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WORLD BRIEFS



JAPAN-VIETNAM

Japan's emperor expressed sympathy to the Vietnamese families abandoned by Japanese soldiers after World War II during his landmark visit to the Communist country. Akihito met with a wife and 15 children of former Japanese soldiers in Hanoi yesterday and told them that he understands their difficulties and hope bilateral relations will continue to develop.

PHILIPPINES A human rights watchdog yesterday accused the police in the Philippines of falsifying evidence to justify unlawful killings in the government's war on drugs that has caused more than 7,000 deaths.

THAILAND A former high-ranking police officer dismissed from a senior position in Thailand's royal palace was questioned by police yesterday about land encroachment charges in what is seen as the latest example of Thailand's new king purging aides and other close associates.



INDONESIA

A prosecutor sought a one-year jail sentence yesterday for a former Reuters war correspondent who is on trial in Indonesia on charges of possessing hashish. The defendant is accused of violating a 2009 law on narcotics, under which such drug possession could face a maximum four years in prison.

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INSIDE

Daniel Beitler

SHARES of Macau's major gaming companies are significantly up in Hong Kong and New York trading this week, responding to the gross gaming revenue (GGR) take in February that marked a two-year high and beat most analysts' expectations.

Macau GGR reached MOP23 billion (USD2.9 billion) at the end of last month, the highest amount since January 2015 when MOP23.75 billion was recorded.

Stocks consequently jumped in New York trading yesterday, with MGM Resorts (+2.28 percent), Wynn Resorts (+7.12 percent), Melco Crown (+5.13 percent) and Las Vegas Sands (+4.31 percent) reacting well to the unexpected double-digit GGR rise of 17.8 percent.

Las Vegas Sands and Wynn Resorts are heavily exposed to Macau, having both opened large integrated resorts in Cotai during the second half of 2016. MGM currently has just one integrated

Gaming stocks post gains in Hong Kong, NY

resort in the MSAR but will be looking to open a second later this year.

Gaming operators also posted strong gains in Hong Kong's Wednesday trading. Galaxy Entertainment, Wynn Macau, Sands China and MGM China each recorded around 3 to 4 percent growth in their Hong Kong-listed share prices.

While some gaming operators continued to record gains yesterday, others saw their positions consolidate slightly. Wynn Macau, Melco International and SJM Holdings were up 0.83 percent, 0.8 percent and 0.32 percent respectively by the end of the day, but Galaxy Entertainment, Sands China and MGM China slipped 0.25



percent, 0.89 percent and 1.09 percent respectively.

The Hang Seng Index complemented the rise, adding around 0.2 percent in value, which the Asian Nikkei Review accredited to the positive news coming out of Macau together with improving sentiment towards Chinese manu-

facturing data.

Uncertainty over gaming stocks temporarily rose to a new height last month when a gauge of Macau's six concessionaires' stocks published by Bloomberg showed trading conditions reminiscent of those preceding the 2014 crash. Moreover, falling year-on-year

growth in the city's GGR over the previous three months – November (+14.4 percent), December (+8 percent) and January (+3.1 percent) – sparked fears that the gaming recovery might be short-lived.

Macau-based gaming analyst Grant Govertsen told the Times last week that the fears were unfounded.

"The reality is that these stocks are still about half of what they were in 2014," he said. "What we are seeing makes sense for a market [seeing] growth again." Analysts at JPMorgan described last month's revenue momentum as "remarkable", while those at Bernstein – as well as representatives of Macau's junket promoters – attributed the gain to a one-fifth rise in the VIP segment in the last quarter.

Looking more to the long-term, Richard Huang told Reuters on Wednesday that, "while it is hard to call last week's results a trend, the industry has showed clear signs of stabilization."

GAMING

Saipan casino set for March opening amid investor fears

Daniel Beitler

THE USD600 million Imperial Pacific casino-hotel in Saipan is scheduled to open by the end of the month, though the company responsible for operating it, Best Sunshine International, has analysts and investors concerned over the accuracy of reported revenue from its temporary casino, which it claims measures in the billions.

Last year the company reported that it took in more than USD32 billion (about MOP256 billion) from high-rollers at just 16 VIP tables. Meanwhile, scores of casinos in Macau recorded a combined USD28 billion in gaming revenues (MOP223 billion) during the same year.

