



ARTISTS USE 'BUSKER CARDS' TO PERFORM

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UBER WITHDRAWS FROM TAIWAN

Ride-hailing app Uber's fines amount to MOP283m within just a month after a law banning unlicensed taxi services was introduced

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HOUSING COLLAPSE LEAVES NINE BURIED

Four homes tumbled in the city of Wenzhou in Zhejiang province, just south of the commercial hub of Shanghai

P10 CHINA

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WORLD BRIEFS



AP PHOTO

US-MALTA A decade-old program to resettle a fixed quota of refugees arriving in the small, southern EU nation of Malta to the United States is another casualty of Trump's executive order on immigration. U.S. Ambassador G. Kathleen Hill told Maltese media this week that the refugee resettlement program has been suspended for 120 days under the order.

More on p14,15



AP PHOTO

KOREA In his first public remarks abroad as U.S. defense secretary, Jim Mattis criticizes North Korea for provocative acts and says he will consult with South Korean and Japanese officials about whether the current strategy for getting the North to curtail or eliminate its nuclear and missile programs is adequate.

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JAPAN-US Angling to pre-empt complaints over Japan's perennial trade surplus with the U.S., Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reportedly plans to propose a sweeping economic cooperation initiative meant to create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the U.S. when he meets with President Donald Trump later this month.

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Tourists upset with CNY overcrowding.

P3 MDT REPORT



PAULO BARBOSA

Ipoh and Macau could become twin cities with direct link

P2



Extra times
weekend Guide
INSIDE

THE Malaysian state of Perak is creating promotional deals with Macau partners in order to boost tourism in the state, reported online Malaysian newspaper The Star.

According to the report, representatives of Perak Tourism, including its acting chief executive officer Zuraidda Md Taib, met recently with Macau Media Group representatives in the Malaysian city of Ipoh to discuss the promotion of tourism in both Macau and Ipoh, with the aim of cementing a mutual friendship.

In pursuit of these interests, the Macau Media Group delegation spent four days in Perak during the Chinese New Year, collecting footage and pictures for the promotion of Ipoh in Macau and mainland China.

It was also reported that the Macau group's director Ke Jiangang met with state Tourism, Arts and Culture committee chairman Datuk Nolee Ashilin Mohd Radzi, in the same meeting, to discuss further collaboration between both cities.

"The group is on a mission to promote tourism in cities included in China's belt-road and Ipoh is their first stop,

Ipoh and Macau could become twin cities

PAULO BARBOSA



Ipoh's city center is characterized by colonial era buildings, such as the railway station (pictured)

especially since we have been chosen as Lonely Planet's top 10 places to visit in Asia," said Ashilin, adding that the partnership would also attract in-

vestment from Macau. "We are also considering to recognize them [Macau] as our Chinese twin city, but this is still a work in progress

[which is] dependant from the decision of Mentri Besar and stakeholders," she told reporters after the meeting in the state secretariat on Tues-

day.

According to Ashilin, "several business groups will come to Ipoh to look into the possibility of building five-star hotels and how to help the state government boost connectivity." She further remarked that "if the partnership was smooth-sailing, the state would surely look forward to collaborating with more Chinese cities like Hong Kong, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou."

She also addressed the possibility of direct flights between Macau and Ipoh.

"Hopefully this will entice their [Malaysia Airlines Bhd] counterpart in Macau to bring in direct flights soon," she said.

Ipoh is the capital city of Perak state and is Malaysia's third largest city, with a population of over 710,000 people. The city center is characterized by colonial era Chinese shop houses and several impressive historical buildings from the British Colonial era, such as the railway station. The city also has some modern attractions, such as the Lost World Of Tambun, which is the only theme park in Southeast Asia with natural hot springs coupled with an array of attractions and rides. **RM**

GRAND PRIX

Promising Russell has sights set high for Macau



George Russell racing in Macau

EIGHTEEN-year-old Briton George Russell hopes to return to the Macau Grand Prix Formula 3 race for a win this year.

"After last year I'd be expected to win or put in a massive performance," said Russell, carrying renewed hope for himself and the Mercedes Formula 1 team with his sights set high for this year's edition.

Russell's hopes appear plau-

sible after finishing seventh in his debut last year in pole position, during a historic edition of the race that marked the first run of the first ever FIA F3 World Cup.

Despite the switch to the GP3 series this year, Russell has already said to have fallen in the love with the Guia circuit and would be up for a new challenge to prove his value on the Macau Grand Prix.

"I hope I can go back there in the future," Russell told Autosport, "It's one of the most amazing circuits I've ever driven - if you're not quick you don't enjoy a track, and if you are quick you do."

Russell's Macau pole last year marked a new milestone for the British driver, after being awarded the 2014 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award.

Remarking on the Guia circuit, Russell said, "[it] is absolutely incredible, and if I got the chance to drive it again I'd be really grateful."

Russell explained how he faced the challenge of racing the corners of Guia in his first year: "I said all year that I'd rather have the recognition from qualifying on pole than qualifying 20th and winning when everyone else crashed."

The only obstacle in his way to Macau might be the GP3 season, which will have its final round in Abu Dhabi the weekend after the Macau GP, with Russell's participation mostly dependent on the season results at the time. **RM**

Government to initiate preparation for LRT

TRANSPORTATION Infrastructure Office director Ho Cheong Kei has stated, during a TDM radio show, that the government will initiate preparatory work for the operation of the city's Light Rapid Transit (LRT) this year.

Ho explained that this preparation will include establishing consultation works regarding legal matters connected to the LRT and assembling the companies involved in the LRT.

Overall, the government's focus for this year is to install train system facilities and to construct an LRT depot.

"I believe we can accomplish our goal of beginning operation of the LRT Taipa section in 2019," said Ho. According to him, four companies have been engaged in construction work without issues since last September, when the depot project restarted.

Ho revealed that if the construction contractors can finish projects on time or ahead of schedule, the government will grant them 8 percent of their contract budgets as a bonus.

In addition, Ho noted that the inauguration of the LRT in 2019 only concerns the Taipa section.

The authority will initiate plans for the section connecting to Barra this year.

The 9.3 kilometers of trestle and 11 stations in Taipa are all connected, Ho said, adding that the main construction of the LRT Taipa section is basically complete.

With the Taipa Line of the Macau Light Rapid Transit (LRT) project planned for a 2019 launch, Macau transport authorities have admitted that they have no estimates for ticket fares, nor do they have projections for the number of passengers expected to use the service on a daily basis.

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DIRECTOR AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
MANAGING EDITOR_Paulo Barbosa paulo.barbosa@macaudailytimes.com
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Eric Sautedé, Leanda Lee, Severo Portela

DESIGN EDITOR_João Jorge Magalhães magalhaes@macaudailytimes.com | NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS
Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Daniel Beittler, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong,
Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Lynzy Valles, Renato Marques, Richard
Whitfield, Rodrigo de Matos (cartoonist), Sandra Norte (designer), Viviana Seguí | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS
JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, Bloomberg,
Financial Times, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua | SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

SECRETARY Denise Lo denise@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C,
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Tourists upset with crowded spaces during CNY



Tourists heading to Ruins of St Paul



Daniela Militaru and Salim Elmazor

Julie Zhu, Lynzy Valles

ALTHOUGH the territory's Chinese New Year arrivals were up for this Golden Week, several tourists were discontented with their experience, citing overcrowding in tourist spots and some stores.

Yesterday, the Times visited several local stores and learnt that despite the increase in sales, numerous tourists have complained about store closures and overcrowding.

"I came here for one restaurant

and I found out that the restaurant is closed," said Chen Qiao Lin, a tourist from Zhuhai.

"There are too many people, it's too crowded. Most of the things that I want to buy are out of stock."

Xandy Ng, who only arrived in Macau yesterday from Hong Kong, echoed the same sentiments and said that the city is congested, which makes it difficult for tourists to take some photos.

When asked about their itinerary for their three-day stay in Macau, Ng said, "We plan to eat a lot and maybe we'll go to casinos."

Although some tourists are plea-

sed with their visit to the region, especially with the local food, some do not intend to visit again during the next Chinese New Year.

A German tourist, who currently lives in China and adores Macau cuisine, said that he currently has no plans to return.

"I really like it here. If there were less people, it would be much nicer. We had authentic Macau food," said the tourist. "We will see [if we'll come back], I don't know."

Meanwhile, several foreign tourists in the region opted for fine dining in the region to avoid the crowd in downtown.

Portuguese tourists Manuela and Cristina Silva, who are in Macau for a day, said that they spent the first few days of Chinese New Year in Hong Kong.

The mother and daughter pair opted to lunch at a local hotel, saying, "It was nice, it was much calmer at the Mandarin Oriental than out here."

Some visitors from London were also quite saddened that a restaurant they planned to go to was closed.

"We were just looking for a seafood restaurant. We hope we're going to find another one, we'll

see," said Salim Elmazor.

"The weather is great, it's nice. We like it [though] it's a bit crowded. It took us a long time to board the ferry. Maybe [we'll] avoid CNY in the future just because it's too crowded," said another tourist, Daniela Militaru.

Tourist Elizabeth Yeung, who lives in Guangzhou, commended the region's ambiance, noting that it has a more traditional atmosphere than mainland.

There are too many people, it's too crowded. Most of the things that I want to buy are out of stock.

CHEN QIAO LIN
ZHUHAI TOURIST

"It's nice, it has a more traditional feeling than [in] mainland since the buildings and lanterns are more traditional," said Yeung, who was only in the city for a day.

"We've had the pork chop bun. We still need to get our egg tarts," she added.

During the Chinese New Year, the immigration authorities recorded 457,296 entrances, which represents a 4.8 percent increase year on year.

CASINO revenue growth in Macau slowed down during January, falling short of analysts' estimates, as the world's largest gaming hub prepares for what may be another bumpy ride in its recovery from a two-year slump.

Every year during the Chinese New Year Festival, Macau welcomes crowds mainly from the tourism market of Mainland China. The road that leads to the Ruins of St. Paul was packed with visitors, as well as the shops alongside the slope up to one of the iconic tourism spots in Macau.

The Times interviewed a few shop owners who have their businesses in the vicinity of the Senado Square and the Ruins of St. Paul, and received a great variety of reactions regarding sales during the Chinese holiday.

Veng Io K, a book vendor in her 60s with a business located right next to the Igreja de São Domingos, spoke happily of her sales during the holidays. "The business was really good," she said, adding that "it was a lot better than in previous years."

