



TRACY HEADS HARD ROCK JAPAN DIVISION
Former Sands China CEO, Edward Tracy, was appointed to lead Hard Rock Japan, which plans to bid for resort licenses

P2



'THE MACAU KID' WINS
Ng Kuok Kun beat Thailand's Komsan Polsan on points during the 5th CCTV CNY Cup – IBF World Championship

P5 BOXING



CHINESE NUCLEAR POWER FLEET COULD OVERTAKE US

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WORLD BRIEFS



UK President Donald Trump's order barring U.S. entry to people from seven majority Muslim nations is "divisive, discriminatory and wrong," British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said. But he rebuffed calls for cancelling Trump's planned state visit to the U.K. *More on p15*



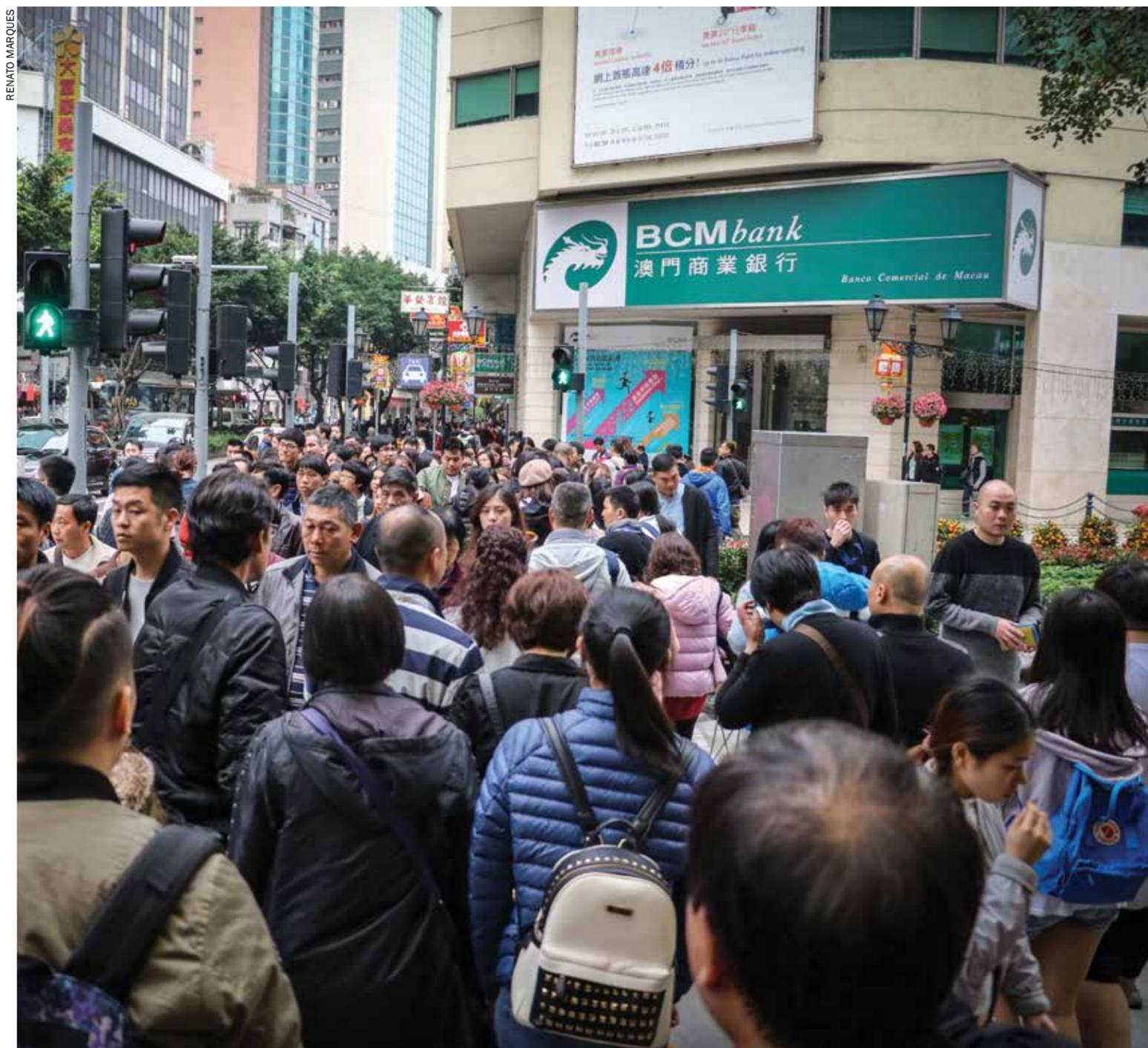
USA Trump has fired the acting attorney general after she questioned the legality of his immigration ban. Sally Yates (pictured), who was appointed by Barack Obama, ordered justice department lawyers not to enforce the president's executive order. A White House statement accused Yates of "betraying" the justice department and being "weak on borders".

PHILIPPINES The United States is not building any weapons depots in the Philippines, the U.S. ambassador says, denying the basis on which President Rodrigo Duterte threatened to abrogate a 2014 defense pact that allows U.S. forces to temporarily base in local camps. *More on p12*

PHILIPPINES The Philippine Supreme Court yesterday prohibited a group of police officers from entering a slum community to prevent them from threatening villagers who have accused them of ruthlessly killing four residents in an anti-drug raid, in the latest setback for the president's bloody crackdown on drugs.

[More on backpage](#)

Family detained for filming rogue taxi driver . P3



Crowds turn out to celebrate CNY in Macau, hotels booked out . P4, 6

HARD Rock International announced on Monday the launch of a new division of the company, Hard Rock Japan LLC, as well as the appointment of Edward Tracy as its CEO.

According to a statement from Hard Rock International, Tracy's appointment is "a strategic move designed to support the company's growth plans in the region."

Japan's legislature recently approved the country's Integrated Resorts Promotion Bill, marking the first step toward the legalization of gaming in a market that CLSA gaming analysts estimate to be worth USD40 billion.

With 30 years of experience in the Japanese market, including six Hard Rock Café locations currently in operation, the company now plans to expand their portfolio by becoming a contender among the bidders for Japanese resort licenses.

Tracy has held a number of positions within the gaming and hospitality industry in the past. In

Edward Tracy CEO for Hard Rock's new Japan division

July 2010 he joined Sands China Ltd, a subsidiary of Las Vegas Sands Corp., as its president and chief operating officer. He later became the company's CEO in July 2011, responsible for the oversight of the largest integrated resort operator by revenue, accounting for some 13,000 hotel rooms and 30,000 employees.

Prior to Sands, Tracy served as president and CEO of Capital Gaming, a multi-jurisdictional manager of regional casinos, as well as president and CEO of the Trump Organization, where he was responsible for managing 12,500 employees, 3,000 luxury hotel rooms and 240,000 square feet of casino space.

In October 2014, Harvard Business Review named Tracy as one of "The Best-Performing CEOs in

the World" in its annual top-100 ranking.

"As the former CEO of Sands China Ltd and CEO of the Trump Organization, Tracy brings more than 30 years of proven gaming, hospitality and integrated resort experience to Hard Rock," said Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock International, as cited in the statement.

"We are confident in Tracy's ability to lead the company's efforts in Japan and we look forward to seeing our business continue to grow under his leadership," he added.

The statement also noted that the appointment of Tracy and the launch of Hard Rock International's Japan division confirm the company's "expansion efforts and commitment to growth in Asia." **DB**



Edward Tracy

LEGAL WISE BY MdME



João Encarnação*

AVOIDING THE PITFALLS OF PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

The Macau Real Estate market is reviving at an accelerated pace. A year-on-year comparison last December shows the average price increased 32%, and the number of property transactions more than doubled.

However, a market frenzy is conducive to rushed decisions in detriment of proper planning and risk assessment, and few people know enough of finance, real estate and the law to make an informed decision. Therefore, reputable mediation, proper financial guidance, and technically sound legal advice are pillars of calculated investment in the property market.

In order to find the right property, there are several reputable real estate agencies and brokers in Macau, who usually charge a one-off service fee of 1% of the purchase price, to be paid by the party being assisted – if both parties are assisted by the same broker, each shall pay 1%. This brokerage/agency fee will usually be payable as soon as any agreement is signed between the seller and buyer (even

on a provisional basis), regardless of whether the purchase goes through.

After identifying a suitable property, buyers should request a valuation of the same from more than one bank, not only to assess the perceived market value of the property, but also to determine which bank can provide them the maximum loan/mortgage – up to the limit of 70% of the unit's price or value (whichever is lower), under the Banking Regulatory Authority's directives – and the lowest interest rates and monthly repayments. Most Macau banks will be happy to assist with this exercise at no cost, or at a relatively small charge.

Purchasers should keep in mind that Stamp Duty (transaction tax) will be levied on the total price of the transaction upon execution of a promissory agreement, and be payable within 30 days of signing of the respective agreement, even if only a small deposit has been put forward.

The final stage of a property ownership transfer requires Notary intervention, but up to that stage legal

representation or assistance is not mandatory. However, the complexity of the different land holding regimes – leasehold versus freehold – and of the contracts involved – mediation agreement, promissory sales/purchase agreement, loan agreement, property insurance, etc. – require a clear understanding of the parties' rights and duties under said contracts. First-time purchasers or sellers should avoid signing on impulse, and seek independent confirmation that any given document sufficiently protects their position and is in line with the common practice and legal provisions of Macau. In this regard, confirmation should be sought that the person(s) appearing as the seller(s) on the documents are indeed the owners of the property and can dispose of the same freely; that the property has no registered encumbrances; and that no irrevocable PoA for disposal of the property has been issued to a third party.

Furthermore, buyers should be aware of several related concepts and

of some issues that commonly arise during or after purchase, such as the net and gross areas of the property; the special transaction tax which becomes payable upon reselling the property within the two years immediately following the purchase (which can amount to between 10 and 20% of the sales price); the additional 10% tax payable by non-Macau ID holders; and whether the property is under a current lease agreement, which by law shall continue in force until its term.

Finally, due to the peculiarities of the Macau real estate environment, buyers are advised to request information on facts that may have an impact on the resale price, such as the age of the property, whether maintenance of the building is being carried out regularly and the management fees are paid, the amount of the monthly management fees, and the yearly cost of the government land lease (if any).

We know that for most buyers, the burden involved in purchasing a property with their hard-earned money is not to be taken lightly, so good preparation goes a long way to protecting and maximizing their investment.

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Tourists detained for filming overcharging taxi driver

A family was stranded in a police station on Monday after they filmed the plate number of a local taxi driver who was allegedly overcharging them.

In the Facebook group of International Ladies Club of Macau, a member, who is a friend of the family, explained that the driver was charging them MOP100 for the ride from The Venetian to Wynn Palace.

Dissatisfied with the fee, the woman took a video of the taxi's plate number and their conversation.

The taxi driver, who thought he was captured in the video, then reported the incident to the police.

Since the family does not speak the local language, the police took them to a police station in Taipa following the taxi driver's accusations.

The family, who resides in Hong Kong, was detained in



the station for nearly six hours.

Yesterday, the family friend commented on her Facebook post, stating that the taxi driver had made false allegations.

"After all it was false allegations the taxi driver made, [because] after the lawyer came and checked the phone, there [was] no video of the taxi driver's face, only the plate

number and conversation they had," she posted.

According to her, a police officer asked the family whether they wanted to charge the taxi driver for making a false

accusation, which the family declined.

The Times contacted the couple, however they refused to disclose any information regarding the incident, as advised by their lawyer.