However, according to a Forbes article authored by Asian gaming writer Muhammad Cohen, the casino's impressive VIP returns have spurned skepticism from industry analysts and former gaming re-

gulators who suspect the figures might be manipulated to distort the company's true market value.

According to Imperial Pacific reports, every month some 100 VIP visitors contribute an average of \$27 million each to its revenue, while each of its 16 VIP tables generates a daily average of \$5.6 million in bets. That figure is estimated to be four times greater than that recorded in Macau prior to the gaming slump.

However some research analysts are concerned that unpaid debts from players may add up to almost 90 percent of the resort's VIP revenue, compared to the Asian average of just 14 percent, representing a substantial liability to the company.

There are also mounting concerns that, should the integrated resort not open at the end of this month as scheduled, regulators may consider revoking the company's license to operate.

The integrated resort slated to open this mon-

th is valued at around \$7 billion, or one-third of Cotai 2.0.

Imperial Pacific International Holdings, which owns the casino through its subsidiary Best Sunshine International, is majority-owned by Hong Kong billionaire Cui Lijie.

Rumors are circling that Best Sunshine CEO Mark Brown will be moving to chairman of the company, making way for its current chief operating officer, Kwong Yiu-ling, to take up the CEO's post. Kwong has a history in Macau, having spent three decades with SJM holdings before working as an executive at the Altira Macau and as executive vice president of casino operations at MGM Macau.

Saipan is not much further away than Macau by air travel, for high-rollers based in either Beijing or Shanghai, but is significantly closer than other casino destinations in the region, like Singapore or Cambodia.

Association to launch Macau Ashes cricket match

THE Macau Cricket Association (MCA), in partnership with the Macau Bats Rugby Club and FBL, will be hosting the inaugural Macau Ashes cricket match this Sunday at The International School's ground in Taipa.

According to the association, the event has received approval and support from the Marylebone Cricket Club at Lords Cricket Ground in London – the "home of cricket". The club has donated two used sets of bails for this event.

The Ashes is a Test cricket series played between England and Australia, where the "ashes" are held by the team that has most recently won the Test Series.

The first Macau Ashes will be played between local English and Australian expatriates.

President of MCA, Adnan Nasim, explained yesterday to the Times that the two teams are expected to have a total of 24 players.

The match, which



would feature 11 players per team, is aimed at fostering the "spirit of Ashes and promoting the cricket activities in the territory.

"It's just a small event being organized but there's a future for it. In the future maybe we'll have an even bigger and larger event inviting more players and people from other places to come," he said.

According to him, the two sets of bails would be burnt after the match and ashes would be placed in an urn – similar to The Ashes Test series.

"[It's like] connecting Macau together into a bigger event that takes place between Australia and England," Nasim added.

Meanwhile the president of the association

noted that the community of cricket players has been growing in the region, despite receiving insignificant interest from the locals.

"Cricket has been played in Macau for many years but it was always hidden. It was a foreigner's sports. There was less interest from locals also," he noted.

Since the association has been formed, it has been organizing events to disseminate the activity, bringing cricket enthusiasts of all nationalities to play a match.

"In the past it was very much divided into different groups [but] with The Ashes coming to Macau, it's going to have little bit a more potential for expatriates to join," he concluded. LV

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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

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Alban Martins, Annabel Jackson, Daniel Beitler, 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), Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS_Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, Bloomberg, Financial Times, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua | SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao arry@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, MACAU SAR Telephone: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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SURVEY

Hearing health knowledge is 'insufficient'

Julie Zhu

THE Healthy Macau Association released the results of a survey conducted between January and February, which indicates that more than half of the surveyed local residents regarded themselves as having hearing problems.

The survey released yesterday, which was done as an online questionnaire, collected 513 contributions. The interviewees were approximately 70 percent female and 30 percent male.

About 40 percent of the interviewees were aged between 31 to 60 years old, and about 30 percent between 18 to 30 years old. People aged above 60 years old accounted for approximately 25 percent.

Close to 60 percent of the interviewees consider themselves to have tinnitus problems. Also, nearly 60 percent believe that someone in their family or group of friends has hearing



problems.

Even though the survey indicates that more than half of the interviewees think they have hearing problems, only a few people are willing to take hearing tests.

