyo, was indicted on Monday for pressuring pension fund officials to support the Samsung merger. Prosecutors say they believe Moon, who now heads the pension fund, acted on behalf of Park, who ordered him to ensure the Samsung merger went smoothly.

The merger helped Lee increase his control over Samsung Electronics, South Korea's most valuable company. **AP**

CAROLINE Kennedy stepped down yesterday after three years as U.S. ambassador to Japan, where she was welcomed like a celebrity and worked to deepen the U.S.-Japan relationship despite regular flare-ups over American military bases on the southern island of Okinawa.

Appointed by President Barack Obama in 2013, she had been expected to leave with the coming change in U.S. leadership. President-elect Donald Trump's transition team has also said that all envoys who were political appointees must step down by Inauguration Day on Friday. Trump has not named a new ambassador yet.

Kennedy ruffled some feathers early in her tenure by tweeting her opposition to Japan's dolphin hunt, shortly after her embassy issued a statement expressing "disappointment" that Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had visited a

shrine that memorializes World War II war criminals, among others.

During her time, though, the conservative Abe and liberal Obama found common ground despite coming from opposite ends of the political spectrum.

"She has great skills and authority as a convener, a much needed function in U.S.-Japan relations," said Kent Calder, the director of the Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C. "She has been more of a network builder than a concrete policy initiator, but that is almost an inevitable role for ambassadors these days."

He said her legacy includes facilitating Obama's historic visit to Hiroshima last May, one of two Japanese cities devastated by U.S. atomic bombs in 1945. Kennedy was in Pearl Harbor at the end of last year

Caroline Kennedy boosted US-Japan ties as US ambassador



when Abe reciprocated with a visit to the site of Japan's 1941 surprise attack that drew America into World War II.

Some will also remember the efforts of the first female U.S. ambassador to Japan to promote literacy and women's and LGBT rights, and for her visits to the northeast region slowly recovering from a deadly and destructive tsunami in 2011.

"She was true to the Obama administration goals, and she maintained the Kennedy mystique without making it the focal point of her tenure," said Nancy Snow, a professor of public diplomacy at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. "I will remember her as a champion of person-to-person exchange and engagement."

Winning understanding

in Okinawa for a reduced but still large U.S. military presence proved an impossible task, and was hampered by a series of incidents from crimes by U.S. base personnel to crashes of U.S. military aircraft.

"In every ambassadorship, there are both enduring issues and unpredictable events," she told Japan's largest newspaper, the Yomiuri, in a farewell interview. "In my case, both were linked to Okinawa."

The daughter of former U.S. President John F. Kennedy arrived in November 2013 to more fanfare than the typical envoy. Thousands of onlookers lined streets to snap pictures and wave as she traveled by horse-drawn carriage to

present her credentials to Japan's emperor. The procession was broadcast live on Japan's public broadcaster NHK.

Her popularity strained embassy resources, a 2015 U.S. government report found, because of the demands for her participation in events across the country. It noted that the embassy "has now caught up on the backlog of gifts sent to the ambassador in her first six months in Japan."

Now 59, Kennedy is returning to her Manhattan home with husband Edwin Schlossberg, who split his time between Tokyo and New York. She hasn't indicated publicly what her future plans are. **AP**

USA

Obama shortens Manning's term, grants clemency to hundreds

Josh Lederman, Eric Tucker, Washington

PRESIDENT Barack Obama granted clemency to Chelsea Manning yesterday [Macau time], allowing the transgender Army intelligence officer convicted of leaking more than 700,000 U.S. documents to go free nearly three decades early.

Embracing his clemency powers days before leaving office, Obama also pardoned 64 individuals including retired Gen. James Cartwright, charged with making false statements during another leak probe. Manning was one of 209 inmates with sentences commuted by Obama, who has now granted more commutations than any other president in history.

Neil Eggleston, Obama's White House counsel, said the individuals would learn "that our nation is a forgiving nation, where hard work and a commitment to rehabilitation can lead to a second chance, and where wrongs from the past will not deprive an individual of the opportunity to move forward."

Manning, Cartwright and Puerto Rican nationalist Oscar Lopez Rivera were the more prominent names on a list otherwise made up mostly of nonviolent drug offenders. The actions are permanent, and cannot be undone by President-elect Donald Trump.

With his last-minute clemency for Manning and Cartwright, Obama appeared to be softening what has been a hard-line approach to prosecuting leakers.

Manning has been serving a 35-year sentence for leaking classified government and military documents to WikiLeaks, along with some battlefield video. She was convicted in military court of violating the Espionage Act and other offenses and spent more than six years behind bars. She asked Obama last November to commute her sentence to time served.

Her case has pitted LGBT rights activists, who warned about her



Chelsea Manning poses for a photo wearing a wig and lipstick.

mental health and treatment as a transgender woman living in a men's prison, against national security hawks who said she did devastating damage to U.S. interests. The former cheered Obama's move, while the latter called it an outrageous act that set a dangerous precedent.

Yet Obama did not grant a pardon to another prominent leaker, former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, whom the U.S. has been unable to extradite from Russia. Snowden hasn't formally applied for clemency, though his supporters have called for it. Yet the White House drew a distinction between the unapologetic Snowden and Manning, whom officials noted has expressed remorse and served several years already for her crime.

Known as Bradley Manning at the time of her 2010 arrest, Manning came out as transgender after being sentenced. She was held at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where she attempted suicide twice last year, according to her lawyers. Manning has acknowledged leaking the documents, but has said she did it to raise public

awareness about the effects of war on civilians.

"We are all better off knowing that Chelsea Manning will walk out of prison a free woman, dedicated to making the world a better place and fighting for justice for so many," said Chase Strangio, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney representing Manning, adding that Obama's action could "quite literally save Chelsea's life."

But House Speaker Paul Ryan called the move "just outrageous," and added, "Chelsea Manning's treachery put American lives at risk and exposed some of our nation's most sensitive secrets."

Manning and many of the others receiving commutations will be released in May, in line with standard procedure allowing a period for re-entry.

With just days left as president, Obama also pardoned hotelier Ian Schrager, who was sentenced in 1980 to 20 months for tax evasion. The White House said Obama will announce more clemency actions Today — his last full day in office — but said those would focus on drug offenders and would not likely include any other famous names.

Commutations reduce sentences being served, but don't erase convictions. Pardons generally restore civil rights, such as voting, often after a sentence has been served.

Cartwright, the former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who received a pardon, had pleaded guilty in October to making false statements during an investigation into a leak of classified information about a covert cyberattack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Prosecutors said Cartwright falsely told investigators that he did not provide information contained in a news article and in a book by New York Times journalist David Sanger, and said he also misled prosecutors about classified information shared with another journalist, Daniel Klaidman.

The Justice Department sought a sentence of two years, saying employees of the U.S. government are entrusted each day with sensitive classified information.