According to the husband, who is a British national, his Filipina wife is still under investigation by local authorities and considered a possible suspect.

"As much as we're still upset and irritated, [...] we can't talk about what happened in the police station," the husband lamented.

Meanwhile, the Facebook post drew support for the family, and netizens also criticized rogue taxi drivers, stating the incident was terrible and awful.

"This story should be taken to papers to expose how ridiculous a system this is and hopefully something can be done about rogue taxi drivers," said one.

"Macau's Tourism!" said another.

A netizen even slammed police authorities, stating: "I think it's not just the taxi driver here. The police take action way too quick without looking at all the evidence." LV

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

Public hospital starts inquiry into incorrect drug prescription



A case of an incorrect dosage of medicine being prescribed to a child in the public hospital (CHCSJ) has been acknowledged by the hospital's administration. The hospital has started an internal inquiry in order to discover how the incident came about, according to a CHCSJ press statement.

In the same statement, the hospital explained that the incident occurred on January 26 around 7.30 p.m., when a 6-year-old boy went to the pediatric emergency room and received a prescription for a dosage of medication that was later found to be a mistake. The hospital administration also noted that after

the report from the mother on social media, the medicine has been returned to the hospital and exchanged for the proper dosage.

The case has been reported by CHCSJ as a 'near-accident.' An internal inquiry has been initiated in order to address prescription procedures, as well as safety, prevention and control measures. The statement noted that the hospital's drug safety team will strengthen the enforcement of the electronic drug prescription system, which includes an alert system for situations where there might be an exaggerated medication prescription and a system to help identify mistaken prescriptions. RM

CE makes positive self-assessment in CNY message

THE Chief Executive (CE) Chui Sai On pledged to step up efforts to promote economic diversification and enhance social wellbeing during his Lunar New Year Message for the Year of the Rooster, delivered on Friday.

Reviewing the accomplishments of the Year of the Monkey, Chui noted that the government had completed the formulation of Macau's first ever Five-Year Development

Plan. The CE said that the government had been able to maintain Macau's economic and social stability and its strong fiscal reserves, while prioritizing projects concerning the enhancement of social wellbeing.

Separately, on the same day, Chui claimed to have no knowledge about the plan reported by Hong Kong media of merging Macau, Zhuhai, and neighboring regions. "Until now, neither my

position nor my office have received such information," he said.

Chui noted that if he had received any information regarding said topic, he would be happy to share it with the public and to hear their opinions on the matter.

Chui remarked that Macau's cooperation with Guangdong is being enhanced and emphasized that Macau is a special administrative region in the nation, meaning that it



must comply with the one country – two systems policy.

ONE SHOT NEWS



The Macau Public Security Police Force (PSP) enforced measures for crowd control in several areas of the city, particularly in the historical center (pictured). Such measures went into force yesterday between 2 and 6 p.m.

Over 1.2 million trips recorded during CNY

During the first three days of the Chinese New Year holiday, 1.21 million people passed through the city's various border gates, according to figures provided by the Public Security Police Force (PSP). On last Friday and Saturday, 770,000 border crossings were registered. PSP expected a peak in the number of tourist arrivals on Sunday and today. Yesterday until 5 p.m., 197,000 arrivals were recorded. PSP put into place human traffic control measures at several of the city's most visited spots, including the Ruins of St. Paul and the Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro.

UM team places 2nd in math contest

A team of postgraduate students from the University of Macau (UM) Faculty of Science and Technology was awarded second prize at the 13th National Postgraduate Mathematic Contest in Modelling, according to a statement from UM. The team was formed by PhD student Guo Li and masters students Wu Yinwen and Kong Lingning. Led by assistant professor Chen Long from the Department of Computer and Information Science, the team chose the "genome-wide association study" in the contest. "By applying the sparse linear model, the team designed a mathematical method to find disease-related genes in the human DNA and achieved good results in the analysis of test data," UM said in its statement. The contest attracted nearly 9,000 teams from universities in China, UM added.

EDUCATION

St Paul celebrates 46th anniversary

ST PAUL'S School held its 46th anniversary celebration last week, along with the inauguration of the "Bishop Jose Lai Garden" on the institution's rooftop.

The celebration featured performances conducted by the students and speeches made by St Paul's School principal Fr Alejandro Salcedo, Bishop José Lai and Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) director Leong Lai.

In his address, Bishop Lai said that the newly inaugurated garden serves as a reminder for the students to be more aware of nature.

The school hoped to connect students and the community with the garden, in order to provide a place where education can be fostered.

Fr Salcedo told the Times that the institution is currently implementing a three-year project that aims to discover "new ways of teaching."

"We are focusing on, asi-



Fr Salcedo (left) and Bishop José Lai

de from technology, a new way of teaching [and] how teachers have to deliver the

message," said Fr Salcedo. He added that the school has strived to encourage

their teachers to change their mentality in educating students.

The school previously launched such a project to Primary 4 students and above, and also now has plans to launch a one-to-one computer project catering for K1 to Primary 3 students.

"In education, every time and every day is new. Society changes [so] education has to change. It has to follow the society," the principal said.

When questioned on the plans for the Canidrome, Leong Lai replied that the site would be used for social and cultural interest as previously announced by the Chief Executive.

She said the bureau plans the school system based on social and demographic changes so as to cooperate with the "Blue Sky Project."

Leong Lai recalled the "Blue Sky Project" involves several projects including demolitions and renovations of schools, as well as expansion of former institution spaces.

The project was initiated by Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam with the purpose of improving the environment of local schools, and ensuring that schools would have outdoor playgrounds. **LV**

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Filipino boxer defends IBF title



Ng Kuok Kun (a.k.a. "The Macau Kid") won again

FILIPINO junior bantamweight boxer Jerwin "Pretty Boy" Ancajas successfully defended his title against Mexican challenger Jose Rodriguez on Sunday night during the 5th CCTV Chinese Lunar New Year Cup – IBF World Championship, hosted at the Cotai Arena at The Venetian Macao. According to boxing analysts, Ancajas put on an impressive show against seasoned foe Rodriguez, who was forced to exit

the fight at the start of the eighth round due to an injury to his arm. The injury was caused by an early series of strikes by Ancajas at the start of the bout. Ancajas will now retain the title for the second consecutive year after defeating Puerto Rican contender McJoe Arroyo last year with a unanimous decision from the judges. This latest win boosted Ancajas' record to 13 successive wins from a total of 26, 17 of which

were knockouts. Meanwhile, his opponent arrived at 32 wins and five losses. "All my sacrifices in training really paid off," Ancajas said after exiting the ring, according to BusinessWorld Publishing Corporation. "I would like to thank God for this victory, for giving me the strength, both mind and body. I would like to thank as well all my supporters in my training that stood by me throughout training and here in

Macau. And, of course, thanks to Boss Manny Pacquiao for giving me the opportunity to fight at this level." Ancajas fought under the banner of fellow compatriot Manny Pacquiao's MP Promotions. The 25-year-old is off to a promising start with his latest win and first triumphant title defense. His last defeat was in March 2012. According to event organizers, this is the first time that CCTV has cooperated with the international sporting organization to forge CCTV-5's Chinese Lunar New Year Celebration television program. The competition saw a total of 24 fighters compete during two nights of bouts. Hailing from China, France, Japan, Mexico, Romania, the Philippines and Thailand, the fighters competed for a number of golden belts from categories such as World Junior Champion, World Female Flyweight Champion, Intercontinental Heavyweight Champion and China Lightweight Champion. One of the fighters was local Ng Kuok Kun, also known as "The Macau Kid," who beat Thailand's Komsan Polsan on points.

Seven motorbikes burn during fire accident

Yesterday in the early morning around 4 a.m., a fire took place outside Nam Sun Garden Building, at Estrada Governador Albano de Oliveira in Taipa, completely burning seven motorbikes. Another six were partially burnt as the fire spread to two nearby shops. No injuries have been reported. The Fire Service Bureau believes that the cause of the fire is ambiguous and has forwarded the case to the Judiciary Police. Last month, more than 80 motorbikes and several bicycles were damaged by fire. A local man was arrested for causing the accident by carelessly throwing a lit cigarette.

Counterfeit currency scheme uncovered

The Judiciary Police (PJ) has arrested a man who allegedly traded around 100 counterfeit USD banknotes. TDM reported that the man did not act alone and was part of a counterfeit currency scheme. "The fake banknotes have vague features. The words USD are visible clearly in the real banknotes. Subject to UV lighting, the security line on the real banknotes shows neon reaction. That isn't visible with the fraudulent notes. The watermark on the fake banknotes appears even without being subject to UV lighting. It proves that it was added afterwards," a PJ spokesperson said.

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opinion

David Fickling, Bloomberg

LUCKY LADIES ASIDE, DON'T BET AGAINST THIS HOUSE

One woman in Macau is doing very well betting against casino mogul Sheldon Adelson.

A gambler who "wins every day" weighed on Las Vegas Sands Corp.'s fourth-quarter earnings, Chief Operating Officer Rob Goldstein told an investor call this week. Shareholders with an eye to the bottom line should be wary of doing the same.

For one thing, while the entire Macau casino sector is looking rather richly valued at present, Sands is in the unfamiliar position of being the cheapest of the bunch.

Some analysts have put this discount down to Sands China Ltd.'s breakneck pace of expansion last year. Revenue from Sands Cotai Central and the Venetian fell by USD116 million in the December quarter, even as the newly opened Parisian resort added \$344 million, the company reported this week. The new site was "cannibalizing" the other properties' mass-market revenue, Richard Huang, an analyst at Nomura Securities Co., told Bloomberg News.

That seems excessive. Cannibalism is generally resorted to only in times of extreme famine - but Macau is experiencing something of a feast.

One way of looking at this is to examine hotel occupancy. While government restrictions on gaming-table licenses are a well-recognized constraint on the territory's gambling industry, one of Macau's biggest problems of late has been that it simply can't accommodate all the people who'd like to come.

Most hoteliers give themselves a pat on the back if they achieve an occupancy rate much above 75 percent, but Macau's rate has dipped to that level in only two out of the past 83 months.

While the opening of 4,700 new rooms at the Parisian and Wynn Macau Ltd.'s Wynn Palace last September caused the rate to drop briefly from 90 percent to 82 percent, by November it was back up at 86 percent. If you're hoping to stay at a Wynn Macau or MGM China Holdings Ltd. property for Chinese New Year on Saturday, you're out of luck.

Sands China is an outsized beneficiary of this dynamic because it's the biggest hotelier, with about a third of the city's 35,500 available rooms.

Occupancy rates at its properties would be considered insanely high anywhere on earth except Macau: 94.2 percent at the Venetian in the December quarter, and 91.1 percent at the Parisian just months after it was opened.

Sands China has the same problem that its Macau peers have: a business model at the mercy of Chinese bureaucrats. A crackdown on high-rollers has hurt the returns on casino investments that were made on the basis of attracting such players. But Sands has been pitching for the mass market in Macau for years now, and analysts expect return on equity over the next 12 months to sit somewhere north of 30 percent.

After a rough few years, gaming revenue in the Asian casino hub has been on the rise for six months now. Investors should always take care of stocks on high valuations, but there are better candidates for those wanting to take a bearish punt on China's casinos. Betting against Sands China is like betting against Macau itself.

Local hotels booked out



Lisa Pham

CASINO operators are wagering that high-rollers and recreational gamblers alike will be spending their "lai see" money in Macau as hotel rooms fill up for Chinese New Year.