"Their knowledge about hearing health is insufficient," vice president of the association Virginia Kong said, adding that only 24 percent of the interviewees expressed their willingness to test their hearing ability. Kong also mentioned that in a recent survey conducted in Hong Kong, similar to the aforementioned one, 35 percent

of the interviewed Hong Kong people had taken some form of hearing test in the past.

The Macau survey showed that the interviewed residents had a vague understanding of hearing loss.

"Approximately 60 percent of [the interviewed] Macau people consider that elders being able to hear but unable to understand is normal," revealed Gloria Sio, an audiometrician who was present during the announcement of the report yesterday.

Sio explained that such a situation should not be deemed

normal because one third of the people older than 65 years old suffer from middle or high level hearing loss.

According to the survey, many of the interviewees showed different stances regarding wearing glasses and wearing occupational deafness compensation boards.

"More than 90 percent of the interviewees said that they are willing to wear glasses if they become near-sighted. However, only a bit more than 70 percent are willing to wear occupational compensation boards if they end up having hearing problems," said Sio.

Sio noted, in the end, that 98 percent of the interviewees look forward to seeing the government promoting free hearing test services.

Both Kong and Sio reminded the public to pay close attention to their hearing problems as the city's noisy transportation might affect their hearing ability.

Over 300 apply to IPIM for temporary residency

Three hundred and five applications for temporary residency for managerial personnel, technical and professional qualification holders were received by the Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute in 2016. According to a statement from the entity, this marks a decrease of 177 compared with the previous year. Twenty-four applications for major investment and major investment plans were recorded, accounting for just 7.3 percent of the total. The number of approved cases for managerial personnel, technical and professional qualification holders amounted to 99, representing an increase of 18 compared with 2015. Meanwhile approved applications for major investment plans numbered four, a decrease of three on an annual basis.

53 percent of vehicles owe new year taxes

As of February 28, 133,220 vehicles had still not paid their annual taxes, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) announced yesterday. The number accounts for 53 percent of the city's total number of vehicles (250,560) including private cars and motor bicycles. DSAT is calling the owners who intend to keep using their vehicles to make the payments before March 31 at any of DSAT's offices, the Financial Services Bureau (DSF), or at the Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT). Owners can also pay the tax online. DSAT reminded that owners must first settle all previous debts when they pay the tax for using their vehicles for one more year.

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School facilities included on public sports network

The Sports Bureau (ID) Public Sports Facilities Network now includes the sports facilities of the Sir Robert Ho Tung Official School. The facilities comprise an indoor sports pavilion, which will expand ID's offer of badminton courts as well as basketball practice courts. The practice fields will be available to the public on weekdays during the evening from 8p.m. to 11 p.m. and on weekends from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Use of the badminton courts will be subject to an hourly fee of MOP20, while the basketball courts will be available for institutional rental upon advance reservation, subject to an hourly fee of MOP100. The school is located at the Tap Seac Sports Pavillion building, the entrance of which faces Rua da Vitória.

Online program may involve prostitution of minors

An online form called "Macau Joint-School Secret Pleasure Angel Programme" drew the attention of education authorities, with the Judiciary Police (PJ) considering the matter very serious given it may involve the prostitution of minors. PJ previously received several complaints from local schools and parents about the program which recently appeared on an online social network. The program is directed at people between the ages of 16 and 25 years of age. It further features advice such as "all female participants please check your emails occasionally and reply to us in order for us to arrange appointments with the dating party."

REPORT

Hong Kong air pollution driven by China's pollutants

THE Hong Kong government described air pollution to be the "greatest daily health risk to the people of Hong Kong" back in 2013, yet in the time since it has only taken a few concrete actions despite commissioning a number of studies.

Although levels of cancer-causing pollutants have exceeded World Health Organization standards for some 15 years, the vast majority of Hong Kong residents seemed to have ignored the problem.

A study commissioned by the territory's Environmental Protection Department noted that 60 to 70 percent of particulate matter is acquired from mainland China. Thus, much of Hong Kong's pollution comes from its neighboring region. In the cold season, as much as 77 percent of air dust comes from China as the wind direction tends to blow contaminants towards Hong Kong.

A report issued by The

Guardian detailed how Margaux Giraudon, a French national who was born in Hong Kong, developed asthmatic bronchitis at the age of three. According to her father Nicolas Giraudon, his daughter grew ill, requiring her to be hooked up to breathing machines in the hospital for three days.