Puerto Ricans had long demanded the release of Lopez, who was sentenced to 55 years in prison for his role in a violent struggle for independence for the U.S. island territory. Lopez had belonged to

the ultranationalist Armed Forces of National Liberation, which has claimed responsibility for more than 100 bombings at public and commercial buildings in U.S. cities during the 1970s and 1980s.

The 74-year-old's term will expire in May. The White House noted that absent a commutation, Lopez likely would have died in prison.

Obama's commutation for Manning also raised fresh questions about the future of another figure involved in the Army leaker's case: Julian Assange.

Manning, Cartwright and Puerto Rican nationalist Oscar Lopez Rivera were the more prominent names on a list otherwise made up mostly of nonviolent drug offenders

WikiLeaks had earlier pledged, via tweet, that its founder would agree to U.S. extradition if Obama granted clemency to Manning. Holed up for more than four years at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, Assange has refused to meet prosecutors in Sweden, where he's wanted on a rape allegation, fearing he would be extradited to the U.S. to face espionage charges if he leaves the embassy.

But the Justice Department has never announced any indictment of Assange. WikiLeaks lawyer Melinda Taylor said U.S. and British authorities refuse to say whether the U.S. has requested extradition. Though she praised the commutation for Manning, Taylor made no mention of Assange's earlier promise to agree to extradition.

White House officials said neither Assange's fate nor separate concerns about WikiLeaks' role in Russian hacking of the election factored into the decision to commute Manning's sentence. The officials briefed reporters on condition of anonymity. **AP**

RUSSIA

Authorities extend residence permit for Snowden

RUSSIAN authorities have extended a residence permit for U.S. intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, who leaked thousands of secret documents from the National Security Agency.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in a post on Facebook yesterday that Snowden's residence permit has been extended for "a couple of

years."

Snowden has been living in Russia since 2013 when he got stuck in the transit area at a Moscow airport after the United States canceled his passport.

The announcement comes as U.S. President Barack Obama has commuted the prison sentence of Chelsea Manning, who was convicted for leaking more than 700,000 U.S. documents. **AP**



Seth Borenstein, Washington

CLIMATE CHANGE

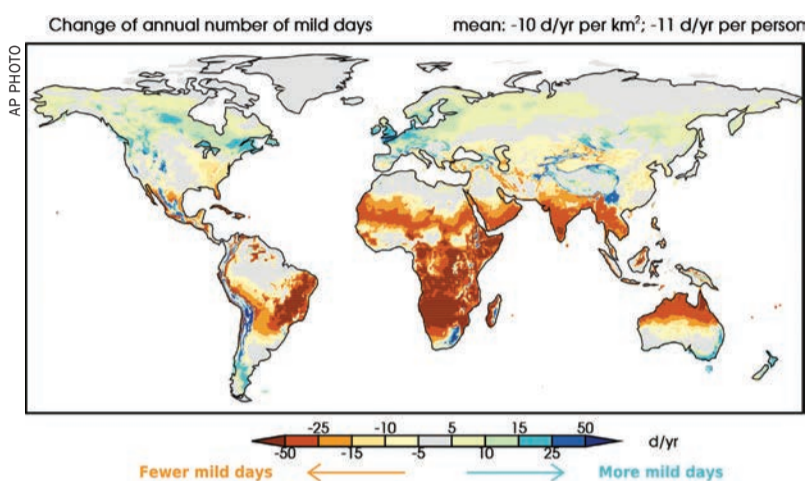
Global warming could steal postcard-perfect weather days

GLOBAL warming is going to steal away some of those postcard-perfect weather days in the future, according to a first-of-its-kind projection of nice weather.

On average, Earth will have 10 fewer days of mild and mostly dry weather by the end of the century, the researchers estimate. Some places will get more days perfect for picnics or outdoor weddings, while other places will lose a lot. Rio de Janeiro, Miami and much of Africa are big losers, while Europe and Seattle will gain nicer weather.

"It's the type of weather where you can go outside and do something fun," said study lead author Karin van der Wiel, a meteorology researcher at Princeton University and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "It's not too cold. It's not too hot. It's not too humid."

For the past three decades, the world has averaged 74 mild days a year. But by 2035 that will shrink to 70 and then 64 by the last two decades of the century, according to the study, published yesterday in the journal Climatic Change. Mild weather was defined as between 68 and 86 degrees (18 and 30 degrees Celsius) with low humidity and no more than a trace



of rain.

Any change depends on where you live and the time of year. For example, on average, the U.S. will lose nine mild summer days by the end of the century, although most is gained back with more mild days in the winter, spring and fall. The report estimates that Washington, Chicago, New York and Dallas will lose two weeks

of pleasant summer weather but some is gained back. On average, Washington loses 13 mild days; Atlanta, 12; Chicago, 9; Denver and New York, 6; and Dallas, 1.

The biggest losers will be the tropics and nearly all of Africa, eastern South America, South Asia and northern Australia. Rio de Janeiro, on average, will see 40 mild days disappear. Miami will

lose its only mild summer day and nearly a month of spring and fall mild days by 2100.

"The changes are more dramatic in parts of the developing world, where you have high concentrations of populations," said NOAA climate scientist and co-author Sarah Kapnick.

Other places, especially northern developed ones, will gain some of what the tropics lost. England and northern Europe are big winners. Seattle will pick up nine mild days and Los Angeles, which already has a lot of nice weather, gets six extra by the end of the century.

The scientists didn't specifically focus on whether the loss of mild days has already started globally, but they did see it happening in much of Africa and South America, Van der Wiel said.

Climate scientists usually focus on extreme weather — record heat, tropical cyclones, droughts, floods — and how they could get

worse as the world warms. Kapnick said she wanted to look at nice weather because her friends kept asking her what day to choose for good wedding weather.

The team used a middle ground scenario for global warming — not worst-case runaway carbon pollution and not dramatic cuts in emissions of heat-trapping gases — and ran different computer simulations to see what would happen.

It's not just fewer nice days to enjoy. Fewer mild days will also harm agricultural production and allow disease carrying insects to thrive more in more places, said University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd.