Rooms at Wynn Resorts Ltd.'s USD4.4 billion Palace casino featuring a fountain show synchronized to music, as well as those at the Wynn Macau, Banyan Tree, StarWorld and the Ritz-Carlton had at least 80 percent of their standard hotel rooms booked over the Jan. 27 to Feb. 6 period, according to a Morgan Stanley survey. Hotel room rates at the Venetian, Sands Macao and Sheraton have risen at least 20 percent for this Chinese New Year compared to last year, according to the survey, conducted on Jan. 16.

Packed hotels during the lunar new year holiday will help the world's largest gambling market as it emerges from a two-year slump. The industry

is reinventing itself with more family-friendly resorts and attractions to draw recreational spenders and casual gamblers.

We're looking for strong hotel bookings with rooms filled with more high-value customers.

GRANT GOVERTSEN
UNION GAMING GROUP ANALYST

"We're looking for strong hotel bookings with rooms filled with more high-value customers than we've seen in recent history, which should lead to very strong Chinese New Year gross gaming revenue," said Macau

-based Union Gaming Group analyst Grant Govertsen. "Casino operators are bullish about their VIP and premium mass market businesses for the upcoming holiday period."

The gaming revenue recovery extended to a fifth month in December and is expected to rise 8.5 percent this month from a year ago, according to the median estimate of eight analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News.

A separate survey by Deutsche Bank AG showed that six of Sands China Ltd.'s seven hotels were fully booked for at least three of the days during the Chinese New Year period. It's a sharp improvement from the National Day holidays in October known as Golden Week, analyst Karen Tang said in a

note Jan. 23.

VIP gaming, measured by revenue from the baccarat card games favored by high-stakes gamblers from China, rose 13 percent in the last three months of 2016, marking a turnaround since the first quarter of 2014. China's crackdown on corruption and illegal outflows, which scared off high stakes players, prompted casino operators to shift their focus to the leisure market.

Wynn Resorts opened Wynn Palace, which attracts more premium gamblers, in August and Las Vegas Sands Corp. began operating the \$2.9 billion Parisian Macau in September. MGM Resorts International is planning to open the \$3.1 billion MGM Cotai in the second half of this year. **Bloomberg**

Room rates competition

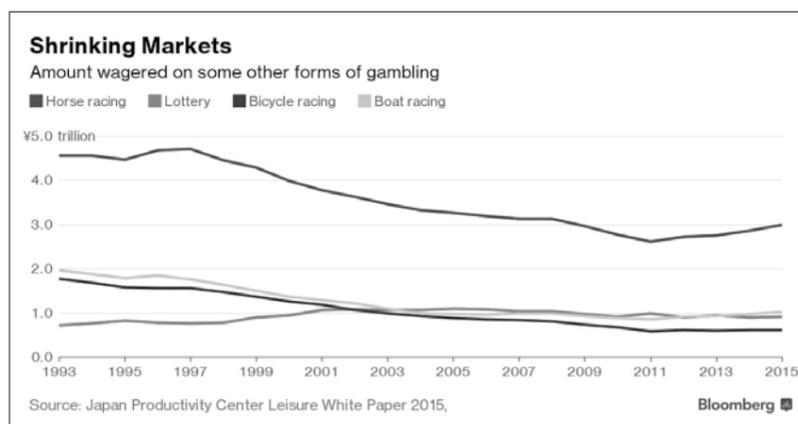
HOTEL operators trying to fill their rooms are lowering their rates amid the intense competition.

"Studio City rooms are heavily discounted compared to most peers," Morgan Stanley analysts led by Praveen Choudhary wrote in a Jan. 17 note, citing its survey of hotel bookings for the Chinese New Year period. "Although the opening of Parisian as well as VIP rooms in November helped room utilization at Studio City, we think the property is still facing competition from Parisian and Palace."

Hotel occupancy levels at the Wynn Palace are at the mid 90 percent range, the company said in an investor call after earnings were released last week. Wynn Macau posted a 96 percent occupancy rate in the fourth quarter.

The newer resorts may be cannibalizing overall revenue of older properties. Sands China last week said its Parisian property generated net revenue of USD344 million on its first full quarter of operation. Meanwhile, its two other properties - The Venetian and Sands Cotai Central - saw their combined revenue drop by \$116 million in the final three months of 2016.

Japan is a gambling hotspot even before casinos arrive



Emi Nobuhiro

EVEN before Shinzo Abe's government opened the door to potential casino development in Japan, the

nation's gamblers wagered 23.3 trillion yen (USD203 billion) on Pachinko and slot machines in 2015.

Even though that market is shrinking as

the population ages and finds other forms of entertainment, and the amount bet is down by almost a third from the peak in 2005, it's still equivalent to about 4

percent of Japan's gross domestic product.

In addition to Pachinko and slot machines, you can legally bet on boat, horse and bicycle races, motorcycle speedway, and buy lottery tickets.

The financial attraction of casinos for Japan is obvious, especially if they can help lure more Chinese tourists, keep them in the country longer and increase the amount of money they spend.

While parliament in December passed legislation to allow casinos, a separate bill for the creation of so-called integrated resorts must

be agreed upon before things move forward. Wrangling over this could mean no casinos in time for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. There's also debate on whether casinos should only be open for foreign tourists.

Japan had no such qualms in the postwar era, when gambling venues spread and the revenue they produced flowed into government coffers to help pay for reconstruction.

If casinos are built and allow Japanese customers to gamble, they will attract some people away from Pachinko, but probably won't have much effect on the other types of gambling, according to Masatoshi Yamamoto, an analyst of regional government, gambling and finances at Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting. **Bloomberg**

Ken Ritter, Las Vegas

Adelson pulls out of Raiders-Vegas stadium deal

BILLIONAIRE casino mogul Sheldon Adelson pulled out of a deal to build a USD1.9 billion domed stadium for the Oakland Raiders in Las Vegas.

The move comes on the heels of a team proposal to pay \$1 a year in rent and operate the stadium, and it deprives the project of a chief financial backer as officials seek to bring professional football to Las Vegas for the first time.

Adelson played an instrumental role in the effort to lure the Raiders, which eventually grew into a \$750 million commitment of taxpayer money to the deal.

He and his family had pledged \$650 million — an amount the team will have to seek from other sources. The Raiders have promised \$500 million.

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval's office said the lease agreement submitted last week would have the Raiders shoulder \$1.15 billion of the cost of the stadium, and accept operation responsibilities and risk.

In a statement, the Raiders acknowledged Adelson's involvement in the project over the past year and promised to make good on owner Mark Davis' vow to move to Las Vegas.

Adelson's withdrawal means the Raiders will go forward with a decision pending from NFL



Sheldon Adelson

owners who must approve the move.

It also means the team won't have to ask team owners to waive a rule prohibiting casino operators from having ownership roles in teams.

Team officials said previously they were enlisting investment bank Goldman Sachs for the project.

The lease proposal would have

the Raiders operate the 65,000-seat stadium that would be built at a site yet to be decided, probably just off the Las Vegas Strip.

In Adelson's terse statement, the chief executive of Las Vegas Sands Corp. declared that he had been shut out of talks that led to the lease document presented to the Clark County Stadium Authority.

"We were not only excluded

from the proposed agreement," Adelson said, "we weren't even aware of its existence."

Sands owns the Venetian and Palazzo resorts and a convention center on the Las Vegas Strip, and several casinos in the Chinese gambling enclave of Macau. Adelson is a big backer of Republican Party causes, and his family also owns the local newspaper, the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

"It's clear the Raiders have decided their path for moving to Las Vegas does not include the Adelson family," Adelson's statement said. "So, regrettably, we will no longer be involved in any facet of the stadium discussion."

Stadium Authority Chairman Steve Hill, who also serves as Sandoval's development chief, vowed to "continue to ensure the stadium project is developed in a manner consistent with the clear direction of Nevada lawmakers."

The plan isn't only to bring an NFL franchise to Nevada, but also to build a stadium for UNLV football "and enhance our state's core tourism economy," Hill said.

Sandoval, a Republican who called lawmakers into a special session to approve tax funding for the project, thanked the Adelson family "for their role in bringing a publicly-owned stadium to Las Vegas."

"It is unfortunate that they were unable to come to terms with the Raiders," the governor said.

He added that terms of the law passed to fund the public portion of the project won't change, "and the state's contribution will not increase as a result of this announcement."

Clark County Commission Chairman Steve Sisolak, who has been intimately involved in the stadium and Raiders plan, characterized Adelson's departure as "a significant setback [...] unless Goldman Sachs has someone lined up to step into Adelson's place."

"I do not know how the other owners are going to react to this," Sisolak said.

Any relocation to Las Vegas must be approved by 24 of the 32 NFL team owners. A vote is expected during league meetings in March in Phoenix. **AP**

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Bauhinia Court, Hellene Gardens Appealing Apartment

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Rate: HKD 4,6416sq ft

Three good size bedrooms. Master bedroom with ensuite. Open style kitchen, made larger by incorporating the original maids quarters and back balcony. Living and dining area has a great layout and built in balcony. Views from the living room across the Coloane mountains and from the kitchen over the swimming pool towards the South China Sea. With only 7 floors in this block this apartment can be considered a low rise building. Renovated 10 years ago the property could benefit from a face lift although with some TCL it could also be a great rental property.



Nam Long, Taipa

(Ref: 16095500)
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Rate: HKD 7,378sq ft

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Anousha Sakoui, Yuji Nakamura

Sony CEO pushes to revive movie studio

THIS week Kazuo Hirai, chief executive officer at Sony Corp., will make his appearance at its Culver City, California based film and TV studio in hopes a more hands-on approach will turn around its fortunes.

He will join staffers walking past the RV turned meth lab made famous in the hit TV show "Breaking Bad" and under the giant rainbow built in homage to the "Wizard of Oz" movie filmed on the lot. Hirai is expected to spend approximately two weeks a month at the studio, a person familiar with his plans said.

The move to spend more time at the studio follows a tumultuous period of box office failures, a major cyberattack, the resignation of studio chief Michael Lynton this month and then a USD1 billion write-down this week. By Thursday, Hirai will take a seat in his new office on the lot's new Morita building - named after Sony co-founder Akio Morita. He will take on the mantle of co-CEO of Sony Entertainment and begin the search for a new leader at the business.

"It is all about finding the magic and making movies that excite people," Barton Crockett, analyst with FBR & Co said in an interview.

That will be a challenge as competitors like Walt Disney Co. have over recent years invested billions of dollars into their movie businesses and the box office spoils have become concentrated



Kazuo Hirai, president and CEO of Sony Corp

among fewer, bigger budget movies.

"I don't think it's going to be something that is accomplished quickly. You have to make big investments now if you are going to be one of the major studios," Crockett said. "It seems like you have got to swing for the fences just to get consumers to show up."

While revenue at the entertainment division has grown steadily for the last five years, almost all the growth has come from television and media, not films. In June, Sony cut the unit's reve-

nue projections for fiscal year 2018 by about 5 percent to roughly \$10 billion and its operating profit margin to between 6 and 7 percent from 7 to 8 percent.

In an internal memo, Hirai and Lynton said that the company was still committed to Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) - Sony's movie and television production and distribution business - playing down reports that it might sell the division.

Chief Financial Officer Kenichiro Yoshida has helped engineer a turnaround in Tokyo by trimming more than 40,000 jobs in

the last five years and selling ailing businesses like laptops and batteries. The film division was largely spared during the restructuring, but will now see "a culture of financial responsibility," according to Hirai's memo to employees.

The studio has already been working to expand its global reach - particularly tilting to China. It struck a co-financing and marketing deal with billionaire Wang Jianlin's Dalian Wanda Group Co. in September, to help push its movies into what will soon be the world's biggest film market.