After Margaux's hospitalization, the French national became obsessed about measuring air pollution, purchasing pricey air purifiers for each room in his house.

According to the media outlet, he began taking his testing equipment to his daughter's school, where he discovered that the air there too was contaminated. The father assumed that school officials did not want to hear about the problem, thus he launched a campaign to clean the air – but was resisted.

As his daughter developed a sickness that caused her



Smog hangs in the air around buildings in the Kowloon district of Hong Kong

lung capacity to fall by nearly a third compared to other children her age, the family decided to move back to France.

The father admitted that he missed the lower taxes in Hong Kong yet he said, "but I prefer to pay tax than to kill my children."

The level of pollutants has exceeded five times the acceptable levels at its peak. Last year, air pollution cau-

sed over 1,600 premature deaths, as stated by the Hong Kong University's school of public health.

Researchers even estimated that there were more than 300,000 doctor visits linked to smog during the first month of the year.

A study also showed that air pollution increased the risk of dying from any type of cancer by 22 percent in Hong Kong.

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Agarwood takes center stage at Ho's trial. Why?



Ho Chio Meng

Renato Marques

PIECES of agarwood have been taking center stage in the trial of former Public Prosecutor General Ho Chio Meng.

The wood, originating from a seizure by the Macau Customs Service in mid-May 2013, has always been involved in the controversy since it arrived in Macau and caught the interest of Ho. The agarwood was then transferred from the Customs Service to the Public Prosecutions Office's possession and, allegedly, as the prosecutor tried to prove in court, was then misappropriated by Ho as he had used it as decorative items in his office, home and other venues.

But why is this wood so important? In May 14, 2013, the Customs Service held a press conference announcing the seizure of over 1,800kg of agarwood worth between MOP71 million and MOP218 million.

At the time it was said that the imports were legal and had the proper licensing from the Macau Economic Services (DSE), which is a requirement since the wood is part of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Customs Service had been keeping tabs on the cargo that arrived from Indonesia via air in five different shipments and had been kept in a warehouse on Pier 23 in the Inner Harbor for over a month.

The same spokesperson explained, at the time, that they found the importing of such large amount of the precious wood suspicious, having considered that the local market could not possibly absorb such a quantity.

The authorities then decided to intervene when three people, including the warehouse manager, were loading 274kg of agarwood onto the sampan, with Customs officials claiming that these boats would most likely next head to the mainland. The precious wood was about to en-

ter China illegally since, "agarwood is listed in mainland China's second level of protected goods. It's not easy to import [it] and needs to be taxed. It's one reason why they were smuggling it [through Macau]," the Customs Service's spokesman explained.

Agarwood is often named "the wood of gods" or "liquid gold" (in relation to the essential oil that can be extracted from it and that it has a market value higher than gold). About one year ago the news outlet Al Jazeera focused on the topic, taking the happenings in the neighboring territory of Hong Kong as an example. In the report, the media outlet notes the efforts of the conservationists to save the tree species from becoming



extinct.

The wood and the tree's oud oil or resin are highly valued not only for its uses as traditional herbal medicine, but also for its aromatic fragrance, which is used in incense and perfume.

The report shows that the "surging prices are driving new demand, with the oil fetching higher prices than gold," and Hong Kong and other regions in Southeast Asia being targeted by loggers since the "tree is now all but wiped out in China." "A piece [is] on sale at a shop very close to here [...] valued at USD1 million for an agarwood bracelet. You can buy loose chips here in Hong Kong," said Gerard McGuirk of Asia Plantation Capital, a company that is striving to farm the tree for commerce in order to save the ones in the wild, especially in the rainforest regions of Indonesia, Malaysia and Borneo.

"They can be anything from HKD100,000 per kilo upwards depending on the quality. So the demand and expense is great," he added, stating that Asia Plantation Capital hopes [with their farms and efforts] to replace the illegal trade by feeding the market and the related industry with similar quality products but without huge damage to nature.

According to the Singapore-based company, it is estimated that the market is worth up to the equivalent of MOP96 billion a year.

The same company says that the agarwood market, whether for oil, woodchips or medicinal use, is growing rapidly.

The latest records from CITES indicate that the recorded global trade in oud oil in 2012 was 4,870 litres, a 1,512 percent increase in volume from 2004.