Stanford University climate scientist Chris Field, who led an international study of extreme weather, questioned the purpose of the study: "Extreme conditions are the sharp end of the climate stick. It is in the extremes when things break and damage occurs." AP



澳門特別行政區政府 Macao Special Administrative Region Government 體育局 Sports Bureau

In accordance with the Regulation of Attribution of Monetary Prizes in High Performance Sporting Events, the following athletes, coaches and technical support team are awarded monetary prizes as encouragement and recognition of their achievements:

- Dragon Boat Team: Competition: 12th Asian Dragon Boat Championships... Total: MOP\$33,750... Coach: Han Weifeng... Athletes: Lam Jo Sang, Cheung Iat Wa, Chan Ka Meng, Hong Wai San, Un Ngai Chong, Chao Ka Hou, Lam Wa Heng, Lam Chon Wong, Cheung Weng Mou, Cheung Ka Lok, Lo Ka Hong, Chan Kai Chong, Loi Chi On, Wong Fei Fu, Lee Yung Shen, Lei Keng San, Lei Chi Fong, Wong Chon long, Ng Cheng Song, Leong Kin Pong, Wong Cheong Seng, Wu Pou Fai, Ao Ieong Keng Kit, Leong Si Wai, Choi Chi Wai, Nascimento Gaspar, Rosita Xavier, Cruz Cabrales de Bernardes, Luz Elena, Fong Hong Ieng, Tam Si Long, Mok Sin In, Ip Soi Pou, Chan Hoi Ying Becky, Wong Sut Man, Ng Ka Kei, Cheong Ka Ian, Vong I Tak, Chan Wai In, Sin Kuan Mui, Leong Hou Lam, Wu Wing Yan, Fung Sin Ieng, Leong Choi Wan, Leng Kin Ian, Lam Chi Teng, Lunhina Fernandes, Yulia, Chai Hao Lei, Lei Chi Cheng, Chio Nga I, Pao I Man, Lok Oi Kan, Ng Chi Ian

- Swimming Team: Competition: 10th Asian Swimming Championships 2016... Total: MOP\$99,400... Coach: Zhang Zilin... Athletes: Choi Sut Ian, Choi Sut Kuan... Roller Hockey Team: Competition: 17th Asian Roller Skating Championships... Total: MOP\$950,000... Coach: Atraca Lisboa, Maria Dulce de Sena Fernandes... Athletes: Lisboa, Alberto Mario Campana Vieira de Jesus, De Almeida, Alfredo Hernandez, Da Cruz Ramos Fernandes, Augusto, Da Luz, Dinisio Alberto, Da Luz Nunes, Eduardo, Alhada Ricardo, Hélder, Leong Chak In, De Azevedo Cruz, Martin Afonso, Oliveira Freire Antunes, Nuno Miguel, De Sena Fernandes Atraca Afonso, Ricardo Jorge, Santos de Oliveira, Rogério André... Taekwondo Team: Competition: 22nd Asian Taekwondo Championships... Total: MOP\$210,000... Coach: Kim, Jun Woo... Athlete: Feng Xiao... Wushu Team: Competition: 9th Asian Wushu Championships, 6th World Junior Wushu Championships... Total: MOP\$2,535,700... Coaches: Iao Chon In, Qin Zhijian... Youth Training Coach: Leong Hong Man... Athletes: Chu Chi Wai, Huang Junxia, Li Yi, Sou Cho Man, Chan Kin Hong, Wong Kai Siu, Kan Kai Wa, Ho Chon Ieng, He Weng I... Xiangqi Team: Competition: 19th Asian Xiangqi Championships... Total: MOP\$121,000... Coach: Chen Bupeng... Athletes: Cao Yanlei, Lei Kam Fun, Che Keng Po, Chan Wing Lok

In accordance with the Regulation of Attribution of Certificates of Merits in Sporting Events, the following athletes, coaches and technical support team are awarded certificates of merits as encouragement and recognition of their achievements:

- Athletics Team: Coach: Lei Ka In... Athlete: Loi In Lam... Dragon Boat Team: Coaches: Han Weifeng, Chang Wa Ieng, Chan Weng Lok... Athletes: Lam Jo Sang, Cheung Iat Wa, Chan Ka Meng, Hong Wai San, Un Ngai Chong, Chao Ka Hou, Lam Wa Heng, Lam Chon Wong, Cheung Weng Mou, Cheung Ka Lok, Lo Ka Hong, Chan Kai Chong, Loi Chi On, Wong Fei Fu, Lee Yung Shen, Lei Keng San, Lei Chi Fong, Wong Chon long, Ng Cheng Song, Leong Kin Pong, Wong Cheong Seng, Wu Pou Fai, Ao Ieong Keng Kit, Leong Si Wai, Choi Chi Wai, Nascimento Gaspar, Rosita Xavier, Cruz Cabrales de Bernardes, Luz Elena, Fong Hong Ieng, Tam Si Long, Mok Sin In, Ip Soi Pou, Chan Hoi Ying Becky, Wong Sut Man, Ng Ka Kei, Cheong Ka Ian, Vong I Tak, Chan Wai In, Sin Kuan Mui, Leong Hou Lam, Wu Wing Yan, Fung Sin Ieng, Leong Choi Wan, Leng Kin Ian, Lam Chi Teng, Lunhina Fernandes, Yulia, Chai Hao Lei, Lei Chi Cheng, Chio Nga I, Pao I Man, Lok Oi Kan, Ng Chi Ian... Bowling Team: Coaches: Yin Man Yan, Choi Jo Fai... Athletes: Wong Sun In, Ho Man Lok, Lee Tak Man... Canoe Team: Coaches: Wong Chun Kong, Sam Siu Heng... Athletes: Ha Long, Sam Jeong, Cheong Si Yi Louisa... Cycling Team: Coaches: Kuan Sok Mui, Lou Weng Meng... Athletes: Lin Hang U, Lei Fai, Fan I Cheng, Ho I Teng, Wan Chi Kit, Cheung Shing Hei, Wong Kai Hei, Chio Hei Lam, Cheung Chi Kio, Shm Ka Sek, Chan Ist Tin, Ho I Lam, Chung Wa Kin, Cheong Choi Peng, Ip Iok, Lam Wai Lok, Leong Chou Lung... Bodybuilding Team: Coach: Lau Fong Pung... Athletes: Cheong Chi Wa, Pang Chi Man... Disabled Sports Team: Coaches: Wong Io Meng, Chiang Hot Ian... Technical Support Team: Chan I Vo... Athletes: Lo Wai Fong, Yu Ka Man... Special Olympics Sports Team: Coach: Sin Yu Ning... Technical Support Team: Chan I Vo... Athlete: Chen Yu Chia... Ice Sports Team: Coach: Li Liping... Athletes: Ho Chi Hin, Kam Chi Chon, Ho Seng Chon, Lo Weng Kuan, Lo Weng Chi, Cheong Sin I, Jeong Hou, Ng Weng I, Suen Wing Lam... University Sports Team: Coach: Vong Vai Fong... Athletes: Lai Ka Tong, Sou Wa Chak, Lo Hip Meng, Tang Man Io... Football Team: Coaches: Tam Iao Sui, Iong Cho Ieng, Chei Seng Cheong, Cheung Chon Man... Technical Support Team: Leong Ian Teng, Lao Chi Leong... Athletes: Ho Man Fai, Lo Weng Hou, Cheung Cheng Ieong Paulo, Kam Chi Hou, Kong Cheng Hou, De Almeida Torris, Nicholas Mario, Lei Kam Hong, Lee Keng Pau, Lei Ka Him, Sio Ka U, Leong Ka Hang, Kou Ut Cheong, Chan Man, Pang Chi Hang, Lam Ka Seng, Ho Chi Fong, Cheong Hoi San, Lao Pak Kin, Choi Weng Hou