Hirai said in the memo the value of high quality content is continuing to rise. At an "all-hands" meeting at the end of the year, Hirai said the company would continue to invest in the business to increase profits but that would take time.

"At a time when there's huge demand for content, the point is to deliver the content tied to the right audiences at the right price," said Thong.

In picking a new CEO for the business, Sony will need an executive who can keep its TV business on track, resuscitate its movie studio and generate more

revenue abroad. Among the possible candidates is Disney's former chief operating officer Tom Staggs, but no one has been approached yet, the person said. Staggs declined to comment.

Sony said the majority of the goodwill write-down dates back to its 1989 acquisition of Columbia Pictures, the main movie label of the film studio. The company plans to reveal the impact on its forecasts on Feb. 2.

The impairment was triggered by downgrading the projection for its motion picture business, primarily due to lower expectations for home entertainment and the estimated profitability of its films.

Last year sales of DVDs fell 9.55 percent year on year, but digital sales rose 15.18 percent, leading to a total for U.S. home entertainment spending to be up 1.36 percent, according to data from The Digital Entertainment Group. The decline in demand for DVDs slowed from 2015 when sales fell 12 percent.

Sony has been digging into its archives for properties to revive with mixed results. A move to reboot the "Ghostbusters" franchise failed last year. Sony will try again with a revival of "Jumanji" due in the U.S. in December, while also attempting sequels to "Blade Runner" and "Trainspotting."

There are high hopes about Sony's collaboration with Marvel Entertainment to breath new life into its "Spider-Man" franchise. A new movie is due out in 2017. **Bloomberg**

HK shares record best month since March

Justina Lee

HONG Kong shares posted their biggest monthly gain in 10 months, buoyed by a rebound in the offshore yuan and optimism that U.S. economic growth will pick up.

The Hang Seng Index closed little changed Fri-

day, recording a 6.2 percent advance for January, the most since March. The offshore yuan appreciated 1.5 percent this month, set for the biggest gain since October 2011. Equity trading in Hong Kong ended at noon Friday and will resume on Feb. 1 after the Lunar New Year holidays.

Chinese onshore markets are shut through Feb. 2.

A 1.3 percent drop in the Bloomberg Dollar Spot Index so far this year has brought some relief to Chinese assets after accelerated declines in the yuan and increased capital outflows weighed on the nation's bonds and equities

in December. Global shares rallied this month - with the Dow Jones Industrial Average reaching a record - amid strengthening earnings and optimism that President Donald Trump will boost fiscal spending in the U.S. Hong Kong's currency peg to the U.S. dollar means the city has to follow

American monetary policy.

The Hong Kong Hang Seng Properties Index has jumped 9.5 percent last month in the biggest increase since July. Hang Lung Properties Ltd. surged 17 percent in January, the biggest gain on the benchmark Hang Seng Index. China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd. climbed 12 percent, the most since April 2015.

A measure of home prices

rose to near a record high at the end of December, weathering an increase in U.S. interest rates and a stamp duty that was imposed in November. Hong Kong's residential property market is likely to hold up well in 2017, with a forecast 5 percent year-on-year rise in prices, Daiwa Capital Markets Hong Kong Ltd. analyst Jonas Kan wrote in a Jan. 26 note. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

MACAU TOWER HOLDS 2017 CHARITY WALK



The Macau Tower's Chinese New Year tradition, the Charity Walk, was held Monday. The Tower's stairs were opened for all to climb to the Observation

Deck for free.

Similar to previous years, the Charity Walk offered the "Strike it Rich" full course in the morning and the "Shortcut to Riches" half

course in the afternoon.

Participants of the former were challenged with the task of climbing 1,298 steps from ground level to the Adventure Deck on level 61, while those opting for the shortcut started from level 38.

The event had a high turnout of over 1,000 participants, who received lucky gift packs after completing the race. Donation boxes were placed at various spots throughout the Tower to raise funds for Macau Red Cross, according to a statement issued by the Macau Tower.

During CNY, locals and tourists can also take part in a series of games and lucky draws at the Macau Tower for the chance to receive gifts and discounts and ring in a prosperous New Year.

JETCO TO OFFER MOBILE MONEY TRANSFER IN MACAU

Hong Kong's Joint Electronic Teller Services (Jetco), a joint venture between five banks, has teamed up with seven Macau banks to offer a dual-currency mobile money transfer service, 'Jetco Pay P2P'.

The new service will allow customers of the participating banks to transfer both HKD and MOP to account holders of all local participating banks using only the recipient's mobile number.

According to Telecomasia.net, the service will be gradually rolled out in Macau starting in the second half of 2017. Transactions will be protected through bank-grade security measures such as end-to-end encryption,



a dynamic pin pad and a device-binding verification feature.

"With the rapid development of Macau's economy in recent years, mobile phone penetration has also increased to nearly 200 percent, creating the perfect environment for the development of mobile payment services such as Jetco Pay P2P in the city," Jetco CEO Angus Choi said.

"Operating on our existing inter-

bank network, Jetco Pay P2P provides the most comprehensive cross-bank fund transfer service in town."

The seven participating banks are Banco Comercial De Macau, Banco Nacional Ultramarino, Tai Fung Bank, Bank of China - Macau Branch, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Macau, Luso International Banking and OCBC Wing Hang Bank.



Molten iron creates bursts of light at CNY show

INSIDE a dark amphitheater near China's Great Wall, four performers carry long, wooden spoons filled with molten iron. Each performer throws the iron against a giant wall. The iron lights up the night in an array of orange showers and

sparkles.

As the rolling booms of fireworks and firecrackers echoed across much of China for the Lunar New Year, this group of performers staged a celebration with the centuries-old custom of dashuhua, or

molten iron fireworks.

The tradition is a vestige of northeast China's steel-producing regions and a source of pride for generations of miners and their families.

Several groups in Beijing's countryside offer multiple per-

formances a week, and the shows are getting popular around China's Lunar New Year holiday. More than 50 spectators attended Saturday's show on a very cold January night.

As the audience started to arrive, 56-year-old Li Qingfa put on a cow-skin helmet, cow-skin shoes, and a sleeveless goat-skin jacket over thick cotton clothes. He and the other performers covered every part of their bodies.

"The performers may easily get hurt or scalded," Li said. "So good protection is a must."

The group practices and cleans the machinery required to produce the molten fireworks every day. Half an hour before, they turned on a large forge and placed several pieces of scrap iron inside. Molten iron began to slowly drip out.

Their show had five parts, interspersed with songs and dances. One part featured molten iron falling from the branches of a tree. The finale featured the four performers lighting up a wall.

"I have fallen in love with it," Li said. **AP**

MALAYSIAN authorities expanded the search for four Chinese tourists and a crew member still missing at sea days after their boat sank off Borneo island. Police detained the boat's owner and the surviving captain and crew member to assist the investigation.

Three Chinese died but 22 people were rescued, most of them after huddling together in the rough waters, wearing life vests and forming human chains, finally being saved by fishermen after more than 10 hours adrift.

Malaysia's Maritime Enforcement Agency said in a statement that the search area has been expanded by about four times to 1,500 square

Malaysia searching for passengers after tour boat sinks



nautical miles of the South China Sea off Sabah state. It said Brunei has also deployed a plane to search in its waters.

Government minister

Shahidan Kassim was reported by the national Bernama news agency as saying that the 20 Chinese tourists rescued were weak, shivering and sunburnt

but had sustained no serious injuries. The survivors were brought ashore late Sunday and hospitalized. Shahidan said rescuers were running out of time as one of the survivors had told authorities that one of the missing had died.

Their catamaran left Sabah's capital, Kota Kinabalu, Saturday morning to Pulau Mengalum, an island 60 kilometers west, and was reported missing about 12 hours later. Sabah police chief Ramli Din tweeted late Monday

that 27 Chinese tourists were on the vessel, rather than 28 as disclosed earlier. It had three crew members.

The captain and one crew member were rescued by another tourist boat Sunday afternoon, and fishermen found the 20 other survivors along with the three dead, two men and a woman, a few hours later. Authorities said the survivors had been adrift for 10 hours but didn't say when the boat sank or give other details.

The police chief said

the boat owner has been detained, along with the captain and surviving crew member, to assist the investigation. He didn't elaborate.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang in a statement Sunday expressed "profound condolences" to the affected families. Geng called on Malaysia to "continue to make all-out efforts in its search and rescue work," as well as to carry out an "impartial and objective" investigation into the accident.

Malaysia's Sabah and Sarawak states share Borneo island with Brunei and Indonesia's Kalimantan province.

Many Chinese travel abroad during the Lunar New Year holiday, which began Saturday. **AP**

Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo

JAPAN ORGANIZER

No history book at hotel during Asian Games

JAPANESE organizers for next month's Asian Winter Games said yesterday that contentious history books will be removed from guestrooms at a hotel that will be used to house athletes.

The organizers also said that Chinese athletes will stay at another hotel in accordance with a request from Beijing.

A rapidly growing Japanese hotel chain operator, APA Group, has faced criticism in China and elsewhere over a history book written by its owner which says the 1937 Nanjing Massacre involving Japanese soldiers was fabricated. Copies of the book are placed in the guestrooms at most of APA's nearly 400 hotels across Japan.

Japanese organizers and the hotel said they have agreed that all printed materials, including the book, will be removed from guestrooms at APA's Sapporo hotel during the Feb. 19-26 event.

Yasushi Suzuki, an official in charge of accommodations at the organizing committee, said it reminded the hotel on Monday to remove all printed materials unrelated to the games from its guestrooms, a condition the hotel agreed to last year ahead of the history book flap. APA said on its website yesterday it will comply with the request.

Only printed materials needed for the games are allowed inside hotel rooms during the event to ensure religious and political neutrality, Suzuki said.

AP PHOTO



Snow-covered vehicles are parked in front of APA Hotel in Sapporo

The organizers have also decided to put approximately 250 Chinese athletes in the Sapporo Prince Hotel, another

designated accommodation for the games, instead of APA at the request of Chinese Olympic authorities, Suzuki

said.

The issue is the latest dispute between the Asian neighbors over Japanese aggression be-

fore and during World War II. It follows recent tensions between Japan and South Korea over a Korean statue representing "comfort women" used for sex in Japanese military-linked wartime brothels from the 1930s to the war's end.

In the book, "The Real History of Japan: Theoretical Modern History II," APA president Toshio Motoya writes that the Nanjing Massacre

All printed materials, including the book, will be removed from guestrooms at APA's Sapporo hotel during the Feb. 19-26 event

is an "imaginary" event concocted by China to criticize Japan. The book also denies that Japan forced "comfort women" to provide sex to Japanese soldiers.

The wartime massacre of Chinese citizens by the Japanese military in Nanking, now called Nanjing, is one of the biggest flashpoints between the two countries. China says up to 300,000 people were killed, while Japanese nationalists put the number much lower or deny the massacre entirely. **AP**

BMI RESEARCH

Chinese nuclear power fleet seen overtaking US within decade

Stephen Stapczynski

CHINA'S rapid nuclear expansion will result in it overtaking the U.S. as the nation with the largest atomic power capacity by 2026, according to BMI Research.

The world's second biggest economy will almost triple its nuclear capacity to nearly 100 gigawatts by 2026, making it the biggest market globally, analysts said in a note dated Jan. 27. The nation added about 8 gigawatts of nuclear power last year, boosting its installed capacity to about 34 million kilowatts, according to BMI.