Veng said that there were

Uneven sales leave some shop owners happy, others concerned

more people visiting her shop, as well passing by her premises. "In the previous years, there were not this many people," she recalled. Her shop sells children toys and Chinese books, including Fengshui books and books about China's politics. Some of these cannot be found in Mainland China. "All products were being sold, whether it was the Fengshui books, political books, or toys," said Veng, adding that "business went up 30 percent."

The owner of another shop, which sells food including dried seafood and is also situated at the center of the aforementioned tourism area, said that business yesterday was similar to that of the previous Chinese New Year because, for the first time, it opened during the holiday.

A traditional shop nearby, which sells simple clothing

items, saw a decrease in sales. The owner Lok Win Ma, who is about 50 years old, had his shop open during the whole holiday period, but his business decreased 10 percent year-on-year. However, Li explained that the reasons for the drop are not directly associated with the holiday itself but with other factors. "Nowadays, people like to do shopping online," he said, further indicating that even when compared to non-holiday periods throughout the year, business during the Chinese New Year was still slower.

The restaurant Curry Veng, 咖喱菜, where people can only buy take-away food, recorded a 30 percent growth in its revenue. Four restaurants owned by the same person, under the same brand name, can be found in the vicinity of Senado Square.

The travel agency Chinoy

Express Travel and Tours, which does business mainly with Filipinos, told the Times that, compared to regular days, there were more Filipinos applying for a Chinese visa during the Chinese New Year.

Owners at the Filipino eatery Sarimanok, located at Rua da Alfândega, said that their business during the holiday this year was "extremely low" when compared to last year's, adding that the restaurant depends prima-

rily on its Filipino market in town.

Vendor Chao Chi Veng, who sells chestnuts right next to Senado Square, said that his business was also worse compared to last year because it rained during the first three days of the Chinese New Year.

Chan Wai Chong, salesman at Loja Das Conservas, said that some customers visited the shops looking for specific products, which unfortunately were already



Lok Win Ma

sold out. Chan noted that the shop only opened yesterday, and that Chinese New Year business was similar to that of non-holiday days. JZ/LV

FIREWORKS VENDORS SAY BUSINESS COOLED DOWN

SEVERAL FIREWORKS sellers at the two legal fireworks trade spots in the city have reported a decrease in business revenues during the Chinese New Year, as assessed from the beginning of the Chinese New Year until midnight yesterday. The vendors have complained that few visitors have shown up. The weak sales might have possibly be due to rainy weather during

the first days of the Chinese New Year. Several vendors reported that business this year did not meet their expectations, with the number of visitors being significantly less than the previous year. However, the vendors claim to be willing to continue operating in the fireworks market next year, even if this year was a disappointment.

Ung hopes IC can work in close connection with locals



CCULTURAL Affairs Bureau (IC) president Ung Vai Meng stated that the IC's upcoming work should be in close connection with Macau residents' lives and needs, and that the IC's goal is to develop the cultural sense of the city's next generation. The

soon-to-depart head of the bureau made these comments during a TDM radio show.

Ung said that he is reluctant to leave his colleagues and the work he has been doing in the bureau, adding that he has "great confidence in Macau's cultural work." He pointed out that several aspects of Macau's cultural development have progressed well with the aid of the Macanese community.

"Macau's performances, libraries, protection of relics, creative industry, among others, are deeply respected by the neighboring regions, at home and abroad," said Ung.

Ung has a particular fondness for Seminário e Igreja de São José, remarking that "it is really romantic just thinking of it." In his words, the IC focuses on cultivating Macau's

youth. "We hope that the youth can participate in international events to improve their competencies," he said.

The president also believes that Macau's culture needs this new generation, and he hopes that these young people will use their own voice to spread Macau's culture across the world.

Ung has been the head of the IC since March 2010, and previously announced that he would be stepping down from his role. A man approaching his 60s, Ung plans to formally retire as he wishes to return to his previous life as an artist and focus on his own artistic creations. "I love art and painting, and now I am going back to my paradise," he said in explanation. The resignation will take effect this month.

Over 100 street artists used 'Busker Cards' to perform



THE "Busker Card," a program that aims to establish rules and regulate the activity of various street performers, has gathered the interest of over 100 street performers thus far, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) said in a statement. The program was launched in November last year by the IC.

According to the statement, the artists have performed for an estimated audience of over 5,000 people in the three "Busking Points," or locations available for street performances, namely Anim'Arte Nam Van, Taipa Houses-Museum and the garden of the Monte Fort (Fortaleza do Monte).

The first phase of the program ended January 31. The IC has given a positive review of the

program, stating that it will continue to establish contacts and cooperate with various departments to continue the development and study of increasing the feasibility of Busking Points. This will be done with the aim of encouraging the population to appreciate and participate in culture and the arts, as well as providing more platforms for local arts professionals and introducing local and foreign street performances.

The bureau stated that current holders of "Buskers Cards" would be contacted by email in order to renew their licenses without the need to reapply, and that the relevant documents are still available for new artists interested in joining the program.

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Uber withdraws from Taiwan citing world-highest fines



RIDE-HAILING app Uber announced in a statement yesterday the suspension of services in Taiwan, starting from February 10, citing fines that amount to TWD1.1 billion

(MOP283 million) within just one month after a new law banning unlicensed taxi services was introduced. The island-state imposes the highest fines on unlicensed taxis in the world, according to Uber. The TWD1.1

billion is the recorded total of fines imposed only in the period after the legislation was introduced on January 6.

The company threatened to close down its operations in Macau last year, also on the basis of fines, in this case exceeding MOP10 million. However the decision was reversed just a few weeks later, due to an "unprecedented amount of support" which led the organization to instead continue lobbying for legislation in the MSAR.

In Taiwan, Uber has also said that the suspension has been enacted with the hope of "restarting dialogue" with the government to "innovate the transport technology" in the country, according to the Straits Times.

They also said that Taipei's decision last month to ban unlicensed taxi services represented a move "away from embracing innovation and 21st century trends in

transportation."

However, the organization behind the ride-hailing app has fared no better in its "dialogue" with the MSAR government.

The Macau division's general manager Trasy Lou Walsh informed the press last month that there has been no "concrete update" in the company's attempt to have its service legalized.

Uber launched its service in Taiwan in 2013. Since then, some one million customers have downloaded the Uber app, served by 10,000 active drivers who have racked up around 15 million trips, the company claimed in the statement.

Although the service was launched in Macau only in late 2015, Uber Macau claims to have as many as 3,000 drivers in the city, 30 percent of the number in Taiwan even though the population of the MSAR is over 35 times smaller. **DB**

Nam Yue market workers show no signs of H7N9

The Health Bureau (SSM) has conducted a screening for the avian influenza virus (H7N9) for the Nam Yue wholesale market workers. According to the SSM, all 106 workers tested negative for the virus, with no indication that any of them were carriers. The screening was performed on February 1 as a follow-up on reports from January 26 of infected poultry among the tested workers, who were staff from the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau. The staff were responsible for the handling and disposal of the potentially infected poultry at the time.

Fetching tourists banned at local street

Tourism buses have been banned from picking up tourists at Rua da Horta da Companhia. The ban came into effect last Wednesday and is effective every day of the week. It was previously implemented last December, but only applied on weekends (Saturday and Sunday) from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. However, despite the prohibition on picking up tourists, bus drivers are still allowed to drop tourists off on the aforementioned street. From now, visitors may walk through Bairro de São Lázaro, R. do Volong and then access the Tap Seac parking lot.

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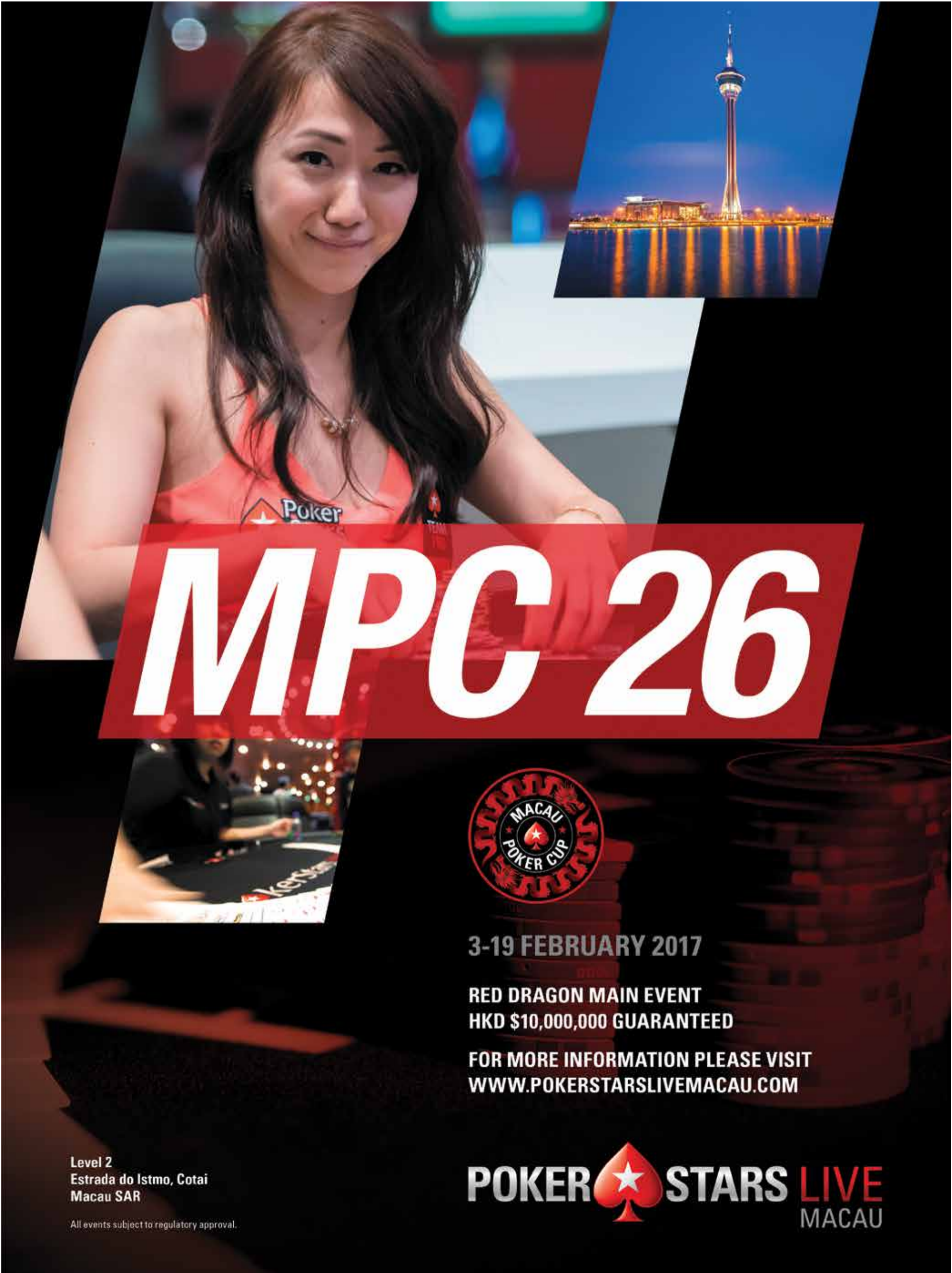
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Rise in taxi infractions during Spring Festival

THE Public Security Police Force (PSP) recorded 231 taxi infractions during the Spring Festival holiday period from Thursday last week until Tuesday, according to a statement released by the PSP.