- Judo Team: Coaches: Kase, Jiro, Silva, Aquino Da, Guerra, Emanuel Frederico; Lo Chi Wai, Chang Choi Chan, Ian Chee Hin, Chan Iou Peng... Athletes: Liao Chon Hou, Lei Cheng I, Lao Ka Cheng, Lei Chi In, Tang Lai Man, Chan Ian Ian, Wong Ka Cheng, Cheung Chi Lap, Tong Ka Io, Chan Ka I, Ho Im San, Chan Man Kit, Zheng Xinyue, Ao Jeong Hang Io, Hoi Ngai Wong, Chek Tak Cheong, Leong Lai Tong... Karate Team: Coaches: Rashidnia, Mohammad Reza, Zakari, Hamed... Athlete: Chio Chan Man... Swimming Team: Coaches: Zhang Zilin, Wang Ruihua, Zuo Chenchen, Li Songfang... Athletes: Choi Sut Ian, Choi Sut Kuan, Leong Sut Chan, Leong Sut In, An Ieong Sin Ieng, Kou Chin, Lo Wai Lam, Li Ni, Lei Cheuk Sze, Lei Cheok Ian, Leong Mei Han, Chan Cheng Han, Chang Si Wai, Choi Nok Lam... Roller Sports Team: Coach: Atraca Lisboa, Maria Dulce de Sena Fernandes... Athletes: Lisboa, Alberto Mario Campana Vieira de Jesus, De Almeida, Alfredo Hernandez, Da Cruz Ramos Fernandes, Augusto, Da Luz, Dinisio Alberto, Da Luz Nunes, Eduardo, Alhada Ricardo, Hélder, Leong Chak In, De Azevedo Cruz, Martin Afonso, Oliveira Freire Antunes, Nuno Miguel, De Sena Fernandes Atraca Afonso, Ricardo Jorge, Santos de Oliveira, Rogério André... Squash Team: Coaches: Lim, Chee Ming, Chan Chak In... Athletes: Yeung Weng Chi, Yeung Wai Long... Taekwondo Team: Coaches: Kim, Jun Woo, Kian, Tshyeeong, Wang Junnan, Chao Iat Keong... Athletes: Feng Xiao, Maricic, Nikola, Lin Ka Ho, Chan Iek Hei, Shi Hoi Ho, De Assunção, Alba Meritda... Triathlon Team: Coach: Ando, Kenta... Athletes: Carreira Chiu, Rogério Jose, Ng Un Ian, Ku Lap Chon, Un Chak Ieong, Jeong Chi Meng, Wu Chi Cheong, Wong Chin Wa, Cheung Wai Ioi, Hoi Long... Wushu Team: Coaches: Iao Chon In, Leong Hong Man, Qin Zhijian, Huang Yanfai... Athletes: Chu Chi Wai, Li Yi, Huang Junxia, Sou Cho Man, Cheong Pui Seng, Wu Nok In, Chio Wai Keong, Cheong Ka Seng, Wong Kai Sin, Wong Sam In, Ho Chon Ieng, He Weng I, Chan Kin Hong, Cheung Ioi Chi, Lei Cheok Jeong, Han Soi Wa, Chan Ka Hou, Kan Kai Wa, Hung Si Fan, Wong Weng Ian, Chiang Chi Kei, Hoi Pui Kei, Iao Hoi Man, Wong Iok Lam, Song Chi Kuan... Chess Team: Coach: Ho Hou Meng... Athletes: Jeong Seak Hin, Ip Seng Tou... Xiangqi Team: Coach: Chen Bupeng... Athletes: Cao Yanlei, Lei Kam Fun, Che Keng Po, Chan Wing Lok

what's ON

LOVE OF MACAU – PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEE KUNG KIM
 TIME: 10am-7pm (Last admission at 6:30pm, closed on Mondays)
 UNTIL: July 9, 2017
 VENUE: Macao Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
 Museum Admission: \$5 (Free on Sundays and public holidays)
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

AD LIB- RECENT WORKS BY KONSTANTIN BESSMERTNY
 TIME: 10am-7pm (no admission after 6:30 pm, closed on Mondays)
 UNTIL: May 28, 2017
 VENUE: Macao Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
 ADMISSION: MOP5 (free on Sundays and public holidays)
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

KUNG FU PANDA ACADEMY
 TIME: 11:30am-1pm & 2pm-15:30pm
 UNTIL: February 5, 2017
 VENUE: Level 4, Tian Shan Ballroom, Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel, Sands Cotai Central
 ADMISSION: MOP200 per child (complimentary entry for one adult and MOP100 for each additional adult)
 Enquiries: (853) 8113 0000

THE STAMP FESTIVAL
 TIME: 9am-5:30pm (no admission after 5:00 pm), closed on public holidays
 UNTIL: April 7, 2017
 VENUE: Communication Museum of Macao / Estrada D. Maria II, No. 7
 ADMISSION: MOP10
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2871 8063 / 2871 8570

SAILING FOR DREAMS - WORKS BY KWOK WOON
 TIME: 10am-7pm (Closed on Mondays)
 UNTIL: April 23, 2017
 VENUE: Navy Yard No.1, Rua de S. Tiago da Barra
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

'DESTINY IS A MATTER OF CHOICE FOR YOURSELF' LEONG WAN SIN EXHIBITION
 TIME: 10:30 am to 6:30 pm (Closed on Mondays and public holidays)
 UNTIL: February 2, 2017
 ADMISSION: Free
 VENUE: 10 Fantasia, Calçada da Igreja de S.Lazaro
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 4582

Offbeat

US: MISSING HUNTER LOCATED IN ALABAMA JAIL

Searchers spent time looking for a missing hunter in north Alabama until officers realized he was actually in jail.

Relatives of 50-year-old Randy Keith Holt of Hartselle reported the man missing Monday afternoon after he failed to return from a hunting trip. Holt didn't have a cellphone with him, so no one could contact him or track him.

The Limestone County Sheriff's Department, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, firefighters, dog handlers, a helicopter and others joined in a search.

But officers realized Holt was in the Limestone County Jail once they heard his last name. He had been arrested for public intoxication near the search site before the manhunt began.

Authorities say relatives of the man didn't realize he was in custody and reported him missing.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:00	Happy Endings Sr.2
17:40	Criminal Minds S10 (Repeated)
18:20	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
19:10	Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:30	Castle S6
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema

CINETEATRO

19 -20JAN

ARRIVAL

ROOM 1

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

Director: Denis Villeneuve

Starring: Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Forest Whitaker

Language: English

Duration: 116min

A STREET CAT NAMED BOB

ROOM 2

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

Director: Roger Spottiswoode

Starring: Luke Treadaway, Joanne Froggatt, Ruta Gedmintas

Language: English

Duration: 103min

10000 MILES

ROOM 3

2:30, 9:30pm

Director: Simon Hung

Starring: Yuan Huang, Megan Lai, Darren Wang

Language: Mandarin (Cantonese, English)

Duration: 103min



SING

ROOM 3

4:30, 7:30pm

Director: Garth Jennings

Starring: Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Seth MacFarlane

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 108min

MACAU TOWER

19 JAN - 27 JAN



ARRIVAL

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

Director: Denis Villeneuve

Starring: Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Forest Whitaker

Language: English

Duration: 116min

this day in history



2000 'INTERNET TWINS' TAKEN INTO CARE

The American twin girls at the centre of an internet adoption scandal have been seized from a hotel in north Wales and taken into care.