China has committed to boosting nuclear power, which accounted for about 1.7 percent of its total generation in 2015, to help reduce reliance on coal, which accounts for about two-thirds of the country's

primary energy. The nation has 20 reactors currently under construction, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Another 176 are either planned or proposed, far more than any other nation,

according to the World Nuclear Association.

"We expect growth to continue and China to emerge as one of the largest nuclear markets globally in terms of total installed capacity over the coming decade, as the huge pipeline of reactors that are planned, proposed or under construction gradually comes online," Georgina Hayden, head of energy and renewable research at BMI, said by e-mail. "Furthermore, by expanding its own domestic nuclear sector, the country will develop the expertise to export nuclear capabilities and nuclear tech-

nology abroad."

China General Nuclear Power Corp., along with its fellow state-run nuclear giant China National Nuclear Corp., is seeking to sell and build nuclear power plants across the globe as part of the country's efforts to export technology and surplus production capacity as it copes with a slowing domestic economy.

Coal's share in the nation's energy mix will gradually fall to just under 54 percent by 2026 from its current 70 percent, according to BMI.

"Nuclear additions are unlikely to slow in terms of absolute amount given the urgent priority to shift the generation mix away from thermal coal, today still over two thirds of output," Joseph Jacobelli, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence, said

We expect growth to continue and China to emerge as one of the largest nuclear markets globally.

GEORGINA HAYDEN
BMI RESEARCH

by e-mail. "Unlike solar and wind, where the construction cycle is typically short, nuclear's longer planning and construction timing allows for the nation's grid to better prepare the network and ensure dispatch and stability." **Bloomberg**

Premier says Trump ban doesn't affect Australia passport holders

Rod McGuirk, Canberra

THE White House had assured Australia that its passport holders won't be affected by President Donald Trump's executive order suspending immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries, the Australian prime minister said yesterday as he resisted pressure to join other Western leaders in publicly denouncing the travel ban.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull made the announcement after 15-year-old Pouya Ghadirian said the U.S. Consulate in Melbourne refused him a visa Monday to go on a school trip to the United States because he had an Iranian passport as well as an Australian passport.

"Our ambassador has just called me to say that he's had assurances, confirmation from the White House, that Australian passport-holders — regardless of their place of birth or whether they are dual nationals or whether they hold another passport — will remain welcome to come and go to the United States in the usual way," Turnbull told Sky News television.

Turnbull said the case of Ghadirian, who was born in Melbourne to Iranian parents, could be reconsidered by American authorities, although he was not familiar with the reasons behind the visa refusal.

Trump signed an executive order last week banning immigration for citizens of seven Muslim-majority nations, including Iran, for 90 days.

Turnbull has rejected calls from political opponents to condemn the order as leaders of Germany, Britain, France and



Malcolm Turnbull

Canada have done. Turnbull said he would not publicly comment on U.S. domestic policy.

"When I have frank advice to give to an American president, I give it privately, as good friends

should, as wise prime ministers do when they want to ensure they are best able to protect Australians and Australia's national interest," Turnbull told reporters.

"Others can engage in commentary. My job is to stand up for Australia, Australian interests and deliver. That's what we've done today," he added, referring to the Australian

exemption from the executive order.

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, who last May said "Trump's views are just barking mad on some issues," told the National Press Club yesterday that Turnbull's silence could be interpreted as agreement.

"The job of prime minister is not worth having if you won't stand up for what you believe in," Shorten said.

Some observers suspect Turnbull has held his tongue because he is grateful to Trump for agreeing last weekend to keep an Obama administration promise to resettle mostly Muslim refugees rejected by Australia.

The Obama administration had agreed to resettle an unspecified number of refugees held on the Pacific island nations of Nauru and Papua New Guinea. Australia refuses to resettle any refugee who comes by boat.

The agreement had seemed to be in doubt under the Republican administration because of Trump's comments about Muslim immigration.

Turnbull described Trump agreeing to resettle the refugees — mostly from Africa, Asia and the Middle East — as "a very good result." **AP**

INDONESIA

US travel ban could hurt fight against terrorism

INDONESIA, the world's most populous Muslim nation, says President Donald Trump's ban on citizens of seven Muslim countries from entering the U.S. could hurt the global fight against terrorism.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Armanatha Nasir said that the policy is the sovereign right of the U.S. but Indonesia, which is not one of the directly affected countries, "deeply regrets" it and believes it will have a "negative impact on global efforts to fight terrorism" and the handling of refugees.

"It is wrong to associate radicalism and terrorism with a particular religion," Nasir said in a statement. "Efforts to combat terrorism must be carried out by promoting international cooperation, including in addressing

the root causes of terrorism."

Trump signed an executive order placing a 90-day ban on travel to the U.S. by citizens of Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia or Yemen, and a 120-day suspension of the U.S. refugee program. Syrians are indefinitely blocked from entry.

Some governments including U.S. allies have criticized the policy, which caused chaos at U.S. airports on the weekend as travelers were detained and sparked protests.

The Indonesian government has advised its citizens in the United States to be familiar with their rights and respect local laws. It said its missions are monitoring any developments that could affect Indonesians in the U.S. **AP**



THE United States is not building any weapons depot anywhere in the Philippines, the U.S. ambassador said yesterday, denying the basis on which President Rodrigo Duterte threatened to abrogate a 2014 defense pact that allows U.S. forces to temporarily base in local camps.

Ambassador Sung Kim said that nothing is being planned now that even closely resembles a weapons depot.

"I think perhaps some misinformation was given to the president and that is why he made the statement expressing concerns

Ambassador says US not building arms depot in Philippines

about a possible weapons depot," Kim told a forum of business leaders. "The fact is, we are not building a weapons depot anywhere in the Philippines."

Projects being pursued under the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement have to do with disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, he added.

Kim also pointed out that the agreement "pro-

vides for us to build facilities and structures in 5 Filipino bases" and it is "hard to imagine that we would be able to do anything on Filipino bases that are not acceptable to the Filipino people, Filipino leadership."

Duterte on Sunday identified three areas where U.S. forces were supposedly bringing in armaments, including the western province of Palawan, which

faces the disputed South China Sea.

He said he would not allow the Americans to store weapons in local camps under the two countries' defense pact because the Philippines may get entangled if fighting erupts between China and the U.S.

"I'm serving notice to the armed forces of the United States, do not do it, I will not allow it," Du-

terte said in the televised news conference after meeting top military and police officials.

He said if the U.S. builds a depot "I will consider a review and maybe ultimately abrogate" the pact all together.

Duterte has moved to rebuild once-frosty relations with China and has vowed to make Philippine foreign policy less dependent on the U.S. He



US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim

has repeatedly threatened to scale back military exercises with American troops and stop agreements that allow U.S. forces to visit. **AP**

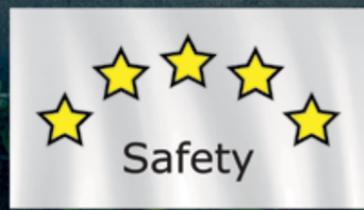
The New Tiguan2. All grown-up



Active Info Display



1.4TSI with 150HP



5 star NCAP



LED Headlight



3D LED Taillight

The Tiguan 2 is a great all-grown-up SUV with distinctive styling which redefines its class and confidently points the way to the future. The new generation Tiguan is the first sport utility vehicle to be based on the modular transverse matrix (MQB), and it sets new standards in design, comfort and functionality. In doing so it of course remains capable of off-road, with a rugged all-wheel drive system that includes premium class technology for use on and off the highway. The Tiguan 2 is, then, both more SUV and more than an SUV.



Volkswagen

PS : 1) The pictures are for reference only.

2) In the event of any dispute, Volkswagen Hong Kong reserves the right to make the final decision.

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This image provided by Joby Aviation shows the conceptual design of the Joby S2 Electric VTOL PAV aircraft

A COMMUTER'S DREAM

Entrepreneurs race to develop flying car

Joan Lowy, Washington

EVEN before George Jetson Entranced kids with his cartoon flying car, people dreamed of soaring above traffic congestion. Inventors and entrepreneurs have long tried and failed to make the dream a reality, but that may be changing.

Nearly a dozen companies around the globe, including some with deep pockets such as European aircraft maker Airbus, are competing to be the first to develop a new kind of aircraft that will enable commuters to glide above crowded roadways. A few of the aircraft under development are cars with wings that unfold for flight, but most aren't cars at all. Typically they take off and land vertically like helicopters. Rather than a single, large main rotor, they have multiple small rotors. Each rotor is operated by a battery-powered electric motor instead of a conventional aircraft piston engine.

It's no sure bet that flying-car dreams will turn into reality. There are many obstacles, including convincing regulators that the aircraft are safe, figuring out how to handle thousands of new low-flying aircraft over cities without collisions and developing batteries that will keep them aloft long enough to be useful.

But entrepreneurs are moving forward. They see a vast potential market for "air taxis" and personally owned small aircraft to transport people from the fringes of metropolitan areas to city centers as urban areas grow more congested and people spend more time stuck in traffic. They envision tens of thousands of one or two-person flying taxis delivering passengers to the rooftops of office buildings in city centers and other landing pads during rush hours.

"In as little as 10 years, products could be on the market that revolutionize urban travel for millions of people," said Zach Lovering, the leader of Airbus' project to develop an autonomous flying taxi called the Vahana. The name means the mount or vehicle of a Hindu deity.

In as little as 10 years, products could be on the market that revolutionize urban travel for millions of people.

ZACH LOVERING
AIRBUS

Uber released a 98-page report in October making the business case for air taxis, which the company sees as the future of on-demand transportation. Uber doesn't have any plans to develop a flying car itself, but the online transportation network is advising several companies that have aircraft in the works.

"The role we want to play is as a catalyst for the entire industry," said Nikhil Goel, an Uber project manager for advanced programs.

Some of the aircraft are drones that passengers will be able to program for flight using a smartphone. Others will be operated from the ground or a command center, and some are designed for human pilots.

It's unclear yet how much the aircraft will cost, although prices are likely to vary significantly. Some of the aircraft are designed to be individually owned,

while others are envisioned more for commercial use. Designers hope that if demand is high, prices can be kept affordable through economies of mass production.

Several recent developments could make these aircraft possible. Advances in computing power mean the rotors on multi-copter drones can be adjusted many times per second, making the aircraft easy to control. Drones have also benefited from advances in battery and electric motor technology. Some companies, like Chinese dronemaker EHang, are scaling-up drones so that they can carry people.

Another aircraft under development, Santa Cruz, California-based Joby Aviation's S2, looks more like a conventional plane except that there are 12 tiltrotors spread along the wings and tail. And some, like the Vahana, a cockpit mounted on a sled and flanked by propellers in front and back, don't really look like any aircraft in the skies today.

"In terms of what you can make fly in a reliable manner, the solution speed gateway that [computer] chips have gone through recently have literally opened the door to a whole new world of flying machine possibilities," said Charles Eastlake, an Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University professor emeritus of aerospace engineering.

But he also cautioned: "My best engineering guess is that people actually using autonomous air taxis in the next 10 or 15 years is possible, but definitely not certain. The challenges are big."

Key for many of the designs will be the development of longer-lasting lightweight batteries. Currently available batteries could probably keep an air taxi aloft about 15 to 30 minutes before it would have to land,

experts said. Depending on how fast the aircraft flies, that probably isn't quite enough to transport passengers between nearby cities or across metropolitan areas, experts said.

Entrepreneurs see a vast potential market for 'air taxis' and personally owned aircraft to transport people from the fringes of metro areas to city centers

Another hurdle will be winning Federal Aviation Administration certification for any radical new kind of aircraft when approval of even small changes in aviation technology can take years.