The infractions include 164 cases of over-charging and 33 cases of taxi drivers refusing to accept passengers.

During the same period, the police also recorded 41 cases involving unauthorized taxis, 27 of which related to mobile taxi hailing services.

In addition to these taxi service infractions, the PSP also investigated 15 incidents concerning unregulated sales or lighting of fireworks.

During last year's Spring Festival, the

PSP issued 78 tickets to Macau's taxi drivers, including 35 for over-charging and 26 for refusing to accept passengers.

Compared to this year, last year's inspection of illegal taxi services involved significantly fewer infractions, with only seven cars found providing taxi services without a legal license, and two cars involved with app-based taxi hailing services.

In September last year, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) released data regarding the public's complaints about Macau's taxi services.

According to DSAT, from January to August of last year, the department received more than 1,540 complaints related to taxis, 467 of which were associated with overcharging.

Local helpers might eye new opportunity in Japan



Emerlina de Lina (left) and Yosa Waranti

JAPAN'S new proposal to allow a limited number of foreign domestic helpers to work in specified locations across the country could attract those currently working in less favorable conditions in Macau and Hong Kong, representatives from local domestic workers' associations told the Times.

Under the new regulations, about 50 Filipino workers who are scheduled to arrive in Japan this month would be paid as much as their Japanese colleagues and must, by law, be provided with

their own accommodation.

Yosa Waranti of the Indonesian Migrant Workers' Union told the Times that there is a possibility that some local domestic workers might consider the opportunity to relocate to Japan if working conditions are more favorable.

"It's a definite possibility that many who have moved [to Macau], especially the young, might [consider moving to Japan ...] in pursuit of bigger salaries," she said.

Chairperson Emerlina de Lina of local domestic worker association, Migrante Macau, said that there might be scope for workers in Macau to look at opportunities in Japan in the future, particularly when their current contracts terminate.

"The current eight-day rule creates problems for workers," said de Lina, referring to the maximum period in which a blue-card worker can remain in the territory without being employed, "as that is not enough time to find a new employer."

"When they finish their [current] contracts, they might look at Japan as a good opportunity," she added. "Some have gone to China before, once they lost their job and couldn't find a repla-

cement in Macau."

Under the new regulations in Japan, domestic workers must be employed full-time by agencies, rather than individuals, and will be paid as much as their Japanese-born co-workers. Moreover, rather than living in with a family as in Hong Kong, Japanese regulations will require foreign domestic workers to be provided with their own accommodation.

However, there are also restrictions. These workers will be required to speak basic Japanese, must have at least one year of experience in housekeeping services and must undergo training for a minimum of 200 hours. They will also be permitted to only stay in Japan for a maximum of three years.

"The three-year limit could lead to many desperate workers overstaying," warned Waranti, adding that there may also be concerns over working conditions and the potential for abuse of domestic helpers.

Currently, the only areas permitted to accept foreign-born domestic workers are Kanagawa prefecture and Japan's second-largest city by population, Osaka. There are also plans to roll out the program soon in the Japanese capital, Tokyo. **DB**

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REAL ESTATE MATTERS

Common misconceptions about renting a property in Macau - Part 1

Juliet Risdon is a Director of JML Property and a property investor.

Having been established in 1994, JML Property offers investment property & homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.

All currencies expressed in Mop unless otherwise stated

www.JMLProperty.com info@JMLProperty.com



JULIET RISDON

This list of common misconceptions may look innocent enough, but the difference in expectation is usually the source of major rental conflicts...

In the final installment of this series we examine some of the most common misconceptions:

Finding good home furnishings will be easy

Some of the more popular furniture stores in Macau such as 'Area' in Ocean Gardens, Taipa and WH Furniture in old Taipa and Macau have recently closed their doors.

There are several furniture stores around Macau that you can visit, including such stores as 'City Square' or 'Zara Home' that sell not only furniture but soft furnishings and decorations as well.

Its not a big problem if I don't pay the rent on time

Not paying rent is a bad idea in Macau. Once a rent is overdue for nine days or more, the landlord is entitled to charge a late fee premium of 50 percent of the rental amount.

If a rent remains overdue for 30 days or more, the landlord can now charge a late fee premium of 100 percent of the

rental amount. In other words, once a rent is 30 days late, you would now owe double the normal rental amount. This is why it is so important to pay rent at the end of a tenancy agreement.

I cant afford to buy a property here

This point of view is easy to understand and relate to. However, the first thing to remember is of course that the bank will loan you a lot of the money that is required to buy a property.

If you are a Macau resident, it is possible get up to 70-80 percent of the property price funded by the bank. That still leaves 30 percent of the price to come up with though, and even on an apartment costing \$4m, you will have to find \$1.2m in cash for the initial deposit.

Non-residents funding for a property can also extend up to 70 percent depending on the property.

There are lots of ways that you can get your families and friends to help you out with the purchase. For example, it's possible for more than one person to co-sign for a property, so you could consider buying a property with a partner.

The security deposit must be refunded in full if I give notice to terminate the agreement before the end date

Currently, Macau tenancy law states that, in the absence of another agree-

ment between the tenant and the owner, the tenant may give three months notice to terminate an agreement.

If the two parties agree a shorter period in writing, and of course many rental contracts do allow tenants to give two months notice instead of three, then the shorter period will stand.

The common misconception is that the tenant is then entitled to receive back the security deposit in full.

In fact, the termination of the agreement means that the tenants release themselves from the obligation that they had originally made to continue to rent the apartment for a definite period of time i.e. two years.

As compensation for the tenant breaking the original agreement, the landlord is entitled retain a maximum amount equal to one months' rent.

The security deposit must be refunded in full the day I leave the apartment

A good rule of thumb is that with the exception of normal wear and tear, an apartment should be left the way it was when you moved in if you want to receive the full deposit back.

Returning the apartment without giving it a thorough clean could be enough for the owner to withhold a portion of your security deposit.

However, under any circumstances the apartment must be thoroughly checked through and this includes the final payment of utility bills, hidden stains and burns and testing the working order of white goods, all of which take time.

It is usual for the return of the security deposit to take up to two weeks. We suggest that the maximum time allowed is stated clearly on the Tenancy Agreement.

DCIC LaunchPad 2016 Delta Creativity & Innovation Celebration. Includes QR codes for presentation and registration, and logos of sponsors like San Jiao Ling and LETS.

C&C LAWYERS advertisement featuring a list of partners and associates, including Rui José da Cunha, Álvaro Rodrigues, and others. Includes office photos and contact information.

MACAUCLOSER.COM advertisement with the slogan 'KNOW MORE LIVE BETTER' and 'LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE'. Includes social media icons and a QR code.

Steve Wynn ex-wife's lawyers are barred from suit over stock

Edvard Pettersson

ELAINE Wynn was handed a setback in her fight with her ex-husband, casino mogul Steve Wynn, to get out of an agreement that prevents her from selling her USD1-billion stake in Wynn Resorts Ltd. without his permission.

A Nevada state judge has barred her lawyers from participating in the lawsuit while considering whether to disqualify the attorneys altogether. Wynn Resorts alleges they failed to disclose to the judge and the company's lawyers that they possessed proprietary information about the casino operator that Elaine Wynn had downloaded on her computer.



Elaine Wynn

their disqualification. She also said the law firm can't use any confidential information from Wynn resorts in "any way, shape, or form."

"I've had multiple stories every time I've dealt with this information," Gonzalez said at the hearing. "The fact that the story changes whenever some new information come up gives me a high level of concern, which is why I am trying to preclude Quinn Emanuel from affirmatively reaching out to anyone."

Representatives of Elaine Wynn and Quinn Emanuel didn't immediately respond to requests for comment on the ruling.

The fight started when Wynn Resorts forcibly redeemed Okada's 20 percent stake, saying he bribed gaming officials in the Philippines where he was building a casino. Elaine Wynn filed a separate claim in Wynn's lawsuit against Okada to escape a shareholders agreement that was part of the couple's divorce and that prevents her from selling her shares without her ex-husband's permission.

The five-year-old lawsuit has been stuck in court over numerous disputes related to the evidence and testimony each side can demand from the other, with numerous trips to the Nevada Supreme Court to try to reverse Gonzalez's rulings. Elaine Wynn's stepped-up attack on her ex-husband has further stalled the case, which had been scheduled to go to trial this month.

"For most of the history of this case, Ms. Wynn's cross-claim against Mr. Wynn has played a minor role in these proceedings," Okada's lawyers said in a Jan. 11 filing with the Nevada Supreme Court. "Recently, however, this collateral dispute between Ms. Wynn and her former husband has metastasized into a disruptive grudge match that threatens the district court's efforts to efficiently manage and dispose of this case."

Bloomberg

The fight started when Wynn Resorts forcibly redeemed Okada's 20pct stake, saying he bribed gaming officials in the Philippines

The ruling came almost a year after Elaine Wynn, who had failed to keep her seat on the company's board in 2015, brought in a new team of lawyers from Los Angeles firm Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP to escalate the three-way legal brawl involving her, Steve Wynn and his former business partner, Japanese billionaire Kazuo Okada.

Her Quinn Emanuel team last year alleged that she had been ousted from the board in retaliation for challenging her ex-husband's management style. Among the allegations were claims that Steve Wynn had been forced into a multimillion-dollar settlement with a former employee over allegation of "serious misconduct" on company property. Elaine Wynn also last year claimed she was entitled to whistle-blower protection for disclosing possible securities law violations to Wynn Resorts' external auditors.