The girls were staying with British couple Alan and Judith Kilshaw who say they paid £8,000 to adopt the girls over the internet. The Kilshaws now plan to fight for custody of the babies through the courts.

Belinda and Kymberley, who are six-months-old, have been the subject of a tug of love between two would-be sets of adoptive parents, on both sides of the Atlantic.

The scandal first erupted when American couple Vickie and Richard Allen complained the twins were taken from them as they were finalising an internet deal to adopt the girls for £4,000.

After two months caring for the twins at their home in California, the Allens say the girls' natural mother asked to say one last goodbye and snatched them back.

Social services were alerted once the babies arrived in Britain.

They applied for an emergency protection order and last night, social services workers and police officers went to the Beaufort Park Hotel in Mold where the girls have been staying with the Kilshaws.

Flintshire social services say the girls have been taken into care for their own safety.

Judith Kilshaw said: "I thought if there was a problem it would be dealt with sensitively.

"They would come at a reasonable time, talk to me and Alan and say this is what we are thinking of doing."

Gloria Allred, legal adviser for the girls' natural mother, Tranda Wecker, says she just wants what is best for the twins.

Richard and Vickie Allen say they are praying for the twins' return - and they have set up a shrine to them in their home.

Mr Allen has appealed to the girls' natural mother not to go through the courts.

He said: "I am asking as a human being to please send me my babies back."

The case will go to the High Court next week.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The case of the internet adoption twins caused huge controversy and led to the tightening of the adoption law in the United Kingdom.

An American judge ruled in March 2001 the girls should be returned to the United States for their future to be decided there.

The court ruled neither set of would-be parents met the legal requirements for adoption.

The Allens later withdrew their claim after Mr Allen was accused of molesting two teenage babysitters - charges he denied.

The Kilshaws ran up legal bills of more than £60,000 in the custody battle.

They were declared bankrupt in March 2002, and four months later Mr Kilshaw was struck off as a solicitor for financial malpractice.

The twins' estranged natural parents failed to win custody.

A judge ruled in May 2002 that the best interests of twins Kiara and Keyara would be served by keeping them under the care of the Missouri Division of Family Services.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Do not jump and run at the sound of someone else's alarm today - your sense of urgency is different from the next guy's. Base your actions on what you think is most important.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Your ability to accept differing opinions and ideas is strong, but it could be stronger. Luckily, there will be no shortage of opposing viewpoints around you today - listen to them and be tolerant. Don't debate ideas.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Pluck the nuttiest idea out of the back corner of your mind, knock the dust and cobwebs off of it, and mull it over today. Chances are, if you turn it over in your mind enough times.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Today you will see how successful many of the people in your life are. Unfortunately, this might awaken the green-eyed monster lurking deep inside of you.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 If you don't start patting yourself on the back more, you could become easy prey for people who like to manipulate or con others into doing the work that they should be doing.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You have every right to brag to friends about your latest accomplishments, but you really shouldn't - at least not today. Too many of your friends with fragile egos might react negatively.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Sure, a lot of the small details of an upcoming event are still up in the air, but the stars say that those details won't really matter in the end. Everything will work out well, so your job is done here!

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Today you will definitely have the energy and strength to go the distance. So don't shy away from any type of challenge, no matter how out of your element you may feel or how high the stakes may be.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your luck continues to be very good today, and you are getting used to having things go your way. This feeling of confidence is a huge boon to your creativity, so make sure you find some time to work all your ideas.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You'll witness an ugly exchange between two people you respect today. One of them feels more deserving of the praise the other one received. You know what it's like to feel overlooked.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 If you spend too much time performing too many experiments, you aren't going to end up learning very much. Too many contradictory conclusions will be formed, and you'll be farther behind.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 It might feel as though you're not quite living in reality today - the universe is sending you lots of fantastic energy, which will definitely be a welcome (and very entertaining) notion.



Crossword puzzles: Easy, Easy+, Medium, Hard. Each puzzle is a grid with numbers indicating starting points for words.

WEATHER table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Rows include CHINA (Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, etc.).

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Lens holders; 5- Lock of hair; 10- Just ___; 14- Bhutan's continent; 15- It's a wrap; 16- Defense grp. since 1949; 17- Auditorium; 18- Refrain in a children's song; 19- Skedaddles; 20- Fountain treats; 22- Enclose; 24- Actress Helgenberger; 27- Follow; 28- Of many kinds; 32- Rips; 35- Inventor Whitney; 36- January, in Juárez; 38- Meat; 40- Like candles; 42- End of ___; 44- Model Macpherson; 45- Brown ermine; 47- John ___ Garner; 49- Neighbor of Syr.; 50- Sign up; 52- Automobile; 54- "Damn!"; 56- Ike's ex; 57- Worker; 60- Seductively beautiful woman; 64- Highway hauler; 65- Crystal-lined rock; 68- Structure for storing grain; 69- Lulu; 70- Kett and James; 71- Old oath; 72- Magic stick; 73- ___ Island; 74- Beaver creations;

DOWN: 1- Stadium cheers; 2- Golfer Aoki; 3- Temperate; 4- Italian sausage; 5- Mao ___-tung; 6- Thor Heyerdahl craft; 7- ___ saw Elba; 8- Person of exceptional holiness; 9- Winter vehicle; 10- Of angular form; 11- Uttered; 12- Kitchen addition; 13- Fortune 500 listings; Abbr.; 21- Ump's call; 23- Untruths, tells falsehoods; 25- Barrett of gossip; 26- First American to orbit Earth; 28- Sounds like a kitten; 29- Having wings; 30- Agnew's old boss; 31- Fantasy; 33- Souvenir; 34- Chip dip; 37- Ready ___; 39- Actress Deborah; 41- Convict; 43- Broadway opener; 46- Bull; 48- Ages and ages; 51- More massive; 53- Elevated; 55- Molars, e.g.; 57- Singer Horne; 58- Prayer ending; 59- ___-Rooter; 61- Capital of Latvia; 62- Jack of "Rio Lobo"; 63- Agrees tacitly; 64- Plant; 66- June honoree; 67- Legal ending;

Yesterday's solution crossword grid with filled-in words.

Main crossword puzzle grid with numbers.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



FOR SALE and FOR RENT advertisement with website www.JMLProperty.com and contact info.

Real estate advertisement for Nova Taipa Tower 29, Car Park, Taipa, 0 sq ft / HKD 1.3M.

Real estate advertisement for Taipa Warehouse, Pac On Taipa, 1,652 sq ft / HKD 6.99M.

Real estate advertisement for Iau Lei Garden Taipa, 1,015 sq ft / HKD 6.8M.