The FAA said in a statement that it is taking a "flexible, open-minded, and risk-based approach" to flying cars. FAA officials have discussed with several manufacturers the certification of

aircraft that will be flown with a pilot in the beginning, and later converted to an autonomous passenger aircraft.

While further research is needed to ensure that autonomous aircraft are safe, "we believe automation technology already being prototyped in low-risk unmanned aircraft missions, when fully mature, could have a positive effect" on aviation safety, the agency said.

Reducing noise is another challenge since air taxis will be taking off and landing in densely populated areas. So is creating enough landing pads to handle lots of aircraft at the same time. A new air traffic control system would also likely be needed.

"It's pretty clear that the existing air traffic control system won't scale to the kind of density at low altitudes that people are talking about," said John Hansman, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor who chairs the FAA's research and engineering advisory committee.

NASA is developing an air traffic control system for small drones that perhaps could be expanded to include flying cars.

"There's no question we can build the vehicle," Hansman said. "The big challenge is whether we can build a vehicle that would be allowed to operate in the places where people want to use it." AP



This artist rendering provided by Airbus shows a vehicle in their flying car project, Vahana

Jill Lawless, London

PRESIDENT Donald Trump's order barring U.S. entry to people from seven majority Muslim nations is "divisive, discriminatory and wrong," British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said. But he rebuffed calls for the government to cancel Trump's planned state visit to the U.K. because of the temporary ban.

Johnson said he had told American officials that it's wrong "to promulgate policies that stigmatize people on the basis of their nationality."

He told lawmakers in the House of Commons that the Trump administration had assured him that "all British passport holders remain welcome to travel to the U.S.," even if they are also citizens of one of the seven countries.

Confusion has reigned about whether dual nationals are affected by the 90-day ban on citizens of Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and Libya.

Britain's three biggest opposition parties have all called on the government to revoke Trump's state visit, planned for later this year, and an online petition opposing the trip has more than 1.3 million signatures. Any petition with more than 100,000 signatures must be considered for a debate in Parliament, though not a binding vote.

State visits involve lavish pomp and ceremony, generally with a stay at Buckingham Palace as the guest of Queen Elizabeth II.

Johnson echoed Prime Minister Theresa May's Downing St. office in saying that the visit should go ahead.

"He is the elected head of state

UK says Trump visit still on amid outcry over travel ban



British Prime Minister Theresa May speaks during a news conference with President Donald Trump in the White House, last weekend

of our closest and most important ally and there is absolutely no reason why he should not be accorded a state visit, and every reason why he should," Johnson said.

Labour lawmaker Yvette Cooper was one of several legislators to accuse the government of a weak response.

Noting that Trump's order had been signed on Holocaust Memorial Day, she told Johnson: "For the sake of history, for heaven's sake have the guts to speak out."

Furor over the travel ban has tarnished what British officials had considered a highly successful trip to Washington by May,

who met Trump at the White House over the weekend — the first foreign leader to visit the president since his inauguration.

Criticism of May's wooing of Trump erupted when — only hours after the prime minister had left the White House — the president signed an executive order imposing a 90-day entry ban for citizens of the seven countries. The order also bars all refugees entering the country for 120 days.

Trump's travel ban sparked protests at airports across the U.S., and drew condemnation and concern from around the world.

The website of the U.S. Embas-

sy in London on Monday advised nationals of the seven countries — "including dual nationals" — not to book visa appointments, saying their applications would not be processed.

The advice was removed from the site before Johnson's statement to Parliament.

Jacob Parakilas, assistant head of the U.S. and the Americas program at the Chatham House think tank, said details of the ban were still unclear. He said there was "a great deal of diplomatic work to be done to soothe tensions with a lot of countries that are allied with the United States."

Furor over the travel ban has tarnished what British officials had considered a highly successful trip to Washington by May

The British exemption didn't end the storm of opposition, with prominent members of May's Conservative Party joining in calls for Trump's visit to be scrapped.

Sayeeda Warsi, a former government minister and Conservative member of the House of Lords, said that it was "sending out a wrong signal" to invite Trump, a leaders whose values "are not the same as British values."

But former Conservative Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said Britain had welcomed other leaders on state visits despite human rights concerns, including Chinese President Xi Jinping.

He told the BBC that, "whatever we think of him, (Trump) is well-disposed to the United Kingdom, and it would be pretty silly, from everybody's point of view, simply to throw away that opportunity to develop that relationship." **AP**

MEXICO

President earmarks USD50 million to back migrants in United States



President Peña Nieto

MEXICO'S president said yesterday his country will spend about USD50 million to hire lawyers for migrants in the United States facing deportation.

The money will be channeled through Mexican consulates in the U.S. and also go to outreach programs to defend Mexicans' rights.

President Enrique Peña Nieto said in a video message to the nation that he had spoken to U.S. President Donald Trump for an hour by phone Friday. He said they reached no agreements, but found space for further dialogue between their respective representatives.

That would have been

one day after Peña Nieto abruptly cancelled a planned visit to Washington this week. The clash was provoked by Trump's insistence that Mexico would pay for his proposed border wall perhaps through a tax on imports from Mexico.

Peña Nieto said he emphasized to Trump that the relationship between the two countries must recognize Mexico's sovereignty, dignity and independence as well as their friendship and cooperation.

"I will inform Mexicans of the advances," Peña Nieto said.

Earlier, Mexican Foreign Relations Secretary Luis Videgaray said the effort to bolster consular services

in the U.S. "isn't about obstructing the enforcement of the law in the United States, or much less opposing law enforcement."

"We are going to focus the money on one fundamental objective, which is the defense of the rights of Mexicans. This means legal advice, informational campaigns, the hiring of lawyers where it is necessary."

Videgaray also said Mexico understands "it will be necessary to make some changes" to the North American Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. and Canada. U.S. President Donald Trump has pledged to re-negotiate NAFTA.

But he said Mexico won't accept a return to protectionist policies such as import quotas or tariffs.

He mentioned including things such as e-commerce, which didn't exist when NAFTA took effect in 1994. Videgaray did not specify what other changes Mexico

would be open to, but did say the country wanted "integrated negotiations, where all topics will be discussed and the dialogue won't be limited to commercial aspects, for example, but also include issues like immigration and security."

Along with renegotiating NAFTA, Trump has pledged to increase the deportations of people who are in the United States illegally, positions that have caused major frictions with Mexico.

Videgaray said Mexico wants to diversify its trade. At present, about 80 percent of Mexico's exports go to the United States.

He said Mexico wants to improve trade with Latin American countries, Japan and especially South Korea.

Mexico also wants to negotiate free trade agreements with Brazil and Argentina and attract foreign investment from China, the foreign relations secretary said. **AP**

what's ON

LOCAL GINGER – CENOZOIC GRAFFITI ART EXHIBITION” AND “IMPRESSION OF MACAU – ART EXHIBITION OF ‘ANDRE LUI”
 TIME: 11am-10pm
 UNTIL: February 20, 2017
 VENUE: Lakeside Gallery in the Anim'Arte NAM VAN
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6866

CHINESE NEW YEAR FLOWER SHOW
 TIME: 7am-10pm
 UNTIL: February 12, 2017
 VENUE: The Taipa Houses, Av. da Praia, Taipa
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2833 7676, 2888 0087

BROADCASTER LEONG SONG FONG - 33 YEARS IN RADIO
 TIME: 10am-6pm (Closed on Mondays, open on public holidays)
 UNTIL: February 5, 2017
 VENUE: Jao Tsung-I Academy, Av. do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida, no. 95 C-D
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2859 2919

MACAU GIANT PANDA PAVILION
 TIME: 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm daily (Except Mondays, closed on the following day instead if a public holiday falls on Monday and no admission after 4:45 pm; six viewings per day)
 VENUE: Seac Pai Van Park, Coloane
 ADMISSION: MOP10
 ENQUIRIES: Civil and Municipal Affairs Bureau (853) 2833 7676

TAK SENG ON PAWNSHOP
 TIME: 10:30am-7pm daily (Closed on the first Monday of every month)
 VENUE: No. 396 Avenida Almeida Ribeiro
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

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

Offbeat

MAN MAULED BY TIGER, KILLED AT EASTERN CHINA RESORT

A tiger-mauling death at a Chinese zoo is under investigation by local authorities who say the victim climbed a fence into the tiger's enclosure.

The attack occurred Saturday at a resort on Dongqian Lake in eastern China's Zhejiang province. A local government statement says the victim, identified only by his surname of Zhang, climbed a fence with a friend instead of buying tickets. The statement said Zhang's wife and two children, as well as his friend's wife, bought tickets to enter the zoo.

Zhang allegedly passed through a wire netting and eventually climbed a wall to enter the tiger enclosure, while his friend stayed back, the statement said. A tiger attacked him inside the enclosure, as visitors to the park apparently watched from a distance. Photos and video shared on social media appear to show Zhang lying on the ground as tigers circle him.

State television reported one tiger was shot dead by local police, and three others nearby were dispersed using firecrackers. One video posted online shows a tiger gnawing on his body as people can be heard screaming. Zhang died later in a hospital.

The incident drew a protest from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, or PETA, which said it reflected the problems of keeping tigers and other large cats in captivity.

Two women were attacked by Siberian tigers in July when they got out of their vehicle at a Beijing safari park. One woman was killed, and the other was seriously injured.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:00	Happy Endings Sr.3
17:40	Once Upon A Time Sr.2 (Repeated)
18:20	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
19:10	TDM Interview (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
21:40	The Bin Laden Conspiracy?
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:15	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

Cinema

CINETEATRO

1 FEB - 15 FEB

POKEMON: THE MOVIE 19

ROOM 1

2:15, 4:00, 5:45pm

Director: Kunihiko Yuyama

Starring: James Cathcart, Kiyotaka Furushima, Megumi Hayashibara

Language: Cantonese (Chinese)



LA LA LAND

ROOM 1

7:30, 10:00pm

Director: Damien Chazelle

Starring: Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone

Language: English

Duration: 128min

RESIDENT EVIL: FINAL CHAPTER

ROOM 2

2:30, 9:30, 11:30pm

Director: Paul W. S. Anderson

Starring: Milla Jovovich, Ali Larter, Shawn Roberts, Ruby Rose

Language: English

Duration: 103min

RESIDENT EVIL: FINAL CHAPTER

ROOM 2 (3D)

7:30pm

Director: Paul W. S. Anderson

Starring: Milla Jovovich, Ali Larter, Shawn Roberts, Ruby Rose

Language: English

Duration: 103min

LA LA LAND

ROOM 2

4:30pm

Director: Damien Chazelle

Starring: Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone

Language: English

Duration: 128min

MOANA

ROOM 3

2:00, 4:05, 6:10, 8:15pm

Director: Ron Clements, John Musker

Starring: Auli'i Cravalho, Dwayne Johnson, Rachel House

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 103min

MACAU TOWER

28 JAN - 15 FEB

JOURNEY TO THE WEST: THE DEMONS STRIKE BACK

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

Director: Hark Tsui

Starring: Bei-Er Bao, Mengke Bateer, Kenny Lin

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 109min

this day in history



1961 CHIMP RETURNS SAFELY AFTER SPACE FLIGHT

A chimpanzee sent into space in a rocket by the United States has been recovered alive and well about 420 miles (676 km) from the launching site in Cape Canaveral.

The test was one of many planned to ensure that a human being could survive space flight, think clearly and perform useful functions outside the Earth's atmosphere.