At a Jan. 23 hearing, Nevada District Judge Elizabeth Gonzalez issued an order that temporarily blocks the Quinn Emanuel lawyers from participating in the case other than to contest

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As thousands of Macau residents and visitors from afar gathered to watch Macau's dazzling Chinese New Year Parade on January 30 and February 4, MGM's parade float not only wowed and entertained, but also had a unique twist - an environmental message at its heart!

Celebrating our passion for sustainability

Through this float, we aimed to share our passion for sustainability with the community at this special time of year. To create the float, we thoughtfully used materials that can be readily recycled such as plastic, glass and metal; and for lighting we utilized 100% LED lighting, which uses up to 80% less energy than non-LED alternatives. In the months leading up to the float's creation, MGM's recycling champions helped to collect over 1500 plastic bottles, 400 wine glass bottles and 500 room key cards to form the body of the float - materials which will be recycled following the float disassembly.



Through the promotion of recycling, we hope to highlight the importance of careful waste management in the community and the power of each one of us to do our part to protect the environment. We further celebrated the beauty of Mother Nature through a "Fantasy Garden" theme, with the entire float engulfed by a majestic Phoenix. Animated lions, birds and plants depicted a floating garden, which intermingled with recyclable materials, symbolizing sustainable living in today's modern world. A troupe of Junior and Senior Lion Dance performers (selected from MGM's very own Lion Dance Program), as well as acrobats, dancers and traditional Chinese beating drums, flagged the front and sides of the float, creating a spectacular celebration of Chinese culture.

Sharing a meaningful token

Every year, diseases caused by a lack of basic sanitation take the lives of over 1.7 million children under the age of five - using soap is key to fighting this unnecessary tragedy. At MGM, instead of throwing away guest room soap, we have partnered with a non-profit association, Clean The World, an organization that collects, carefully sanitizes and recycles discarded soap and then distributes renewed bars to those in need in Macau and beyond. This initiative also reminds us of the embedded value of recyclable items, and the benefit that we can bring to the community through sustainability and mindfulness of natural resources.

To share a token from this program, MGM distributed soap created by the Clean The World program during the parade, with the message that recycling soap saves lives!

Unwavering dedication to sustainability

We are honored to have been recognized over the years for our contribution to sustainability, having been chosen as one of the top corporate sustainability leaders in Macau, Hong Kong and Mainland China, in the Hang Seng Sustainability Corporate Benchmark Index. Further, we are also proud that MGM COTAI will have environmental sustainability at its heart, having received the China (Macau) Green Building Design Label - the first private sector company, as well as the largest entity, to have received this award in Macau.

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These photos taken by cellphone yesterday show rescuers working at the accident site in Wencheng County, Wenzhou City

ZHEJIANG

Housing collapse leaves nine buried

NINE people were buried in the collapse of a group of homes in eastern China yesterday morning, a Chinese rescue official and state media reported.

Four homes tumbled in the city of Wenzhou in Zhejiang province, just south of the commercial hub of Shanghai, the Xinhua News Agency

said.

Xinhua said crews were working carefully because the collapsed homes, each between four and five stories tall, were attached to buildings that had remained standing. Huang Guoku, a traffic control official in Wenzhou's Baizhuangji township, confirmed the Xinhua report and

said as many as 300 rescuers were on the scene.

No immediate cause was given for the collapse and Xinhua said there had been no reports of extreme weather in the area over recent days.

In October, 22 people were killed in Wenzhou when a cluster of decrepit homes collapsed, apparently becau-

se of poor construction and the building of additional levels on unstable foundations.

Meanwhile, a total of 13,796 fires occurred during China's week-long Spring Festival holiday, killing 39 people and forcing the evacuation of 10,523 others, the Ministry of Public Security said as quoted by Xinhua.

The fires resulted in direct economic losses of 44.63 million yuan (about USD6.49 million), marking a 54.1 percent drop compared with the same period last year, the ministry said in a statement.

The number of fires and fire casualties decreased by 11.8 percent and 26.4 percent

respectively year-on-year, it said. No fire claimed more than five lives during the holiday.

According to Xinhua, fires are usually caused by setting off fireworks and firecrackers during the holiday as the Chinese believed the noise will drive away bad spirits and bring good luck.

However, sales of fireworks have dropped in recent years in cities amid pollution concerns and government restrictions. Nationwide, 444 cities have banned fireworks and 764 other cities imposed restrictions on setting off fireworks, according to the ministry. **MDT/Agencies**

USD212 million deal to make Chinese SUVs in Hidalgo

MEXICO announced a 4.4 billion peso (USD212 million) deal to assemble Chinese cars in the central state of Hidalgo yesterday, amid calls for the country to diversify economic ties as tensions have risen with the U.S., its largest trade partner.

Hidalgo Gov. Omar Fayad announced the deal between Mexico's Giant Motors Latinoamerica and Chinese state-owned automaker JAC Motors at a news conference in the capital.

The plant in Ciudad Sahagun, about 40 miles northeast of

metropolitan Mexico City, will produce two SUV models and the first cars are expected to roll off assembly lines in the second half of this year.

Fayad said the plant will begin with a capacity of 11,000 vehicles annually, with output ultimately rising to 40,000. The initial phase of the project is expected to create 1,000 direct and 4,500 indirect jobs.

The vehicles are initially aimed at the Mexican market, but there are hopes of distributing elsewhere in Latin America

in the future.

"This automobile will proudly carry a label that will say 'Made in Mexico,'" Fayad said, "and that should be a cause for great pride for the people of Hidalgo."

The United States now buys about 80 percent of Mexico's exports, but recent weeks have seen tensions between the two nations amid President Donald Trump's promises to build a wall along their border and force a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The U.S. administration also floated

the possibility of a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports to force Mexico to pay for the wall, though officials later walked that back as simply one of multiple options.

Fayad called the deal announced a step down "a road toward the diversification of exports alternative to the United States."

He said Mexico would do well to try to boost trade with Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, while also keeping its arms open to its northern neighbor.

"We are expressly working to present a series of options that do not limit us to one single path. [...] We see [this moment] as a new niche of opportunity," Fayad said. **AP**

CNY

Ivanka Trump visits Chinese Embassy



Ivanka and her father walk to board Marine One on the South Lawn of the White House

Ivanka Trump is celebrating Chinese New Year at the Chinese Embassy in Washington.

President Donald Trump's daughter walked into a reception for the holiday holding hands with her daughter. She was accompanied by Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. Cui Tiankai.

They were instantly surrounded by a swarm of other guests who pulled out phones to take their photo.

Ivanka Trump stopped to watch a performance of traditional music by an all-female cast of Chinese musicians in green, blue and yellow gowns. She then watched a troupe of male dancers who juggled hats while standing on each other in pyramid formation.

Ivanka Trump traveled to Delaware with her father earlier to honor the returning remains of a U.S. Navy SEAL killed in a weekend raid in Yemen.

Lucy Hornby, Beijing

THE abduction of Xiao Jianhua from Hong Kong by Chinese agents last week is stoking investor concerns about the network of businesses and shareholdings the billionaire controls.

The reopening of Chinese stock markets today after a week-long hiatus will give them their first litmus test. Share prices are set to show whether the disappearance of the former “bagman” to families of Communist party leaders forces his powerful backers to liquidate their holdings. Others are speculating on a renationalisation of assets held by Mr Xiao or his Tomorrow Group.

The 45-year-old financier has not appeared in public since he left his Hong Kong residence in the early hours last Friday, accompanied by Chinese security agents. He later told his family he was in mainland China, according to people familiar with the investigation.

Mr Xiao liked to style himself a value investor and disciple of Warren Buffett. But his primary asset seemed to be an ability to make himself useful when China's powerful families needed to move money around. Shell companies he controlled were instrumental in several deals involving families of Chinese leaders. These include the 2006 privatisation of Luneng Group, a state-owned power company in Shandong that was later renationalised, and the 2013 sale of a stake in Ping An Insurance.

In recent days the previously censored 2006 story of the Luneng privatisation by the family of Zeng Qinghong, a politician allied with Jiang Zemin, the former president, has been allowed to circulate

Investors await reaction to Xiao Jianhua's abduction in Hong Kong



Xiao Jianhua

freely on social media in China. Its resurrection is seen as a sign of larger political motives behind his repatriation.

His known investments stretched from chemical plants and coal mines near his wife's hometown in Inner Mongolia to property ventures and Ping An.

“He controlled a lot of companies so if his disappearance is proven it will certainly

affect some of the shareholdings,” said Hong Hao, head of research at Bocom International in Hong Kong. “People want to know if there will be any change in the ultimate ownership of these companies.”

Chinese media reported in 2013 that Mr Xiao controlled nine listed companies and 17 banks, and that he held investments in a total of more

than 30 financial institutions. Other estimates reach as high as 60. One 2013 commentary published on the website of the state-controlled People's Daily referred to Mr Xiao as a “porter” rather

“**He controlled a lot of companies so if his disappearance is proven it will certainly affect some of the shareholdings**”

HONG HAO
HEAD OF RESEARCH
BOCOM INTERNATIONAL - HONG KONG

than creator of wealth.

The Hurun report, a Chinese rich list, put his net worth in 2016 at USD6bn, making him the 32nd richest person in China, after he talked them down from a higher ranking.

Richard Hoogewerf, chairman of the Hurun Report, told the Financial Times this week it was extremely difficult to work out Mr Xiao's wealth because “he's a got a myriad of highly complex structures”. His full holdings are not known and many of his investments are thought to be through unlisted hol-

ding companies.

On Wednesday, after the Financial Times reported Mr Xiao had been taken from the Four Seasons, a luxury hotel and apartment block in Hong Kong, Tomorrow Group took out a front page ad in Hong Kong's Ming Pao newspaper “clarifying” Mr Xiao's whereabouts and repeating messages from the company's social media account that had been censored the day before.

Half pleading, half defiant, the company claimed Mr Xiao was “receiving medical treatment overseas” and denied he had “harmed the interests of the country” or “supported any opposition organisation”. It added that he was a Canadian citizen enjoying consular protection, as well as the legal rights of a Hong Kong permanent resident.

Tomorrow Holding's website has been inaccessible since its founder disappeared but the company said in a social media message late on Thursday that its operations, as well as those of its subsidiaries, remain normal.

At its low-rise yellow building on a leafy street in Beijing's technology district, there were no signs indicating its presence, nor that of the two technology companies that moved into the third floor a few years ago. Most offices in China were closed for the final day of the new year's holiday yesterday, so no employees were in sight. **MDT/FT Exclusive**

Builders buying into new ventures fuels creditor worry

CHINESE property developers investing in new ventures outside their core business are hurting their bonds.