Real estate advertisement for Manhattan E Unit Taipa, 1,626 sq ft / HKD 11.382M.

JML property logo and contact information.

GOLF

Europe announces changes to Ryder Cup qualifying system

AP PHOTO



Steve Douglas, Abu Dhabi

EUROPE'S team for the 2018 Ryder Cup in France will have an extra captain's pick and is set to contain more in-form players following a revamp of the qualifying system in the wake of a heavy loss to the United States last year.

The aim is clear: To give captain Thomas Bjorn the best possible team to regain the cup.

Jolted by Europe's 17-11 loss in Hazeltine, Europe announced changes yesterday that see the

number of captain's selections increased from three to four, while more points will be earned at events in the latter stages of qualifying to ensure that in-form players have a better chance of making the team.

A third change to the qualification process will see no Ryder Cup qualifying points on offer at tournaments staged on the PGA Tour in the same weeks as the European Tour's newly introduced Rolex Series — a group of eight events that will have enhanced status and prize money.

The changes were approved late Tuesday at a meeting of the European Tour's tournament committee in Abu Dhabi, where the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship is being played this week.

"I'm confident that we're going to have the 12 best European players representing us in France," European captain Thomas Bjorn said.

It was felt by some that Europe did not field its best team at Hazeltine because of restrictions with the qualifying system. Alex Noren, for example, was the hottest player in Europe in the second half of 2016 but his wins in July and September came too late to get him in Darren Clarke's side.

"From my own experience," Bjorn said, "when you make all your points in November and December the year before, it can be quite daunting to play in the Ryder Cup when you haven't played particularly well for three

or four months coming into it."

"I don't think you can, at any time in sports, take away from guys that are in form."

While keen to have the best players at his disposal, Bjorn also was wary of preserving the standing of the European Tour in the face of competition from the lucrative PGA Tour.

As a result, the rule that a player

must be a member of the European Tour to be eligible for the Ryder Cup was retained. That ruled out U.S.-based Englishman Paul Casey from getting in the 2016 team, as he was refusing to join the European Tour for family reasons.

Also, from 2018 onward, players cannot be a future Ryder Cup captain or vice-captain if they decline membership of the European Tour or fail to fulfil the minimum obligation of playing at least four events on tour each season.

"I think we've got a good balance," British Open champion Henrik Stenson said of the changes.


The qualification process begins at the Czech Masters in Prague from Aug. 31-Sept. 3 AP

TOKYO 2020 TO STUDY GOLF CLUB'S MEMBERSHIP POLICIES

TOKYO 2020 organizers say they will review membership practices at the golf course selected for the Olympic Games following criticism that it does not allow women as full members. Founded in 1929, the Kasumigaseki Country Club is one of the oldest private clubs in Japan but does not allow women to become full members or to play on Sundays. "The Tokyo 2020 or-

ganizing committee will continue studying the club owner's policy on the membership eligibility and responses to the public discussion," organizers said in a statement. Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike has urged the club to admit women as full members. "I feel very uncomfortable about women not being able to become a regular member in this era," Koike said at a press conference.

AD



ASIA CHAMPIONSHIP OF POKER
ACOP
PLATINUM SERIES

ACOP PLATINUM SERIES 16. HKD \$500,000 GUARANTEE PLUS A CHANCE TO WIN A SEAT AT THE ASIA CHAMPIONSHIP OF POKER

From 6-15 January, 'PokerStars LIVE Macau' will host the ACOP Platinum Series 16 which will have fourteen Official Asia Player of the Year events and features the HKD \$500,000 Main Event.

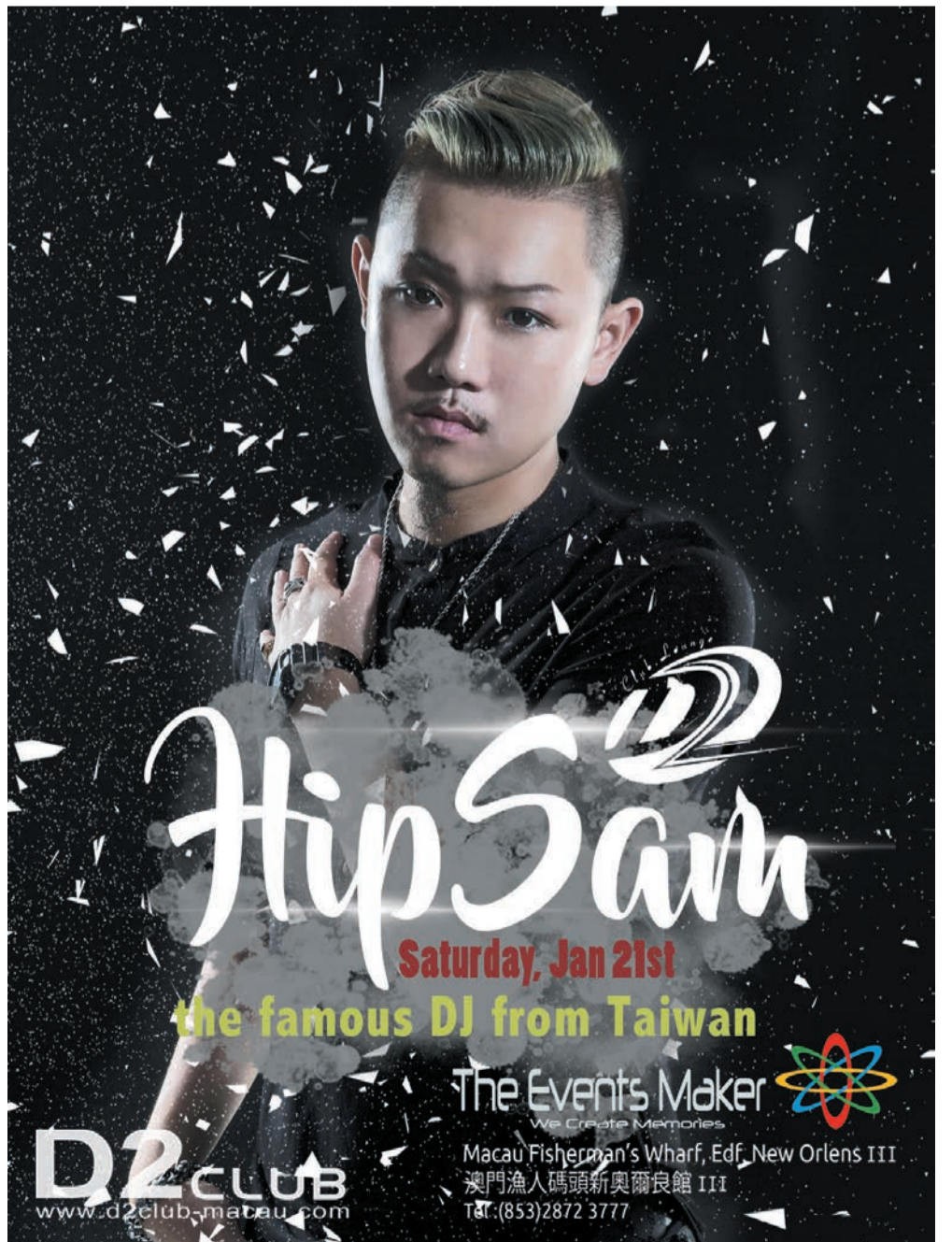
The Top 10 players from the Main Event will be entered into the ACOP: Platinum Series Playoffs for a chance at HKD \$100,000 ACOP Main Event Seat!