Key importers of such goods include countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia

and Bahrain.

At the same time, the latest records from trade statistics for international business development (TradeMap) indicate that recorded global trade in agarwood chips and powder in 2013 was 4.7 million kilograms, an 878 percent increase in volume from 1995 (the year that "Aquilaria malaccensis" was included on CITES list of the endangered species). In this particular year, the key importers include countries and territories such as Singapore, China, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Agarwood is often named 'the wood of gods' or 'liquid gold'

Another related company "Sustainable Asset Management" (SAM) estimates the same value for world trade (MOP96 billion per year) with much of the trade being made "undocumented and without required CITES certification."

The company that records oud oil retail prices on a quarterly basis, tries to provide a complete picture of prices, both regional and country-specific, by collating current market retail prices from as many sources as possible.

According to the latest surveys, the current price for this wood's oud oil is set around MOP304,000 per liter.

The same source also notes prestigious brands that use this oud oil in some of their perfumes and cosmetics products such as Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, Tom Ford and Christian Dior.

Its value is also highly increased by its new medical applications not only on traditional Chinese medicine but also as a highly in-demand product for respiratory treatment and in the research for cancer treatments.

This form of wood is also widely used as gifts and in ceremonial practices (both religious and secular) all over the world. It is also carved into sculptures, beads and boxes.

ASEAN Gaming Summit to include 'social casino' talk

The ASEAN Gaming Summit 2017, which will be held at the Conrad Manila on March 21 and 23, will feature a talk by John Lin, managing director of Playstudios, on the topic of "social casino". Social casino is a lucrative component of the mobile game industry, which is expected to generate about USD4.4 billion in 2017. According to a statement from organizers, the ASEAN Gaming Summit will host the talk, where Lin will assess the value of social casino in Asia and how this will fit in with land-based and online gambling. "Historically, there was a lot of skepticism about the free-to-play model as applied to the games of chance [...] but there is no doubt, that Asian players love games of chance," he said, according to organizers. "Our conviction is that the social casino sector [in Asia] will one day be larger than North America and Europe."

Bird nests shop robbed of HKD1.3 million

A shop selling bird nests, located at the Zona Nova de Aterros do Porto Exterior, was robbed of HKD1.3 million worth of stock yesterday morning. A shop employee was injured by the thief and had to receive medical treatment. The thief entered the shop at around 6 a.m., with his face covered. The shop owner, who returned after the robbery, stated that his shop is still open 24 hours.

China trademark office opened in Hengqin

The Trademark Office of the State Administration for Industry & Commerce of China (CTMO) opened its office in Hengqin on Wednesday, according to a report by Jornal Va Kio. The office's opening marks the second one in Guangdong province. All nationals are allowed to register their trademarks at this office. Besides Zhuhai, China has also announced the opening of other 37 trademark offices across other provinces. Prior to the establishment of this office, Hengqin planned to invest RMB300 million in subsidies to help Hengqin's enterprises. Any Hengqin company accredited with "China Well-known Trademark", or "Guangdong Well-Known Trademark," can get at most RMB2 million or RMB800,000, respectively, in subsidies.

'Missing' wood kicked-off Ho's case

DURING several testimonies of witnesses during the trial sessions at the Final Appeal Court (TUI), the agarwood was mentioned and widely questioned but in at least two of these sessions, it became clear that the pieces of this valuable wood that disappeared from the MP's storage room were then found or seen by witnesses in several venues used by Ho Chio Meng for his personal life. That was, in fact, one of the main reasons which led to the presentation of the first complaint to the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC).

It was also mentioned in court that only after Ho's first hearings at the CCAC, some of the wood pieces were returned to the MP storage, an episode in which the court heard different versions of the same story from the prosecutor and Ho.

For the prosecutor, the wood was "left at the door of the MP storage room with no record of who left it there," while the former Public Prosecutor General addressed the court on at least two occasions to remark that it was he who had personally returned the wood pieces in his possession and they were delivered pro-

perly to MP staff who had signed a note stating the return of the goods.

In mid-February, judge Song Man Lei, one of the three judges judging the case, informed all the parties that, after a further investigation regarding this case, the court had decided to add additional facts.