The notes of Sunac China Holdings Ltd and Dalian Wanda Commercial Properties Co. may come under more pressure this year as the groups branch out into non-core businesses. Purchases by highly leveraged Chinese developers unrelated to real estate raise the

“knee-jerk question” of whether they might be having problems with their existing business, said Bryan Collins, a fixed-income portfolio manager at Fidelity International in Hong Kong.

Chinese builders face increased competition and tighter profit margins at home as urban developments have mushroomed in recent years in a maturing market, according to MUFG Securities

Asia Ltd. Moody's Investors Service expects government measures to slow sales growth in China's property market this year after hitting a record high in 2016.

“Whenever a company goes outside their core business, it invites questions about their strategic focus and how their credit profile will evolve over time,” said Clement Chong, senior credit analyst in Singapore at NN Investment

Partners. “We would be concerned about what the new ventures would do to the business risk and financial risk profiles.”

Sunac China's 2019 notes fell the most since August after it announced its first investment outside of property on Jan. 13. Dalian Wanda's 2018 and 2024 bonds fell when billionaire shareholder Wang Jianlin said last year the parent is planning five



substantial acquisitions to focus more on entertainment and sports.

Calls to Sunac and

Dalian Wanda's media departments during the Chinese New Year holiday went unanswered. **Bloomberg**



A group of asylum seekers hold up their identity after landing in Manus Island, Papua New Guinea

Kristen Gelineau, Sydney

ANALYSIS

Trump's clash with Australia strains alliance

FOR decades, Australia and the U.S. have enjoyed the coziest of relationships, collaborating on everything from military and intelligence to diplomacy and trade. Yet an irritable tweet President Donald Trump fired off about Australia and a dramatic report of an angry phone call between the nations' leaders proves that the new U.S. commander in chief has changed the playing field for even America's staunchest allies.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was left scrambling to defend his country's allegiance to the U.S. after The Washington Post published a report yesterday detailing a tense exchange that allegedly took place during the Australian leader's first telephone call with Trump since he became president. During the call, the Post reported, Trump ranted about an agreement struck with the Obama administration that would allow a group of mostly Muslim refugees rejected by Australia to be resettled in the United States. The newspaper said Trump dubbed it "the worst deal ever" and accused Turnbull of seeking to export the "next Boston bombers" — a reference to Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, U.S. citizens born in Kyrgyzstan who set off explosives at the 2013 Boston marathon.

Though Turnbull declined to confirm the report, he also didn't deny it, apart from rejecting one detail — that Trump had hung up on him. The prime minister insisted his country's relationship

with the U.S. remained strong, and that the refugee deal with the U.S. was still on.

Trump's not going to agree to this deal [on immigration]! Obama entered into it and whatever Obama was for, Donald Trump is against.

NICK ECONOMOU
Monash University

Yet shortly after, Trump took to Twitter to slam the agreement, tweeting: "Do you believe it? The Obama Administration agreed to take thousands of illegal immigrants from Australia. Why? I will study this dumb deal!"

Australians, long accustomed to a chummy friendship with the U.S., were stunned by the drama. Not since the Vietnam War — when Australia's then-Prime Minister

Gough Whitlam criticized a series of bombings authorized by then-President Richard Nixon — has there been such obvious friction between the leaders of the two nations.

"You can't help but think the signal this sends to world leaders: That you have to be very, very careful doing business with this administration, particularly with the president and the people around him," said Simon Jackman, CEO of the U.S. Studies Center in Sydney. "And that can't help but put a chill on relations between allies."

Yet the only surprising thing about Trump's reaction to the deal is that Australians were surprised at all, said Nick Economou, a political analyst at Monash University in Melbourne. Members of Turnbull's conservative party probably assumed — perhaps naively — they still had a special relationship with conservatives in the U.S., based on the close ties the parties enjoyed during previous administrations. But if Trump has taught the world anything, Economou said, it's that he has little patience for tradition.

"I suspect that there is a feeling that, 'Oh no, we've dealt with Republicans before, we were very close to George W. Bush, we should be fine with

Mr. Trump and he'll agree to this deal," Economou said. "But the thing is, of course he's not going to agree to this deal! Obama entered into it and whatever Obama was for, Donald Trump is against."

Australia has long been one of America's strongest allies. The nation has fought alongside the U.S. in every major conflict since World War I, including the Korean War, Vietnam War and, more recently, in the Middle East. Australia is also part of the "Five Eyes" intelligence-sharing program with the U.S., along with Canada, Britain and New Zealand.

And while few believe the spat over the refugee deal will permanently damage those ties, it will likely prompt changes in how America's allies approach their dealings with Washington.

The businessman-turned-president's response — lashing out at a deal that had already been on the table — could be a negotiation tactic he is borrowing from his days in real estate, said Norman Abjorensen, a political analyst at the Australian National University. And like it or not, he said, it's a tactic Australia may need to accept.

"The way of doing business — Australia's going to have to adjust to it," Abjorensen

said. "There's not going to be adjustments at the other end, for sure. The wind has shifted quite dramatically."

But while politicians may be able to adjust to Trump's whims, the Australian public may not be so forgiving, Abjorensen said.

"People are going to read this and think, 'Hang on, this is something a little bit different. Doesn't he like us? What's changed?'" Abjorensen said. "It might bring about a gradual rethinking of the relationship, certainly at the level of the people."

Despite the drama, Turnbull insisted that his country remained loyal to the U.S., calling the relationship "rock solid."

"Our alliance is built on commitments on service, on courage, on partnership of millions of Australians and Americans going back generations," Turnbull told Melbourne radio station 3AW. "And it will continue and strengthen during my time as prime minister and I'm sure President Trump's time as president."

Still, despite the upbeat message Turnbull delivered publicly, most analysts suspect he — like most Australians — was left stunned by the slight.

"I think Mr. Turnbull has come across something he's probably never encountered before in his political career, his legal career or his business career. The 'Trump experience,' day one!" Abjorensen said with a laugh. "This is how you treat your friends? Heaven help those who are a little bit further down the list of being in favor." AP

Robert Burns, Seoul

Mattis criticizes N. Korea ahead of talks with Japan, S. Korea

IN his first public remarks abroad as U.S. defense secretary, Jim Mattis yesterday criticized North Korea for provocative acts and said he would consult with South Korean and Japanese officials about whether the current strategy for getting the North to curtail or eliminate its nuclear and missile programs is adequate.

Mattis spoke to reporters aboard his military plane en route to Osan air base from Washington. In the brief interview, he said he would be discussing the plan to install a new U.S. missile defense system, called Thaad, in South Korea as a means of deterring the North's ballistic missile threats against South Korea and Japan.

North Korea also has said it is nearly ready to test-launch a ballistic missile of intercontinental range, meaning it could theoretically threaten the United States.

"Were it not for the provocative behavior of North Korea, we would have no need for Thaad out here," Mattis said.

Alluding to China's objections to having Thaad deployed in South Korea, Mattis said, "Thaad should be a worry

to no nation other than North Korea."

Mattis held an introductory meeting with Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn, who said he looked forward to working with the Trump administration.

Mattis said he was delivering a message from Trump.

"I talked to President Trump and he wanted to make a very clear statement about the priority that we place on this alliance between our two nations, the secretary said. "Our new administration inherits a very strong, trusted relationship between our two countries and it's our commitment to make it even stronger especially in the face of the provocations that you face from North Korea."

After a series of meetings in Seoul yesterday and today, Mattis was scheduled to fly to Tokyo for further consultations.

In Washington this week, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held its first policy

hearing since Trump took office to discuss North Korea. There were more questions than answers.

Last month, Trump fueled speculation of possible U.S. military action to pre-empt North Korea's weapons development. In response to Kim's threat, Trump tweeted, "It won't happen!" But he didn't elaborate how he could be so sure.

"Does that mean we have drawn a red line?" Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md., asked at this week's Senate hearing.

During the campaign, Trump complained that defense treaties disadvantaged the U.S. and that he would not rule out abandoning signatories if they refuse to pay more for their defense. He also suggested that South Korea and Japan, which are already within the range of North Korean missiles, might acquire their own nuclear weapons rather than rely on U.S. deterrence. AP



South Korean protesters stage a rally against U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis's visit, in front of the government complex in Seoul yesterday

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THERE IS LIFE BEYOND TRUMP...

Sanders, Biden weigh in on race to lead Democratic Party

FORMER Vice President Joe Biden is backing Tom Perez to head the Democratic National Committee, calling the former Obama administration labor secretary the “best bet to help bring the party back.”

Biden’s endorsement — a sign of Perez’s strong support among former Obama administration officials — drew a sharp response from Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, escalating the relatively sleepy party chairman battle into a fight between the liberal wing that supported Sanders’ insurgent primary bid and backers of Hillary Clinton.

“The question is simple: Do we stay with a failed status-quo approach or do we go forward with a fundamental restructuring of the Democratic Party?” said Sanders, who’s backing Keith Ellison, a Minnesota congressman. “I say we go forward and create a grassroots party which speaks for working people.”

Biden’s support, his first political act since leaving office, is the highest-profile endorsement in the crowded — and still fluid — race to lead the Democratic Party, which has rekindled party divisions exposed in last year’s presidential primary campaign.

While former President Barack Obama has praised his former labor secretary as “tireless, wicked smart,” he’s so far withheld a formal endorsement.

Biden cast Perez, a Dominican-American civil rights lawyer who grew up in the Rust Belt, as a tireless champion of working Americans, immigrants and the disabled.

“He knows how to explain why our party’s core beliefs matter to the immigrant family in Arizona and the coal miner in West Virginia. That matters,” Biden said in a statement. “I’ve watched him work. I think I know his heart. That’s why I endorse him as the next chairman of the DNC.”

Perez, who was quietly urged by the White House to jump into the race, faces his stiffest competition from Ellison.

Democratic strategists with



Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden contend to lead the Democrats into a new era



The question is simple: Do we stay with a failed status-quo approach or do we go forward with a fundamental restructuring of the Democratic Party?

BERNIE SANDERS

knowledge of the chairman selection process say Perez has as much as a 66-member lead

among the 447 members of the party who will vote on the next chairman at the party convention in late February. In total, 304 members have indicated who they’re backing.

The strategists spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the vote counting.

Perez aides say he’s raised more than USD825,000 for his campaign, with 73 percent of the donors contributing \$200 or less.