Find out more at PokerStarsLIVEMacau.com

Level 2,
Estrade do Istmo,
Cotai

POKER STARS LIVE MACAU

All tournaments are subject to regulatory approval.



Hip Sam
Saturday, Jan 21st
the famous DJ from Taiwan

The Events Maker
We Create Memories

Macau Fisherman's Wharf, Edf, New Orleans III
澳門漁人碼頭新奧爾良 III
Tel: (853) 2872 3777

D2 CLUB
www.d2club-macau.com

Dave Skretta, Kansas City (Mo.)

FIGURE SKATING

Nathan Chen leads the way at US championships

THE pain in his hip is gone. All that's left is a surgical screw and a scar.

Nathan Chen hardly thinks about it these days, when he's gliding over the fresh ice in training or competition. The next big thing in American figure skating doesn't worry about it while he's taking off for one of his myriad quads, or that triple axel that causes him so much vexation.

It's been a year, after all. A lot has happened.

"Now, it's totally fine," he said, while preparing for this week's U.S. championships at the Sprint Center in Kansas City, "but it's really difficult when you're injured for worlds or something big. But I think that being able to overcome that makes you stronger."

Yes, that's exactly what the 17-year-old prodigy has done: He's come back stronger.

The avulsion injury, where a piece of the hip bone splintered off, hardly hampered him last month in Marseille, France. Chen landed four of his stunning quadruple jumps during the Grand Prix final to earn silver, becoming the second-youngest ever to medal at the event.

He also was the first American to medal there since Evan Lysacek and Johnny Weir in 2009.

"He's a really great competitor," said reigning U.S. champion Adam Rippon, who will be unable to defend his title due to his own injury, "and I'm really impressed with what he's done."

Not surprisingly, Chen has become the heavy favorite to win the title this weekend.

"The first time I saw him, he was competing against my brother at nationals, and my brother retired after that year because of Nathan," said three-time champion Ashley Wagner. "He's definitely coming into his own. It's awe-

some how much he's pushing the boundaries of his sport."

By that, Wagner means that there are few other skaters doing quads with the same kind of amplitude as Chen - perhaps Japanese superstar Yuzuru Hanyu and a handful of others.

While risky, the rewards for the high-flying jumps are worth it. Their base value has jumped a considerable amount over the last couple Olympic cycles, reaching a point where even quads that end up under-rotated or with a two-footed landing yield big points.

The big question is what exactly will Chen unveil in Kansas City?

"I've been working on all my quads, excluding toe loops, the past two weeks," he said. "I've thought about different program plans and it depends on how my body is during that time, if anything is hurting, if I'm ready to push full-out. There's a lot of options."

Rippon's decision to withdraw cleared a major road block for Chen, and left Max Aaron and Jason Brown as his biggest competition. But chances are they'll have to land at least one clean quad of their own - and perhaps a couple - to have a shot at winning.

Here's a brief look at the other titles up for grabs this week in Kansas City:

LADIES Wagner emerged as the favorite after winning Skate America, but a disappointing Cup of China left the race wide open. Defending champion Gracie Gold struggled throughout the



fall but should not be counted out, while Mirai Nagasu and Mariah Bell are podium threats.

Missing is silver medalist Polina Edmunds, who withdrew with a foot injury.

"My confidence, some would say is surprisingly high," Gold said. "The amount of progress I've been able to make since

Golden Spin (in December) to now has been incredible. I think I'm going to put out two really great performances in Kansas City."

PAIRS Tarah Kayne and Danny O'Shea are back to defend the title they won in St. Paul, Minnesota, but the wild card is how Kayne's knee will

hold up. She was diagnosed with a tendon issue that has had an impact on training and competition for much of the past year.

Former champs Alexa Scimeca and Christopher Knierim have withdrawn due to injuries, leaving the teams of Haven Denny and Brandon Frazier and Marissa Castelli and Mervin Tran among the favorites.

"We took a break and kind of reorganized a lot of things, a lot of weaknesses we've had this season," Frazier said. "I think the last month has been very solid, probably the best month of training we have had since we've been back."

DANCE The Americans have become world leaders in ice dance, and that should mean a tight race for medals at the U.S. championships. But reigning champs Maia Shibutani and Alex Shibutani are still clear front-runners, especially after their bronze medal at the Grand Prix final.

Madison Chock and Evan Bates, the 2015 champs who took silver a year ago, are aiming to return to the top. Madison Hubbell and Zach Donohue are three-time bronze medalists eager for more.

"I think we're definitely in a different place heading into this championship," Alex Shibutani said. "The results have been validating for us, but I think what led to the success we've had over the past 18 months started with the mindset and approach that we've been able to successfully continue the first half of the season: We don't take anything for granted." **AP**

CYCLING

Richie Porte wins 2nd stage of Tour Down Under

AUSTRALIAN cyclist Richie Porte won the second stage of the Tour Down Under yesterday, giving him the overall lead in the opening event on the 2017 UCI WorldTour.

Runner-up at the last two editions of the Tour Down Under, Richie put himself in a strong position to go all the way and win the race this

time after he took out the gruelling 145.5 kilometer (90 mile) stage from Stirling, in the Adelaide Hills, to the small town of Paracombe, by 16 seconds.

Spain's Gorka Izagirre crossed the line second while Colombia's Esteban Chaves was third. Rohan Dennis, a team mate of Porte for the United States-based

BMC Racing Team, recovered from a flat tire to finish fourth.

Yesterday's stage, featuring several tough climbs and difficult descents, is one of the most demanding and influential stages of the six-day Tour. Two years ago, Dennis went on to win the race after winning the stage.

Porte crashed out of

the Olympic road race in Rio de Janeiro in September so made winning the Tour Down Under his first objective of a season in which he is aiming for a podium finish at the Tour de France.

He now leads the overall classification by 20 seconds.

"I know I've got good climbing legs and didn't

really want to wait around. So to be able to ride away like that gives me good confidence," Porte said.

"You know there are some stressful days coming up so I won't be counting our chickens until they hatch."

This stage featured five laps of a undulating loop through Stirling before the riders turned

away and began a series of steep climbs and descents on the way to Paracombe, which has a population of just 350.

The early part of the stage featured a solo breakaway by German's Sasha Sutterlin, riding for the Movistar Team. He opened up a margin of five minutes before he faded and was caught by the peloton. **AP**

opinion

Girl About Globe

Linda Kennedy



KEN'TECHY FRIED CHICKEN

As the Year of the Rooster looms, KFC is turning into Ken'techy Fried Chicken.