In particular, it was noted that one agarwood case was completely handled by prosecutor Wu Hio, while another was jointly handled by Wu and a second prosecutor Lao Ian Chi, clarifying also that Ho did not interfere in either of those cases and that no written records could be found regarding the MP which indicated otherwise.

In court, the prosecutor also wanted to know where the "other missing pieces" of the agarwood were since not all of it has been returned.

In trial, Ho replied to the question stating, "we threw it away. It was full of bugs."

Also in a previous session of Ho's trial, it was said that the MP would have ordered the burning of at least a piece of this wood that would allegedly be contaminated by insects and/or mould.

MAM opens latest 'Arts Window' series

The Macau Museum of Art (MAM) is presenting the latest edition of its "Macau Arts Window" exhibition series, named "Untitled Travel - Works of Lin Ge". The exhibition features a total of 30 illustration works, mostly themed around a few places in Macau that are either about to disappear or have already disappeared. According to a statement from MAM, the artist endeavors to record the transformations of the city through his works, reminding the public of certain long-forgotten landscapes. MAM has been organizing the series since 2012 with the aim of providing "an open and diverse exhibition space and exchange platform [to] encourage local artists to explore and express concepts and forms of contemporary art."

UM scholars publish breakthrough paper

A paper authored by scholars at the University of Macau (UM) was recently published in "Lab on a Chip", a publication under the auspices of the Royal Society of Chemistry in the U.K. The paper presents a new technique that can quickly identify the DNA of multiple pathogens causing septicemia (a serious blood infection) from a single droplet. According to a statement from the UM, the breakthrough will allow medical workers in remote mountainous regions to promptly identify pathogens and administer treatment. This is because the new technique can utilize portable DNA testing and thereby quickly diagnose hidden or contagious diseases. The research paper was co-written by PhD student Dong Cheng, Gao Jie, Chen Tianlan, Professors Jia Yanwei, Mak Pui-In and Vai Mang-I, and also the vice rector for research, professor Rui Martins.

Food Products Exhibition Center celebrates first year with prizes

THE Portuguese-speaking Countries' Food Products Exhibition Centre located at Tap Seac's Glass House is celebrating its first year of operation (on March 31) by giving away prizes.

The Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), which manages the center that opened its doors on March 31 of last year, decided to promote the anniversary by giving away product baskets in an online and offline series of activities, IPIM informed in a statement.

The activities, which will be held until March 30, aim to share the personal stories behind the products on display in order to contribute to the promotion of the companies participating. The online activity being held through the social network platform Facebook is a "Like and Share to earn a gourmet products basket" activity, in which people are invited to "like" the Facebook page of the Economic and Trade Co-operation and Human Resources



Portal between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries and carry out a few additional steps in order to have the opportunity to participate in the lucky draw which will give away a prize of a basket of gourmet products, valued at MOP10,000.

The basket will contain several kinds of wines and food products, such as a 24-month cured Iberian Ham.

At the same time another series of activities is occurring "offline" in the center where visitors are invited to try and win products by guessing their Portuguese-speaking country of origin. This is envisaged to deliver a more interactive experience to the public.

As mentioned by IPIM, all the prizes exclusively contain products acquired from local suppliers that are partners of the center.

According to IPIM, since

the portal entered into operation back in 2015, more than 13,000 users have registered and gathered information on over 10,000 food items promoted through it.

Figures provided to the Times by IPIM at the beginning of this month indicate that around 9,000 visitors (around 800 per month) and 38 groups have visited the facility. Although the center's promoters claim that creating brand awareness is the main target, the center generated low direct sales during its first operational year. According to the figures reported earlier by the Times, only "12 companies have joined the promotion with the total revenue generated reaching [MOP]180,000."

However, almost a year after opening, the center's promoters made a positive assessment of it, informing that it has been displaying products from seven Portuguese-speaking countries and has held several related events.

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KIM JONG NAM MURDER

Malaysia to release, deport N. Korean in nerve agent probe

Eileen Ng, Kuala Lumpur

A North Korean man will be released from custody because of lack of evidence connecting him to the fatal nerve agent attack on Kim Jong Nam, the estranged half brother of North Korea's ruler, Malaysian officials said yesterday. In a major fallout from the assassination, Malaysia also announced it was scrapping visa-free travel for North Koreans.