Ellison attributed the support to Biden’s sense of loyalty to Perez, who spent much of the past eight years working in the Obama administration.

“At the end of the day, I think we can all agree that the DNC chair must be the choice of the rank-and-file Democratic Party members across the nation,” he said in a statement.

His aides disputes Perez’s lead

in the race and claim a hefty advantage, though they would not share their internal count. Ellison staffers say he’s raised nearly \$1 million for his campaign, with 98 percent of donors contributing \$200 or less.

Along with Perez and Ellison, South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, South Carolina Democratic Chairman Jaime Harrison, New Hampshire Democratic Chairman Raymond Buckley, Democratic strategist Jehmu Greene and the executive director of the Idaho Democratic Party, Sally Boynton Brown, are in the race.

While the contests mostly focus on the political logistics of rebuilding the struggling party, the candidates are also working to appeal to a party base furious with President Donald Trump’s early actions and demanding nothing short of complete resistan-

ce from their leaders.

“Even though Donald Trump is trying to administer body blows to Lady Liberty, the American people are speaking up loudly and clearly in places all over the country,” Perez said in an interview earlier this week. “We can’t normalize falsehoods.”

Ellison, who held a news conference with the leaders of the American Civil Liberties Union and Gold Star father Khizr Khan yesterday said Trump’s early actions have made it impossible for Democrats to approach the new administration with anything but a wall of opposition.

“We’re well past the question of should we just automatically oppose Trump. It’s based on a factual predicate and record,” Ellison said. “Democrats are being told by the people of this country to stand up and fight on their behalf.” AP

WHITE HOUSE

Trump comments on Mexico ‘lighthearted’

A White House official is confirming that President Donald Trump told Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto that he might send U.S. troops to deal with “bad hombres down there” if the Mexican military doesn’t.

The official says the remark was meant to be “lighthearted” and was a reference to cooperation between the countries in fighting drug cartels.



The Associated Press first reported yesterday that Trump made the comment in an hour-long conversation with Mexican President Enrique

Pena Nieto on Jan. 27.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the details publicly, said “those comments, while lighthearted, were part of a discussion about how the United States and Mexico could work collaboratively to combat drug cartels and other criminal elements, and make the border more secure.”

The official described the

conversation as “pleasant and constructive.”

On another front of his anti-migrant crusade, an Iranian scientist heading to Boston to take a job at a Harvard Medical School lab has sued President Donald Trump after she was denied entry into the U.S.

Samira Asgari says in her lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court that she was denied entry to the U.S. even

though she had a valid visa and federal judges had issued a restraining order against the president’s ban on visitors from seven Muslim-majority nations, including Iran.

Asgari had most recently been living in Switzerland. Last weekend, Asgari flew from Switzerland to Germany, but was blocked by U.S. and airline officials as she tried to board a plane to Boston.

In addition to Trump, the suit names Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection officials as defendants. MDT/AP

USA-IRAN

Trump puts Iran 'on notice' after ballistic missile test

Vivian Salama & Josh Lederman, Washington

PRESIDENT Donald Trump said yesterday his administration has put Iran "on notice," echoing comments from his top national security adviser that the U.S. will act against Iran unless it stops testing ballistic missiles and supporting Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Trump and his National Security Adviser, Michael Flynn, didn't elaborate on what retaliatory actions the U.S. could pursue.

Trump tweeted, "Iran was on its last legs and ready to collapse until the U.S. came along and gave it a life-line in the form of the Iran Deal: USD150 billion."

He also tweeted, "Iran has been formally PUT ON NOTICE for firing a ballistic missile. Should have been thankful for the terrible deal the U.S. made with them!"

Earlier, Flynn forcefully denounced Iran's behavior in his first public remarks since Trump took office. He accused Iran of threa-



National Security Adviser Michael Flynn speaks during the daily news briefing at the White House, in Washington

tening U.S. allies and spreading instability throughout the Middle East while faulting the Obama

administration for doing too little to stop the Islamic Republic. "As of today, we are officially

putting Iran on notice," Flynn said from the White House podium.

On notice for what, Flynn didn't say. Senior Trump administration officials said they were actively considering a "range of options" including economic measures and increased support for Iran's regional adversaries. The officials, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity, declined repeatedly to say whether military action is being considered.

The warning was an early manifestation of Trump's promise of a tougher American approach to Iran. Yet administration officials emphasized that their allegations were unrelated to Iran's obligations under the Iran nuclear deal that President Barack Obama and world leaders negotiated. Though Flynn noted Trump has criticized that deal, officials declined to say whether Trump planned to follow through on his campaign pledge to renegotiate it.

"The Obama administration

failed to respond adequately to Tehran's malign actions — including weapons transfers, support for terrorism and other violations of international norms," Flynn said.

The White House also faulted Iran for backing Houthi rebels in Yemen who on Tuesday claimed a successful missile strike against a warship belonging to a Saudi-led coalition fighting to reinstall Yemen's internationally recognized government. The media arm of the Shiite rebels said the vessel was believed to belong to the Saudi Arabian navy.

Administration officials said Iran was providing key support by arming, training and financing the rebels, with a goal of leveraging its relationship with the Houthis to "build a long-term presence in Yemen."

The White House said the goal in putting Iran "on notice" was to signal to Tehran that it needed to rethink its behavior. Flynn said Iran specifically violated the U.N.'s ban on "activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology."

Iran's Defense Minister Gen. Hossein Dehghan confirmed that Iran conducted a missile test, but did not say when the test was carried out or specify the type of missile. He insisted it wasn't a violation of U.N. resolutions. AP

AD

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FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
16:50	Happy Endings Sr.3
17:30	Castle S6 (Repeated)
18:10	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Documentary Serie
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Portuguese Movie
01:40	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
02:30	RTPi Live

SATURDAY

10:30	Comedy
11:05	Blaze Riders
11:30	Documentary Serie
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Documentary Serie
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Soap Opera
18:40	Documentary Series
19:10	Miscellaneous
19:40	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non Daily Portuguese News
21:10	Drama
22:00	Revenge S.4
22:45	Miscellaneous
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Musical
00:10	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:45	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:25	Young Children
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Zig Zag
16:40	Documentary Serie
17:15	Miscellaneous
18:30	Documentary Serie
19:00	Miscellaneous
19:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:40	Comedy
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
22:00	Secrets of China
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Documentary series
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
00:40	RTPi Live

Offbeat

CRITICS DON'T EVEN WANT ANIMATRONIC TRUMP TO SPEAK

Some critics of President Donald Trump are so adamant in their opposition that they don't even want a fake version of him to speak.

An online petition was started last week, asking Walt Disney World to keep an animatronic Trump silent in its Hall of Presidents attraction.

The attraction has animatronic figures of all U.S. presidents. Recent incumbent presidents have recorded speeches for their animatronic doubles.

The Change.org petition says Trump ran a campaign filled with hateful speech and he doesn't deserve to have a voice at a place like Disney World in Florida. A Disney spokeswoman didn't immediately respond to an email and call seeking comment.

The Hall of Presidents temporarily closed earlier this month so the new animatronic president could be installed.

It reopens in June.

cinema



CINETEATRO

2 FEB -3 FEB

RESIDENT EVIL: FINAL CHAPTER

ROOM 1

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 1 (3D)

7:30pm

Director: Paul W. S. Anderson

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

Language: English

Duration: 103min

THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE

ROOM 1

4:30pm

Director: Chris McKay

Starring: Jenny Slate, Will Arnett, Ralph Fiennes

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 104min

POKEMON: THE MOVIE 19

ROOM 2

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

Director: Kunihiko Yuyama

Starring: James Cathcart, Kiyotaka Furushima, Megumi Hayashibara

Language: Cantonese (Chinese)



LA LA LAND

ROOM 2

7:30, 10:00pm

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

THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE

ROOM 3

10:15pm

Director: Chris McKay

Starring: Jenny Slate, Will Arnett, Ralph Fiennes

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 104min

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



1960 MACMILLAN SPEAKS OF 'WIND OF CHANGE' IN AFRICA

The Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, has had a frosty reception from politicians in South Africa after speaking frankly against the country's system of apartheid.

In a speech to MPs in the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town, Mr Macmillan spoke of the "wind of change" blowing through the continent of Africa, as more and more majority black populations in the colonies claim the right to rule themselves.

"Whether we like it or not," he said, "this growth of national consciousness is a political fact."

The government's aim, he said, was to "create a society which respects the rights of individuals - a society in which individual merit, and individual merit alone, is the criterion for a man's advancement, whether political or economic."

Nationalist Party politicians listened to him in silence, and a number refused to applaud when he had finished.

Dr Verwoerd, the South African Prime Minister and the architect of the apartheid system, thanked Mr Macmillan for his speech, but said he could not agree.

"We are the people who brought civilisation to Africa," he said. "To do justice in Africa means not only being just to the black man of Africa, but also to the white man of Africa."

Mr Macmillan's speech is the first time a senior international figure has given voice to the growing protest against South Africa's laws of strict racial segregation.

The speech was widely anticipated throughout the country, as Mr Macmillan had already said he would take the chance to say what he thought about the situation in South Africa.

Even so, the plain-speaking nature of the speech took many in Cape Town by surprise.

Mr Macmillan is in South Africa at the end of a month-long tour of the African continent, in which he has travelled about 17,000 miles.

His visit was always controversial, and many accused him of giving the Nationalist Party credibility by allowing himself to be a guest of the South African government.

His speech today is likely to lay those criticisms to rest.

Courtesy of BBC

IN CONTEXT

Harold Macmillan's "wind of change" speech became a historical landmark. It was the first sign that the British government accepted that the days of Empire were over, and it dramatically speeded up the process of African independence.

It also marked the beginning of South Africa's long spell out in the cold. Although Nationalist Party politicians reacted with outrage to the speech, and became even more entrenched, the speech brought international opposition to the apartheid system out into the open.

Only a month later, the Sharpeville Massacre was to add revulsion to the disapproval, and South Africa faced utter isolation, including international trade sanctions.

Even so, the country clung stubbornly to apartheid for another 30 years, until 1990 when President de Klerk began dismantling its laws and ANC leader, and future president, Nelson Mandela was released.

Harold Macmillan resigned from office in 1963 due to ill-health, after four decades in British politics. He died in 1986, at the age of 92.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Just in the nick of time, a friend you haven't seen in far too long will ride in and rescue you. They might not be royalty, and their steed may not be a white horse - or even a BMW.

Taurus
April 20-May 20
You're not quite sure what to do, but you have to decide quickly. Should you be good, follow all the rules and impress your bosses with your incredible ability to follow orders to the letter?