A Beijing branch of the fast food chain has introduced facial recognition software. When you go there, a bit of tech checks you out, and might show you some leg. Of fried chicken.

That's if you're a guy in your 20s. If the artificial intelligence-enabled system reads you as female and older, it could recommend porridge and soybean milk. The software links person to palate, and makes some whopper assumptions, to reference a rival.

KFC has teamed up with Baidu, the Chinese search engine, to create this, the world's first smart restaurant. But is it a good idea? Well, if they'd had that software at Beijing's Starbucks, it would have avoided my many attempts to say 'meishi kafei'. 'An Americano'. What rapture it would have been to merely stare into a Starbucks digital camera and have the nodal points of my face measured and stored on a database, thereafter communicating my caffeine order without anyone behind the counter shouting 'shenme?' (what?) So, in China, with expats and difficult tones, I can see the advantages.

But will it work? Because of pollution, many Beijingers wear face masks. Recognize me now, KFC? Or is it finger-licking hard?

An even more basic challenge is getting a clear view of a face. The typical Chinese neck is angled at 45 degrees: staring down at a smart phone.

Then there's the rise of cosmetic surgery, usually obtained by travelling to South Korea. 'Rhinoplasty failure, doctor— KFC still serves me the same meal!'

Assuming it does work, what about the implications? Obviously, there are issues of privacy and data security. Do you want your chick picks recorded? But also other stuff - the smaller hot potatoes. What if you're on a diet? Much was made recently in the UK about office cake culture and its contribution to obesity, suggesting people starting a January cut-down have the right to be irritated if colleagues bring in chocolate and cake. Extend that, and surely you can be exasperated by KFC tempting you to a bucket of wings. Can you sue facial recognition software, if you can link it to weight gain?

And will KFC's facial recognition software eventually talk to other facial recognition software, passing on your details? Might it talk to a patisserie? 'Na, she's already had crispy wings, no fondant fancy for her'. Or to fashion stores? 'Those jeans won't fit, she eats fried chicken here too often.' All these savvy pieces of software communicating with each other, originating from this one smart chicken restaurant in China - after the Internet of Things, the Internet of Wings?

Let's also consider: is it a Facebook of food? It sounds like you are only recommended things you already know, like-minded meals. No new ideas, like, say, the 'sausage and pan-fried egg with macaroni in soup' combo. It's popular in Hong Kong branches of KFC.

There are so many reasons to cry fowl, you have to wonder why KFC is doing this. To be a rooster profit booster, that's why. KFC is one of the largest chains in China, with thousands of restaurants. It regularly introduces new menu items to tantalise customers. This is another menu update: not 'teriyaki' but 'techy-happy chicken. And it's getting lots of publicity in advance of the new year holiday, when China's workers have leisure time to fill.

Me, I mostly worry about small talk. Software won't do that so about to vanish are: 'Hello and I'll be your server today' and 'Have a nice day.' Happy Year of the Smart Rooster.

THE HONG KONG ACTOR ANDY LAU INJURED WHILE WORKING IN THAILAND

Hong Kong actor Andy Lau has been injured while working in Thailand.

A statement from his representative said the 55-year-old actor fell off a horse and injured his pelvis on the set of a commercial Tuesday.

The statement thanked people who expressed their concern but said fans shouldn't worry.

It said: "Mr. Lau is under the sound care of a medical team and all is fine."

No further information about how he was injured or his current condition was disclosed.

Lau is one of the most beloved actors from Hong Kong and has won countless accolades for singing and acting.

BOLLYWOOD

Indian court acquits actor of using illegal arms



Top Bollywood star Salman Khan was acquitted yesterday of the charge of using unlicensed arms while hunting for rare blackbucks in a wildlife preserve 18 years ago.

The 51-year-old was present in the court in Jodhpur, a city in Rajasthan state, as Chief Judicial Magistrate Dalpat Singh Rajpurohit announced his acquittal.

The charge was dismissed for lack of evidence,

his attorney Hastimal Saraswat said. If convicted, he would have faced up to seven years in prison.

The prosecution argued that the license of a revolver and a rifle allegedly used by Khan had expired in 1998.

As Khan's fans cheered his acquittal, he tweeted: "Thank you for all the support and good wishes."

The Indian court system is notoriously slow, and it often takes years and even decades for a case to

go to trial.

Apart from the illegal arms case, police had filed three poaching cases against Khan during the shoot of one of his films in Jodhpur in 1998.

He was convicted by a lower court and sentenced to one and five years in prison, respectively. But the actor challenged the verdict in a higher court, which said there was no evidence to suggest that the pellets recovered from the animals were fired from Khan's gun. He is still facing trial in a third case for allegedly poaching two rare blackbucks.

Khan has starred in more than 90 Hindi-language films, but has also had brushes with the law.

In 2014, the Mumbai High Court acquitted the actor in a drunken-driving, hit-and-run case from more than a decade ago.

The judges found that prosecutors had failed to prove charges of culpable homicide, in which they accused Khan of driving while intoxicated in 2002 and running over five men sleeping on a sidewalk in Mumbai, killing one of them.

The government of Maharashtra state, of which Mumbai is the capital, has challenged his acquittal in the Supreme Court. **AP**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Massimo Percossi/ANSA via AP



Students and teachers stand outside a high school yesterday, in Rome, after it was evacuated following three earthquakes which hit central Italy in the space of an hour, shaking the same region that suffered a series of deadly quakes last year.

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	50-70 Moderate	
High Density Residential Area	60-80 Moderate	
Ambient	60-80 Moderate	

SOURCE: D5M6G

WORLD BRIEFS

JAPAN A fast-growing Japanese hotel chain is facing criticism over a book penned by the chain's owner that says the Rape of Nanking was fabricated. APA Group drew fire for spreading the revisionist views of company president Toshio Motoya by putting the books in hotel guestrooms and also selling them. **More on p10**

IRAQ's prime minister is demanding full disclosure about events surrounding the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Haider al-Abadi told reporters that he would like to see a "thorough investigation" into what took the U.S. forces from "liberating" the country to "occupying" it.



AP PHOTO

BOSNIA The President of the Bosnian Serb region of Republic of Srpska, Milorad Dodik, has dismissed U.S. sanctions imposed on him for obstructing the peace accords that ended Bosnia's war two decades ago, calling it a reversible act of revenge by the departing Obama administration.

GERMANY-BRITAIN German Chancellor Angela Merkel is pledging to ensure that the Brexit process doesn't divide Europe. Merkel said yesterday that British Prime Minister Theresa May's speech has offered "a clearer impression" of what London wants, but stressed that negotiations will begin only when Britain formally triggers exit talks.



AP PHOTO

US Obama became the president to have granted more commutations than any other when he announced that Chelsea Manning will be freed in May. Manning, the transgender Army intelligence officer who leaked more than 700,000 U.S. documents, was one of 273 people receiving clemency on a single day. **More on p14**