The chimp, named Ham, was trained to pull levers in response to flashing lights during flight. He carried out several such operations successfully as he travelled at 5,000 mph (8,000 km/h) at a height of 155 miles (250 km) above the Earth.

Ham, named after the Holloman Aerospace Medical Centre, and originally from Cameroon in Africa, was chosen from six "astrochimps" - four female and two male - who underwent intensive training in New Mexico and Cape Canaveral in Florida.

Chimpanzees were chosen in preference to dogs - which the Russians have sent into space on several occasions - because they are more similar to humans.

At 1655 GMT, the Mercury capsule with Ham on board blasted off. Almost immediately there was a hitch: the flight path was a degree higher than it should have been, and rising.

As computers reported a drop in the oxygen supply, the mission was aborted. However, partly because of the high flight angle, it had already reached 157 miles (253 km) above the Earth, higher than the planned target of 115 miles (185 km).

Ham was safe in his spacesuit throughout, and suffered no ill effects from his venture into space. In all, he travelled 155 miles (250 km) in 16.5 minutes.

For a little over six and a half minutes of the flight he experienced weightlessness, and his response times were reported to be as good in space as they were on Earth.

There was more trouble when he landed. Because of his steeper-than-expected climb, the capsule overshot its landing site in the Atlantic off Florida by some way. Ham had an uncomfortable three-hour wait before he was found.

Then when rescue helicopters finally arrived, they found the capsule on its side and sinking. It had landed with such force that the heat shield had punched two holes in the capsule.

Ham, however, took it all in his stride and when the spacecraft was opened accepted an apple and half an orange in reward.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Just two and a half months later, the Soviet Union became the first nation to put a man into space when Yuri Gagarin orbited the earth for nearly two hours on 12 April 1961.

Shortly afterwards, Alan Shepard became the first American in space with a sub-orbital flight lasting 15 minutes.

To correct some of the defects exposed during Ham's space flight, a second Mercury space mission manned by a chimpanzee was sent up later in 1961.

Enos the chimpanzee travelled twice round the Earth and returned safely.

John Glenn became the first American astronaut to orbit Earth on 20 February 1962.

Three more one-man Mercury orbital flights went into space, the last being a 22-orbit mission in May 1963.

Ham the chimpanzee went to the National Zoo in Washington DC after his brief career as an astronaut, where he lived for 17 years.

In 1981 he was moved to a chimpanzee colony in North Carolina where he died in 1983 at the age of 25. He is buried at the International Space Hall of Fame in New Mexico.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Ever been on the verge of finishing a jigsaw puzzle only to discover the last piece has gone missing? And remember how frustrating it feels to not find it after hours of searching, only to discover it a day later.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Ouch! Someone's working their way under your skin and trying to provoke you. Instead of being irritated by what you see as their needless rebellion, take a step back and a deep breath and view things objectively.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You're the hub of a big social wheel. You have some marvelous social gifts, one of them being the ability to connect people from all walks of life. With you at the center, all kinds of great connections could get started.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 One reason willow trees always survive storms is that they bend - and instead of breaking, once the thunder and lightning has passed, they simply bounce right back.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 What's gotten into your friends and family? It seems like they're being contrary simply for the sake of needing each other (and you). Whatever the reason, try and let it roll off your back.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Go ahead and listen to your naughty, adventurous side - after all, it has some very good ideas about what you should be up to right now, especially if you're feeling like a change of pace.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Your honest enjoyment of people always ensures a good time, and that goes double today. You can turn the lunch line at your local sandwich shop into a party with graciousness and ease.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Crowds have never been high on your list of things you love, and that's especially true right now - you need solitude to contemplate some changes that need to be made.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 It's especially appealing when you're also given limitless freedom to exercise your imagination. With your vision and creativity, the limits are only where you decide they are.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 It's tempting to tinker with something, but your efforts to do so might raise a whole chorus of dissonance. Reassure folks you won't be changing the substance of who you are or what you do.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Well, look at you! Actually, the real question right now is who isn't looking at you? All eyes can't help but be drawn in your general direction - you have a light and spark about you that just won't quit.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Lately you may feel like your brain is acting like a DVR on steroids, and recording and remembering all sorts of junk that crosses your path. Sit down and toss anything that isn't absolutely necessary to finish the tasks at hand.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

Table with columns: CHINA, MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Rows include Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, Urumqi, Xi'an, Lhasa, Chengdu, Chongqing, Kunming, Nanjing, Shanghai, Wuhan, Hangzhou, Taipei, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, WORLD, Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Somewhat; 6- At the summit; 10- Mimicked; 14- Billiards shot; 15- Singer McEntire; 16- Strike out; 17- Govt. security; 18- Uttered; 19- Author Stanley Gardner; 20- Edible snail; 22- Directing head; 24- Waterfall; 25- Stain; 26- King of the Huns; 29- Fresh-water fish; 30- Husband of Ruth; 31- Herbicide; 37- Holder; 39- Dashboard abbr.; 40- Alley Oop's girlfriend; 41- Discourteous; 44- Golden; 45- Blockhead; 46- Makes amends; 48- Greeting; 52- Put on (limit); 53- "Fighting" Big Ten team; 54- Military cafeteria; 58- Venetian blind part; 59- So-so grades; 61- "Exodus" actor Sal; 62- Mozart's "kleine Nachtmusik"; 63- Rifle adjunct; 64- At for words; 65- Classic autos; 66- Coil; 67- Hawaiian state birds;

DOWN: 1- Entr'_; 2- best friend; 3- High-performance Camaro; 4- Machine for adding; 5- TV chef Lagasse; 6- Favored crime of pyromaniacs; 7- Nipple; 8- Wan Kenobi was a character in "Star Wars"; 9- Detachable lock; 10- Let's Make; 11- Remaining out of sight; 12- "Oklahoma!" aunt; 13- Caterpillar competitor; 21- Chew on; 23- Refrain in a children's song; 25- Hindu ascetic; 26- Ben Adhem; 27- Large village; 28- Sharp taste; 29- Station; 32- Author Zola; 33- Lover of words; 34- Cut of meat; 35- Model Macpherson; 36- Phooey!; 38- Radioactive gas; 42- Amusing; 43- Pouches; 47- Dutch navigator; 48- Smarter; 49- "Dallas" matriarch; 50- Grassy plain; 51- Quotes; 52- Greek fabulist; 54- Office note; 55- Soon; 56- majest; 57- A pitcher may take one; 60- Funnyman Phillips;



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
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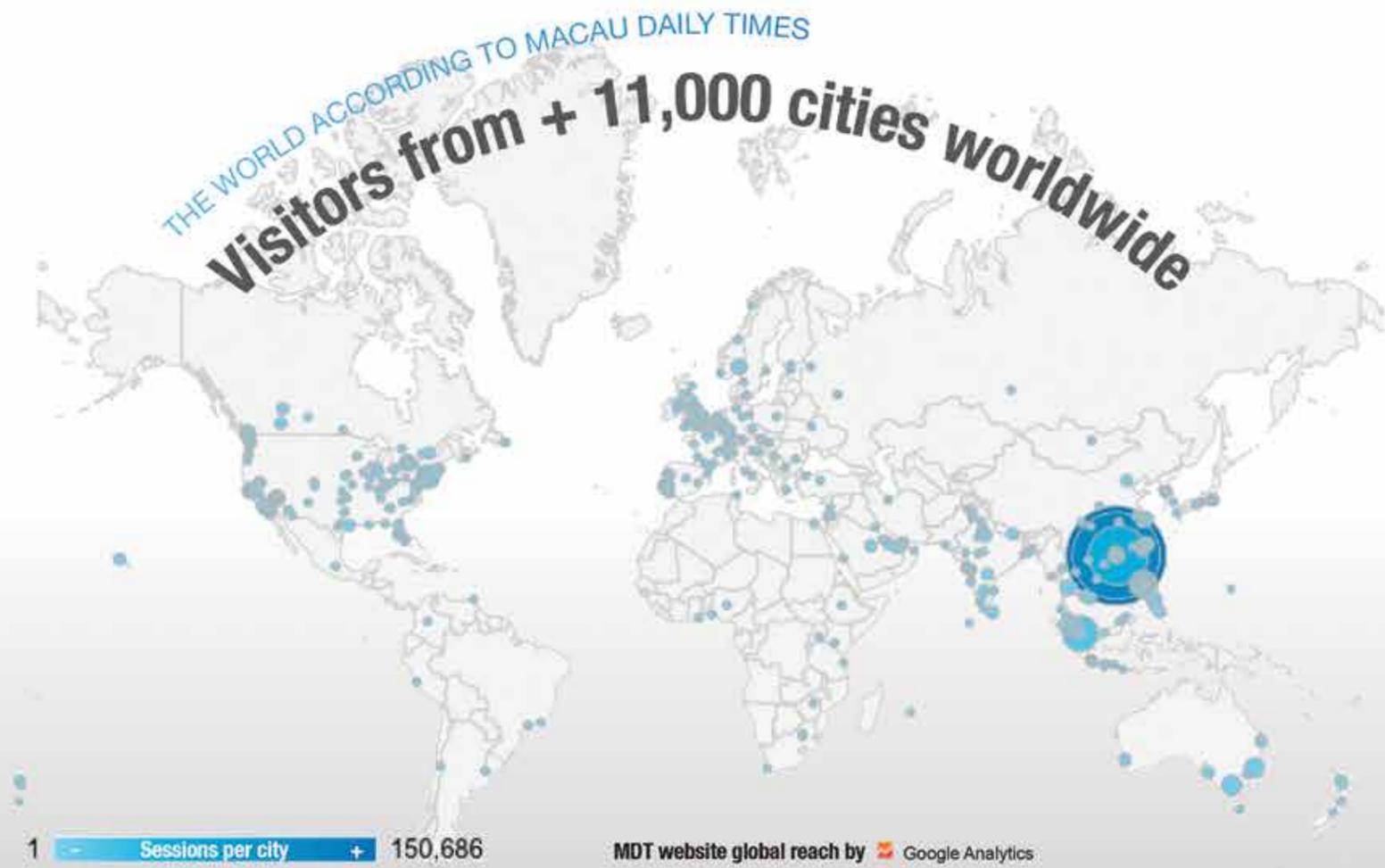
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MacauDaily 澳門每日時報
Times

“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

Kristie Rieken, Houston

NFL

Super Bowl opening night a bit more tame than usual

A man traipsing around Super Bowl opening night in a full-length gown declaring himself "The Empress of Austria, Elizabeth I" was the most outrageous guest at what was a rather tame media night compared to the circus it has been in the past.

The Empress, otherwise known as Julian Kurzwernhart, who said he'd been covering the Super Bowl for a television station in Austria for the past six years, spent more time being interviewed in his crazy getup than actually conducting interviews with the players from the Atlanta Falcons and New England Patriots.

"Why outfits? Oh yeah, that's funny questions because we want to spread some Austrian flavor every year here and spread some Austrian charm and you guys have something to love," he said. "It's a crazy event and you have to dress up."

The event, which is the first availability with the teams during Super Bowl week, was held at Minute Maid Park, where the Houston Astros play.

While media mingled with players on the field, 10,204 fans filled the stands to get a glimpse of their favorite players.

There were a handful of other strange getups, such as a man from a television station who wore a long blonde wig and a jersey which was half that of Atlanta quarterback Matt Ryan and half New England tight end Rob Gronkowski.

A reporter from a local television station sported an oversized red foam cowboy hat and asked everyone who spoke to him if they'd like to try on the matching blue one he held.



He handed the hat to Atlanta receiver Julio Jones who thanked him and placed it beside him on the podium next to his seat.