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
And there was much rejoicing in the kingdom. Which kingdom? Yours. The universe has arranged for nothing but pleasant energy to circulate in the heavens above you - and it looks like the good feelings will be contagious.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You can't help caring. It's your nature. So if someone asks for your opinion, warn them that it's tough for you to be objective. All you can really offer are your feelings, especially if you're involved in the outcome of the situation.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Tired of spending, or should that be overspending? Or are you just ready for a new focus and a change of pace? You'll be in a fine mood. When you're in a good mood, you're contagious, making everyone around you happy.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
Everyone seems to be a lot more pleasant today - or at least a lot less extravagant, emotionally speaking. This would be a fine time to throw an impromptu party at your place with all your closest friends.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22
After days of being totally lavish, excessive and extravagant, you're ready to tone it down - well, almost ready. Except when it comes to showing a dear one how much you care.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
You're ready to focus on more practical things now - like your home. Of course, that can mean one of several things. You may want to do an entire makeover of a room from the ground floor up.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Things are going along just swimmingly, aren't they? Yes, this is the kind of day you can live with. Everyone around you is in the mood to be playful and take a well-calculated risk or two.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You're in the mood to try things out - all kinds of things, but especially all the good things that your senses have to offer. That includes good food, fine wine and quality companions.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
What you are ready for is to let all those secrets you've been hiding come right out into the open, with no holds barred. Before you do, though, is there anyone you should warn first - in private?

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20
Be careful who you let in on the secret, even if it's someone you adore. You've been holding on to a vital, startling piece of information for quite some time now.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-6	6	clear/cloudy
Harbin	-17	-4	clear
Tianjin	-1	7	cloudy
Urumqi	-15	-5	clear
Xi'an	-3	8	cloudy
Lhasa	-8	9	cloudy/clear
Chengdu	3	13	cloudy
Chongqing	9	13	overcast
Kunming	5	17	shower/cloudy
Nanjing	4	7	drizzle
Shanghai	5	10	overcast/drizzle
Wuhan	1	6	drizzle
Hangzhou	4	12	cloudy/shower
Taipei	13	22	overcast
Guangzhou	13	21	cloudy
Hong Kong	16	19	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-10	-5	overcast/flurry
Frankfurt	3	6	drizzle
Paris	6	10	drizzle
London	6	10	drizzle
New York	-3	4	flurry/clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Botch; 6- Stow, as cargo; 10- Walk in water; 14- French farewell; 15- Former partners; 16- Black; 17- Charged toward; 18- Flesh; 19- Unit of force; 20- Haunt of Robin Hood; 23- In what way; 24- Charged particle; 25- Overhead trains; 26- Indy 500 sponsor; 27- Longing; 32- "Casablanca" role; 35- Jai alai basket; 36- Actress Vardalos; 37- In spite of; 41- JFK listing; 42- Lobster state; 43- Small batteries; 44- Short dagger; 46- Young fellow; 48- River inlet; 49- 1980's movie starring Bo Derek and Dudley Moore; 50- Sorority letters; 53- Expression of appreciation; 58- Island feast; 59- Go sky-high; 60- Big; 61- Formerly, formerly; 62- Time; 63- "Silas Marner" author; 64- Greek goddess of the earth; 65- "Betsy's Wedding" star; 66- Religious offshoots;

DOWN: 1- Waterlogged soil; 2- Boise's state; 3- Tendon; 4- Precious; 5- Outsmart; 6- Yellowish citrus fruit; 7- Canned; 8- Unwilling to listen; 9- This, in Tijuana; 10- High-speed skiing; 11- Ethiopia; 12- "___ you dare!"; 13- Opposite of WSW; 21- Alley-___; 22- Showed again; 26- Spotted; 27- Type of question; 28- Town near Padua; 29- ___ glance; 30- Columbus' ship; 31- Jokes; 32- Supermodel Sastrre; 33- Trent of the Senate; 34- Steps up; 35- Voucher; 38- That is to say...; 39- Rat-a-___; 40- Pop; 45- Monetary unit of Zaire; 46- Was ahead; 47- Fishes; 49- ___ cotta; 50- Adapted to a dry environment; 51- Gold bar; 52- Cancels a dele; 53- Distinctive quality; 54- Dept. of Labor div.; 55- Fleece; 56- Praise; 57- Boy or man; 58- Lower limb;

Yesterday's solution

S	U	N	T	P	A	P	E	R	D	O	N	T
R	A	R	E	A	L	L	A	H	E	V	O	E
R	E	A	L	E	S	T	A	T	E	T	E	A
E	L	T	O	N	O	S	I	R	I	S		
L	E	D	G	E	R	S	A	S	I	N	E	
E	N	E	R	G	E	R	G	E	R	M	I	T
D	E	L	A	Y	H	O	R	A	E	D	E	
T	R	I	M	C	I	V	E	T	S	U	R	P
O	O	N	M	A	R	E	S	A	L	L	I	E
R	E	L	A	T	E	S	A	P	O	G	E	E
L	A	T	T	E	N	S	H	A	R	P		
O	B	I	T	A	P	P	O	R	T	I	O	N
O	B	O	L	T	I	A	R	A	P	I	E	D
W	I	N	E	E	G	E	Y	P	T	E	L	H

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- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IACM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
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<p>Calçada da Surpresa, 12, Ching Fai Court, Macau 2 Bedroom Apartment Unique in Design HKD 23,000 / 2,000 sq ft Ref: 16120629</p>	<p>House, Hac Sa Beach Coloane House with Open Views Terrace Overlooking Mountains HKD 60,000 / 6,000 sq ft Ref: 17010632</p>	<p>Manhattan - B unit Taipa 3 Bedroom Apartment Spacious and Furnished HKD 22,000 / 1,680 sq ft Ref: 16120630</p>	<p>Hellene Gardens, Lot 4, D Unit, Coloane 3 Bedroom Apartment Car Park Included HKD 12,800 / 1,663 sq ft Ref: 16100623</p>



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FOOTBALL

For Guam, skipping the 2019 Asian Cup is a lost opportunity

John Duerden, Associated Press

LESS than two years after the team from tiny Guam drew international attention in the qualifying tournament for the 2018 World Cup, the football story in the northern Pacific island has turned to one of broken dreams.

Prior to June 2015, the United States territory, which joined FIFA only in 1996, had lost its only two World Cup qualifiers with a combined score of 35-0.

Then, within the space of five days, Guam beat Turkmenistan and India to temporarily top an Asian qualifying group containing Iran and Oman and jumped to No. 146 in FIFA's rankings, its highest ever place.

The results also earned Guam — for the first time — a spot in the final round of qualification for the Asian Cup, to be held in 2019. But that opportunity is gone.

Guam Football Association chief executive Richard Lai last month blamed a lack of funding when he announced the decision to withdraw from the continental tournament.

So when the draw was made last week, Nepal slotted into Guam's allocated spot and ended up in Group F with Philippines, Tajikistan and Yemen. The winners and runners-up in all six groups will advance to the AFC Cup in the United Arab Emirates in 2019.

The decision to withdraw from the qualifying generated backlash from players and fans,



but Lai told The Associated Press that it would cost around USD1.2 million to compete in the six qualifying games and "We just don't have the money."

He said many of the players are based in the United States and the cost of flying them into and out of Guam and setting up training camps drives up the costs for an FA with little sponsorship, broadcasting revenue or government support.

"There is no sports ministry here to support the team (and) every NGO here has to be self-sustaining," Lai said. "The FIFA grants come with conditions regarding women's football and youth football and facilities. We can't keep investing all we have in the national team only."

The federation said it plans to focus on Guam's youngsters in the hope it will pay dividends in the future.

"We can develop more and better players, help more go to the U.S. and improve then we can play friendlies against teams like Thailand and Singapore

and start generating revenue," Lai said.

Jason Cunliffe, who was captain of the national team, said he was upset when he found out through the media that Guam had withdrawn from the Asian Cup.

"The money is there. I think maybe not all of it was there immediately but there was a way," he said. "We've known since March that we had reached this stage of qualification and we were told to prepare. There has been no effort from the GFA to raise funds."

Lai "and everyone else have done a good job in the past but we can't rest on our laurels," he said. "We no longer have faith in the decision-makers."

Gary White, was the Guam coach in 2015 before leaving in 2016 to take over Chinese club

Shanghai Shenxin, said the success came from administrators and players "pulling together."

"I had support from the federation and the commitment from the players," White said. "There is enough leadership both in the GFA and among the players that they will get back on track."

For Lai, the last World Cup campaign was a special situation for the island of 165,000 people.

"We wanted to see where we stood, to measure our development 20 years after joining FIFA," he said. "What we achieved was phenomenal but now we have no savings. Withdrawing was a hard decision but was really our only option — better to withdraw before the start than halfway through."

Cunliffe believes his squad could have finished in the top two in qualifying and reached the Asian Cup for the first time.

"The opportunity was there to put our island on the map," he said. "But that opportunity that the players gave everything to earn has been taken away. Not by someone else but by our own federation and that is hard for us to swallow." AP

Former Chelsea, England midfielder Lampard retires at 38

FORMER Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard says he is retiring from soccer and will study to become a coach.

The 38-year-old Lampard made the announcement on Facebook yesterday, saying he turned down "a number of exciting offers to continue playing at home and abroad ... to begin the next chapter in my life."

Lampard made 106 appea-

rances for England's national team and scored a club-record 211 goals for Chelsea from 2001-14. He also played for West Ham and Manchester City before moving to New York City FC for the final 18 months of his career.

Lampard had a 21-year professional career and said "the largest part of my heart belongs to Chelsea," where he won every major club honor.



GOLF

Tiger Woods struggles in Dubai, shoots 77 in 1st round

MISSING fairways, missing greens and piling up the putts, Tiger Woods got off to a rough start at the Dubai Desert Classic. The 14-time major winner finished the first round with a 5-over 77, failing to record even one birdie yesterday at the Emirates Golf Club.

"Well, I didn't hit the ball very well," said Woods, a two-time champion in Dubai. "I left probably about 16 putts short. I just couldn't get the speed of these things, and consequently, it added up to a pretty high



number." At the halfway stage of the first round, Woods had the second worst

score among those who finished. Sergio Garcia was the early leader at 7-under 65.

Woods started on the 10th hole and hit only 10 fairways and 11 greens in regulation. He needed 33

putts to complete his round.