Officials never said why they arrested Ri Jong Chol four days after Kim was attacked at Kuala Lumpur's bustling airport. Yesterday, Malaysian Attorney General Mohamad Apani Ali said Ri will be released and deported because he does not have valid travel documents.

The attack was caught on grainy security camera footage that showed two women smearing something on Kim's face as he waited for a flight in Kuala Lumpur on Feb. 13. Malaysian officials say the substance was VX nerve agent, a banned chemical weapon.

Kim was dead within an hour as the fast-acting poison coursed through his body, authorities say. No bystanders reported falling ill.

The poisoning has unleashed a serious diplomatic battle between Malaysia and North Korea. While it isn't one of Pyongyang's key diplomatic partners, Malaysia has been one of the few places in the world where North Koreans could travel without a visa. As a result, for years, it's been a quiet destination for Northerners looking for jobs, schools and business deals.

That could all begin to change in the wake of Kim's death.



A medical staff member stands outside forensic department at Kuala Lumpur Hospital in Kuala Lumpur

Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the visa-free arrangement with North Korea will be scrapped from Monday due to national security. He also slammed the North Korean ambassador in Kuala Lumpur who accused Malaysia of "trying to conceal something" and "colluding with hostile forces."

"We don't want to make enemies, but if they had used Malaysia for their own agenda, they should not accuse Malaysia and tarnish our image on the international stage," Zahid said. "We will act firmly to guarantee the safety of our people. Don't ever use Malaysia as a base to do anything you like."

The two female suspects caught in the security footage were charged with murder in a Malaysian court Wednesday. They face the mandatory death sentence if convicted. Both say they were duped into thinking they were taking part in a harmless prank.

"I understand but I am not guilty," Vietnamese suspect Doan Thi Huong told the court in English after the murder charge was

read.

The other suspect, Indonesian Siti Aisyah, nodded as her translator told her, "You are accused of murdering a North Korean man at the departure hall" of Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

The women did not enter pleas because the magistrate court where they appeared has no jurisdiction over a murder case. Lead prosecutor Iskandar Ahmad told the court he will ask for the case to be transferred to a higher court and for the women to be tried together.

In the surveillance video, Huong was seen clearly in a T-shirt with "LOL" emblazoned across the front. Both women were originally from modest farming villages and had moved to their countries' capitals seeking a better life.

Also Wednesday, the court approved a gag order to prevent police and potential witnesses from making public statements about the case.

North Korea is widely speculated to be behind the killing, particularly after Malaysia said that

VX had killed Kim. Experts say the oily poison was almost certainly produced in a sophisticated state weapons laboratory.

North Korea's official news agency called that finding the "height of absurdity" on Wednesday, saying the two women could not have used such a deadly toxin without killing or sickening themselves and anyone around them.

North Korea opposed Malaysian officials even conducting an autopsy on Kim, while Malaysia has resisted giving up the body without getting DNA samples and confirmation from next of kin.

Kim is believed to have two sons and a daughter with two women living in Beijing and Macau. Authorities are seeking seven other North Korean suspects, four of whom fled the country the day of Kim's death and are believed to be back in North Korea. Others sought include the second secretary of North Korea's Embassy and an employee of North Korea's state-owned airline, Air Koryo.

Kim Jong Nam was estranged from his half brother, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. He reportedly fell out of favor with their father, the late Kim Jong Il, in 2001, when he was caught trying to enter Japan on a false passport to visit Tokyo Disneyland.

Isolated North Korea has a long history of ordering killings of people it views as threats to its regime. Kim Jong Nam was not known to be seeking political power, but his position as eldest son of the family that has ruled North Korea since it was founded could have made him appear to be a danger. **AP**

6th Macau Literary Festival kicks off tomorrow

The 6th edition of The Script Road – Macau Literary Festival kicks off tomorrow with comic book authors Dick Ng, Filipe Melo, Philippe Graton and Clément Baloup delivering a talk on "Illustrating Words – The Art of Comics" at 4 p.m. Lo Yi-Chin, a celebrated author from Taiwan, will then take to the stage at 5:30 p.m. to discuss "The Labyrinth of Contemporary Chinese Fiction". The events will be held at the Old Court Building. The official opening ceremony and inauguration of the Script Road exhibitions will commence at 3 p.m.