When the reporter informed him that he wanted him to try it on and not keep it and then tried to ask another question Jones jokingly snapped at him.

"Next question, I ain't messing with you," he said before cracking up.

Jones embraced the silliness of the night and said he couldn't think of a question he wouldn't answer.

"We have a lot of fans from everywhere, Australia, Mexico [...] and everyone wants answers

and I'm going to answer them to the best of my ability," he said. "It hasn't been too crazy for me."

Guillermo Rodriguez, a talk show personality on ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live", asked the players to sign what he called a football, which was actually a soccer ball.

He asked questions like: "Do you think Nick will find love on 'The Bachelor'?", to Atlanta coach Dan Quinn and "What do you like pizza or pineapple?" to Falcons running back Devonta Freeman.

His fun didn't stop with the Falcons and he was even able to get a smile out of notoriously gruff

New England coach Bill Belichick.

Rodriguez pronounced the coach's name "belly check" and told him: "You know you are much prettier when you smile."

He wasn't able to get an autograph from the coach though.

"No," Belichick told him. "Because it's not a football."

He eased up a second later telling him he might sign it later.

Rodriguez also had an extended exchange with Patriots quarterback Tom Brady where he told him his teammates said he smelled like flowers and asked him if his wife, supermodel Gisele Bündchen had a sister he could date.

"No," Brady said simply.

Rodriguez followed up with: "I thought she had a twin."

Brady then explained: "She does but she's married," which drew boos from Rodriguez. "I know. Too bad."

Working alongside the traditional media were a handful of people who are normally the ones fielding questions from reporters.

Gymnast Simone Biles, who won four gold medals at the Rio Olympics, worked as a correspondent for "Inside Edition", Houston Rockets power forward Kyle Wiltjer, reported as what he called an unpaid intern for NFL Network. And Houston Astros pitcher Lance McCullers asked questions recorded by the team's social media department.

Wiltjer, who is a huge NFL fan, had a little fun with some of his questions. He opened with a serious query to Quinn about the importance of special teams before hitting him with a more entertaining one.

"I'm 6-foot-10 with a 7-1 wingspan, you think I can I block some kicks for you?" Wiltjer said raising one of his long arms skyward.

That drew a big smile from the coach.

"There's no question you could," he said. "So let's talk afterward." AP



FOOTBALL

Brazilian forward Pato latest to head to Chinese Super League

BRAZILIAN forward Alexandre Pato has signed with Tianjin Quanjian, the latest ma-

major acquisition by the Chinese Super League.

Pato posted on Twitter yesterday [Macau

time] that he was "very happy" to join Quanjian from Spanish club Villarreal. Tianjin did

not immediately confirm a report in Chinese state media that his transfer fee was 18

million euros (USD19.3 million).

The 27-year-old Pato scored six goals in 24 appearances for Villarreal after playing just twice during a disappointing loan spell at English giants Chelsea. He has been in and out of Villarreal's starting lineup amid rumors of a transfer to China.

Quanjian, promoted to China's Super League after winning the second tier last year, also acquired Belgium's Axel Witsel this month and is coached by former Italy captain Fabio Cannavaro.

Other prominent players lured to China include Brazilians Hulk, Oscar, Ramires and Paulinho, Colombian striker Jackson Martinez and Argentinians Ezequiel Lavezzi and Carlos Tevez.

China has spent heavily to bring in interna-

tional stars and build up its football infrastructure at all age levels, with the stated goal of producing a national team capable of winning the World Cup by 2050. The big contracts handed out by its clubs have raised some alarm among major European clubs that previously had no rival in signing the world's top talent.

And skepticism is starting to grow in China. The governing body of Chinese soccer announced Jan. 16 that it would reduce the number of foreigners allowed to appear at any given time for a club from four to three, along with other steps targeting "recent irrational investments by clubs, high-figure transfer fees and salaries paid to domestic and international athletes and other issues." AP

opinion

World Views

Eric Talmadge, Pyongyang bureau chief, AP

FOUR REASONS NORTH KOREA LOOMS OVER US DEFENSE CHIEF'S ASIA TRIP

North Korea will be casting a dark — and nuclear — shadow over U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis' first foray abroad.

When Mattis calls on South Korea and Japan from today he will be visiting Washington's two staunchest allies in Asia. Both host tens of thousands of American troops and both will be looking for reassurances the new administration in the U.S. is not going to drop the ball on North Korea.

North Korea, racing ever closer to having a nuclear-tipped missile that could strike the U.S. mainland, is without doubt already one of the biggest security challenges on new President Donald Trump's plate. Lately, Pyongyang has been taking a wait-and-see stance toward Washington, hoping Trump might be willing to roll back America's "hostile policies."

Don't expect that to last long.

Kim Jong Un warned in his annual New Year's address that North Korea is in final stages of readiness to test-launch an intercontinental ballistic missile, a crucial step it needs to take to demonstrate it has the technology to attack the U.S. mainland. North Korean officials have followed up with statements that Pyongyang has the right to conduct such a launch any time it sees fit. Satellite imagery appears to suggest something is, indeed afoot, though the North could be bluffing. Even so, the missile threat is real, and growing. Pyongyang has a wide range of short- and intermediate-range missiles capable of hitting South Korea, not to mention U.S. military bases in Japan. It conducted a record number of tests last year, including its first from a submarine, which is an important breakthrough.

North Korea by all accounts has been rushing ahead with its development of nuclear weapons, despite international sanctions and condemnation. It conducted two nuclear tests last year, starting off 2016 with what it said was its first test of an H-bomb. The second test, in September, was the strongest blast to date. Kim Jong Un has repeatedly stated that nuclear weapons are the cornerstone of his national defense strategy and has shown no intention of giving them up. Experts differ on whether the North has a nuke small enough to mount on a long-range missile, but agree more tests are likely. How Trump handles that will have major repercussions throughout the region. There's already talk on the fringes in South Korea and Japan about the strategic value of getting nuclear weapons of their own.

Kim Jong Un probably has between 10 to 20 or more nuclear weapons. But to build up his stockpile, he needs fissionable material — and reports suggest he may have restarted the long-shuttered Yongbyon nuclear facility to solve that very problem. Working from satellite photos taken earlier this month, analysts Jack Liu and Joseph Bermudez posted their conclusion, that the reactor is now up and running, on the respected website 38 North. That's important because some experts believe the facility could produce about 6 kilograms of plutonium a year, enough to make one or two nuclear weapons.

Beware the ides of March.

Spring is traditionally the time when tensions on the Korean Peninsula hit their peak. It's when the North Korean military is just coming off its winter training cycle and, south of the Demilitarized Zone, the U.S. and South Korea conduct massive joint exercises to hone their fighting skills. The wargames have always been a major "provocation" in the eyes of Pyongyang, though Seoul and Washington say they are defensive in nature. The atmosphere has grown more toxic in recent years, however, amid South Korean reports that the exercises now include training for "decapitation strike" scenarios to take out Kim Jong Un and his top leadership. Pyongyang has said that crosses a red line.

THE RECORD 32.59 MILLION FOREIGN TOURISTS VISIT THAILAND IN 2016

Thailand received a record 32.59 million foreign visitors last year, with revenue beating expectations and likely to exceed previous forecasts this year by growing 10 percent or more, officials said.

Thailand is proving popular even as terror scares, including a series of bombings in resorts towns killing four people, and the death of King Bhumibol Adulyadej had hotels and tour guides

across the country on edge. Tourism fared better than expected after a bloodless coup deposed Thailand's elected government in 2014 as well.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand said that the tourist industry earned 2.52 trillion baht (USD71.4 billion) last year, up 11 percent from 2015. Most travelers come from China, South Korea, and Japan.

MACAU

Group visitors down almost one-quarter in 2016



XINHUA

The number of visitors on package tours decreased by 2.6 percent year-on-year to 706,000 in December 2016, a slower decline compared with November. According to information from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), the number of package tour visitors from mainland China (554,000) dropped by 4.1 percent year-on-year, while those from the Republic of Korea (36,000) and Taiwan (39,000) increased by 17.8 percent and 11 percent respectively.

For the whole year of 2016, visitors on package tours totaled 7,544,000, down by 23.4 percent year-on-year. Those coming from mainland China (5,968,000) and Taiwan

(427,000) decreased by 26 percent and 21.3 percent respectively, while those from the Republic of Korea (371,000) increased by 14 percent.

Outbound residents using the services of travel agencies totaled 127,000 in December 2016, down by 4 percent year-on-year. The number of residents travelling on package tours decreased slightly by 0.7 percent year-on-year to 57,000, of which those visiting mainland China and the Republic of Korea comprised 65.5 percent and 12.9 percent respectively. For the whole of 2016, outbound residents using the services of travel agencies dropped by 14.3 percent year-on-year to 1,256,000. Residents travelling on package tours

(501,000) decreased by 17.9 percent, with those going to mainland China (342,000) falling by 27.9 percent while those to the Republic of Korea (51,000) surged by 135.5 percent.

There were 107 hotels and guesthouses operating at the end of December 2016, up by one year-on-year. The number of guest rooms increased by 4,000 to 36,000, with that of three-star hotels rising the most, by 3,000. Guest rooms of five-star (22,000) and four-star (7,700) hotels accounted for 60.1 percent and 21.2 percent of the total respectively.

For the whole of 2016, guests of hotels and guesthouses totaled around 12 million, up by 13.6 percent year-on-year. Guests from mainland China (7,607,000), the Republic of Korea (304,000), Hong Kong (1,782,000) and Taiwan (477,000) grew by 12.8 percent, 34.3 percent, 17.8 percent and 24.7 percent respectively. The average occupancy rate of hotels and guesthouses stood at 83.3 percent in 2016, up by 1.8 percentage points year-on-year. Four-star hotels had the highest rate at 86.3 percent.

The average length of stay of guests was 1.4 nights, down by 0.1 nights year-on-year. Visitor-guests accounted for 72 percent of total overnight visitors, up by 2.6 percentage points year-on-year.

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

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS



AP PHOTO

MYANMAR The daughter of an assassinated Myanmar legal adviser says his family worried about his activities and warned him to be careful, but he pursued his work for Myanmar's people, regardless of who they were or what religion they believed. Ko Ni, a prominent adviser to Aung San Suu Kyi and the ruling party, was shot to death at the Yangon airport Sunday.



AP PHOTO

INDONESIA's tsunami detection system, made up of seafloor sensors that communicate with transmitting buoys on the surface, has been rendered useless by vandals and lack of funding. Now Indonesian and U.S. scientists say they've developed a way to dispense with the expensive buoys and possibly add crucial extra minutes of warning.

NEW ZEALAND A Dutch tourist aboard a cruise ship near Antarctica who suffered a suspected stroke is successfully evacuated to a U.S. base on the frozen continent.



AP PHOTO

AUSTRALIA A sixth person has died in a hospital 10 days after a man with a history of mental health and drug issues drove a car through a lunch-time crowd in a pedestrian-only street in Australia's second largest city.



AP PHOTO

EU The European parliament is asking France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen to start repaying hundreds of thousands euros it says were wrongly paid to legislative aides. An EU parliament letter to Le Pen published by Challenges magazine gives yesterday as the deadline to begin repayment of about 300,000 euros.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Darko Bandic



The difference is Melania. Tiny Slovenia is undergoing a tourism boom because it is the native country of U.S. first lady Melania Trump. The number of overnight stays in Slovenia by American tourists has jumped by 10 percent in 2016 when compared to 2015. Four million visited the country of 2 million last year.