"I just could not hit the putts hard enough. I left every putt short," Woods said. "What I thought was downwind, downhill, would be quick, downhill, and I still came up short. Into the wind, uphill putts into the grain, I put a little more hinge on it going back to try to get a little more hit to it and it still didn't work."

Strong wind was forecast for today, making the prospect of picking up some strokes in the second round a bit difficult.

"Hopefully, this wind blows tomorrow and I shoot a good round and get back to even par now. That's certainly not out of the realms," Woods said. "But I have to go out there and do it. I have to go out there and execute and it's going to be tough and hopefully it is tough and I can play a really solid round and give myself more looks."

Woods returned to golf last month after 17 months off with a back injury, but he didn't make the cut at the Farmers Insurance Open. AP

opinion

Bizcuits

Leanda Lee



BAD TAXIS, BAD MACAU TOURISM

The first sign of the trouble was on Facebook – a lady seeking advice for her friends, a British/Filipino couple, embroiled in another Macau taxi saga. The source of the second news of the incident was more concerning: within hours it had traversed to Manila and Melbourne. By Wednesday morning I was sent MDT's article via Skype. The topic was then initiated by others in conversations with me on Viber and Messenger. Hong Kong, Indonesia and China were added to the list.

The sort of horror story these visitors from Hong Kong have to tell reverberates through our Macau community and beyond. With all the Chinese whispers, it goes something like this: A couple take a (typically problematic) short taxi ride from the Venetian to the Wynn Palace. The female passenger senses something is not kosher when the driver attempts to charge MOP100. Complaints of over-charging are made, the lady takes a video of the license number and conversation. The driver reports to the police that he was videoed and the passengers end up held at the Taipa police station. Assistance from a lawyer sees them released nearly six hours later with an option to accuse the driver of false allegations, but they return to Hong Kong with the wife still under suspicion and distressed by the day's events and what may eventuate.

For a moment, the female passenger's Filipino nationality as a possible compounding factor niggled at me. I have been shocked at the open discrimination in Macau; small things such as the agreeableness shown me at the supermarket checkout and the sneer to the domestic helper behind. A professional Filipina friend once confided in me that she took pains to dress impeccably and was never seen in jeans for fear of not being accorded civil courtesies. Although discrimination could conceivably have played a role in the driver's response, there is a more formidable trend exemplified in this case.

Macau law states a driver's duties are to present well; to stop when hailed; to assist with luggage; to give exact change; to be proper and courteous; and to follow the shortest route. Instead we have been made numb to the constant overcharging, refusal of passengers when the destination or passenger type does not suit the driver, circuitous routes and even violent behaviour. Beyond that we are hearing many more anecdotes of police protecting drivers at the expense of passengers; a worrying addition.

I sought out tips to manage shifty taxi drivers recently: "The taxi ID is a passenger's only protection. Take a photo in China, then they don't rip you off too much", "The best is to take a photo and play with Google Maps." These, however, seem ill-advised in Macau. Use that phone to protect yourself and you could be hauled before the courts. Many a disgruntled passenger has been driven to a police station for taking photos inside a cab.

Those who care about Macau's international tourist reputation constantly raise and have been lobbying against the poor taxi service, the effect it has on visitor's experiences and our daily affairs - "Honestly, even in Africa you get better service". It's problematic for business operations and undermines efforts to bolster our struggling MICE industry. If air crew returning home from the airport feel the need to change out of their uniforms or conceal them under greatcoats to successfully hail a cab, the service is doing us all a great disservice.

The sorry state of Macau's taxis will never change until drivers and license holders benefit more by providing good customer service than swindling. That's why Uber's system of mutually beneficial incentives works.

Instead, taxis and passengers continue the stand-off. Soon they'll be demanding we leave our last protective shield behind – our phones.

THE GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO VISIT US WITH 'FRIENDSHIP OFFER'

Germany's foreign minister is heading for Washington to meet newly sworn-in U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and convey what he calls an "offer of friendship and trust."

Sigmar Gabriel's trip yesterday follows criticism by Chancellor Angela Merkel of President Donald Trump's restrictions on immigration from seven majority-Muslim coun-

tries. It also comes amid concern in Berlin about the new administration's intentions on trade.

Gabriel, who is also Germany's vice chancellor, is also expected to meet U.S. Vice President Mike Pence. He stressed the United States' longstanding status as his country's closest ally outside Europe.

BREXIT

UK lawmakers back bill to trigger EU exit talks



British Prime Minister Theresa May

BRITAIN moved closer to leaving the European Union yesterday as lawmakers backed a bill authorizing divorce proceedings and kept alive the government's plan to trigger Brexit talks within weeks.

The House of Commons decisively backed the bill by 498 votes to 114, sending it on for committee scrutiny. The result was a victory for the Conservative government, which had fought in court to avert the vote out of fear Parliament would impede its Brexit plans.

Lawmakers also defeated a "wrecking amendment" proposed by the Scottish National Party that sought to delay Britain's exit talks with the EU because the British government has not disclosed detailed plans for its negotiations.

During two days of debate in the House of Commons, many legislators – Eurosceptic and Europhile alike – said they would back the bill out of respect for voters' June 23 decision to leave the EU.

But opposition parties will try to insert more amendments during the next stages of the parliamentary process. They are seeking to prevent an economy-shocking "hard Brexit," in which Britain loses full access to the EU's single market and faces restrictions or tariffs on trade.

After committee consideration, the bill is due to return to the House of Commons for a final vote next week before moving on to Parliament's upper chamber, the House of Lords.

The government was forced to introduce the legislation after a Supreme Court ruling last week torpedoed Prime Minister Theresa May's effort to start the process of leaving the 28-nation bloc without a parliamentary vote.

The government wants to have the bill approved by early March so it can meet a self-imposed March 31 deadline for triggering the EU divorce talks.

Scores of lawmakers spoke during more than 16 hours of debate over two days. Tho-

se who backed the winning "leave" side in the referendum said they would vote proudly to start the exit process.

Others, who voted to remain in the EU, said they would respect the will of the people despite their own reservations.

Former Treasury chief George Osborne, a pro-EU Conservative, said "to vote against the majority verdict of the largest democratic exercise in British history" would set Parliament against the people and "provoke a deep constitutional crisis in our country."

The government says it will publish a White Paper outlining its strategy for withdrawal, but it's unclear how many new details it will contain.

The U.K.'s largest opposition party, Labour, told its lawmakers to back the bill, but said it plans to try to amend it later to avert the so-called "hard Brexit."

However, 47 of the 229 Labour lawmakers defied party leader Jeremy Corbyn and voted against the bill.

"I do not believe that the Brexit course we are now set on will make Britain a more prosperous, fairer, more equal, tolerant country," said Owen Smith, one of the Labour rebels. "I believe, by contrast, that it will make our politics meaner, and it will make our country poorer." MDT/AP

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	20-40 Good	
High Density Residential Area	20-40 Good	
Ambient	20-40 Good	

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS



THAILAND Almost three tons of scales from endangered African pangolins, hidden in sacks, are seized at Bangkok's main airport. A wildlife anti-trafficking group says the haul is worth more than USD1 million on the illegal market and represents as many as 6,000 dead animals.

THAILAND Media organizations are protesting a bill that would require journalists to be licensed and would establish a council that can penalize news outlets for violating professional standards.

INDIA At least eight policemen were killed in a land mine blast suspected to have been carried out by Maoist rebels in their stronghold in eastern India, police said. Another five policemen were injured when their vehicle was blown up in Koraput region, nearly 550 km south of Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa state.

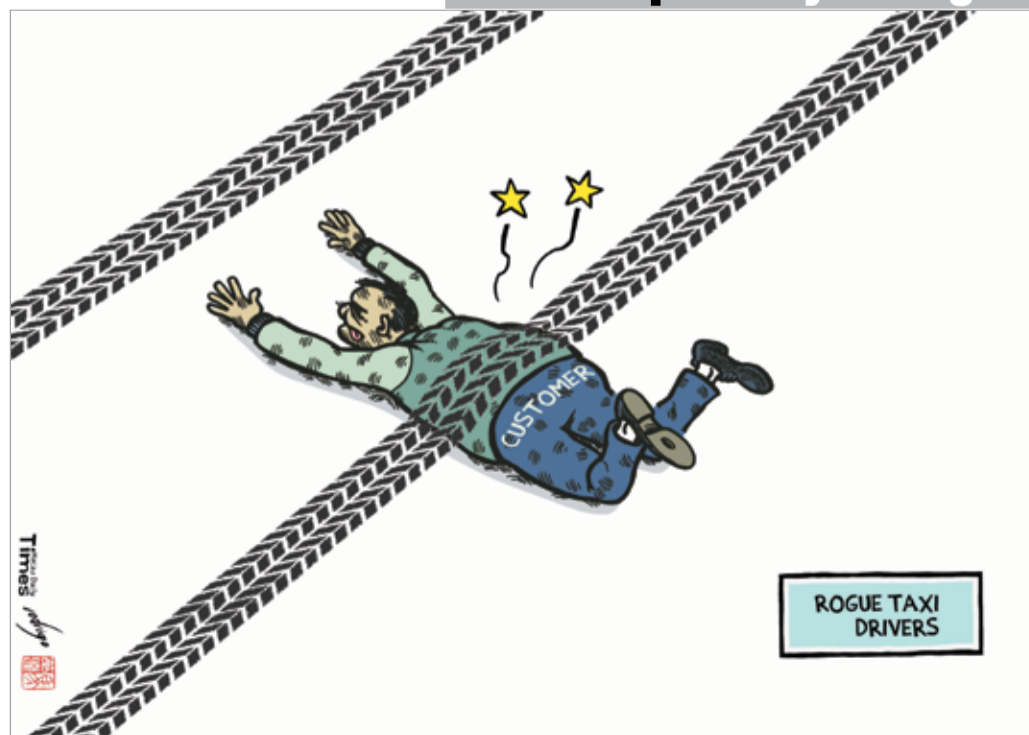


ISRAEL's prime minister has vowed to build a new West Bank settlement "as soon as possible" following the court-ordered demolition of an illegally built settler outpost. Benjamin Netanyahu spoke as Israeli forces were completing the evacuation of the Amona outpost yesterday. His government tried to block the evacuation but was overruled by the Supreme Court.



UKRAINE Two Ukrainian troops have been killed in the country's industrial east as both government forces and rebels reported shelling on their positions overnight. Ten other troops were wounded as fighting in Ukraine's industrial heartland entered its fifth day, the government's press office for the military operation in the east said.

times square by rodrigo



ROGUE TAXI DRIVERS