MGTO co-hosts tourism meeting

The Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Tourism Administration of Guangdong Province and Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) jointly held the 77th Work Meeting of the Tourism Marketing Organization of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau in Hong Kong on Wednesday. During the meeting, the three parties reached a consensus to keep strengthening collaboration in tourism promotion under the current tourism cooperative framework, according to a press release issued by MGTO. The tasks include setting up joint booths in major travel fairs, placing strategic advertisements and organizing trade familiarization trips and joint promotional activities for multi-destination travel in domestic cities and overseas.

FSS calls for pensioners' proof of life

The Social Security Fund (FSS) calls for beneficiaries of old-age pension and disability pension to provide the proof of life for this year, in accordance with the Law 4/2010. The number of people involved this year is nearly 100,000, of which 95,700 people have already provided their proof of life. The FSS calls on the remaining 3.5 percent of the beneficiaries, who have not yet provided the proof of life, to complete the procedure within this month without further delays. The relevant payment will be suspended from April if anyone fails to provide the required documentation.

corporate bits

COTAI WATER JET LAUNCHES COMPLEMENTARY LIMOUSINE SERVICE



Cotai Water Jet is offering a complimentary Macau limousine service for passengers who purchase three full adult fare,

Cotai First tickets on the same Airport Route sailing.

The service must be booked before 5 p.m. at least a day be-

fore departure, and limousines can accommodate a maximum of three passengers and three check-in bags.

Customers can also take advantage of the Cotai Water Jet WeChat fan promotion and Bank of China (BOC) card offers.

Until the end of the year, Sands Resorts Macao WeChat fans can take advantage of a WeChat fan promotion offer to enjoy a 15 percent discount on City Route Cotai Class and Cotai First full adult fare one-way tickets.

Passengers who purchase full adult fare Cotai Water Jet Cotai Class tickets using BOC credit or debit cards are entitled to a 15 percent discount on the City route, or 20 percent discount on Airport route sailings. All sailings must be made on or before June 30, 2017.

RANGE ROVER VELAR TARGETS YOUNGER DRIVERS



Range Rover's new Velar SUV will be the brand's most road-friendly auto yet, allowing manufacturer Jaguar Land Rover to put the squeeze on top-selling models from BMW AG and Audi, JLR Chief Executive Officer Ralf Speth said Wednesday as the car was unveiled.

The Velar will be 20 centimeters lower than the traditional Range Rover, reducing the degree

of roll or tilt when cornering and marking the model out as a true driver's car, Speth said at the Design Museum in London, where the auto made its public debut.

Priced from 44,000 pounds (USD54,000), the Velar will fill the gap between the \$42,000 Evoque, which debuted in 2010, and the Range Rover Sport, which sells from about \$65,000 after a ground-up revamp in 2013.

Aside from its handling, the model is characterized by a minimalist design and new dashboard with three touch-screen information panels or "plates," Speth said.

"It's a more car-like Range Rover, but still with SUV capabilities," the CEO said in an interview. "It's lower, but there's a higher seating position. It's also a modernistic design, very dynamic, and we have this plate technology, with the opportunity to shift the contents from one screen to the another."

The Velar will compete with SUVs including BMW's X5 and the Q7 from Volkswagen AG's Audi arm, the CEO said. While he declined to comment on sales volumes, production could be running at almost 52,000 cars a year by 2019, according to analysts at IHS Markit, who estimate that Range Rover Sport output may fall below 70,000 units from 87,000 last year.

REAL ESTATE MATTERS

Common misconceptions about renting a property in Macau - Part 6

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.

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...

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.

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.

rental amount. In other words, once a rent is 30 days late, you would now owe double the normal rental amount.

I can't 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.

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 agreement between the tenant and the ow-

ner, 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 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.

SSGKC LaunchPad 2016 DCIC Delta Creativity & Innovation Celebration. Includes QR codes for registration and logos of sponsors like San Jiao Ling and Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City.

C&C LAWYERS advertisement featuring a list of partners and associates, including Rui José da Cunha, Álvaro Rodrigues, and various legal professionals.

MACAU LITERARY FESTIVAL advertisement with the theme 'rota das letras • 萬文不朽 • the script road'. Features an illustration of an open book and event details for March in Macau.

Didi said to weigh raising billions in fresh capital

DIDI Chuxing, the ride-hailing service that acquired Uber Technologies Inc.'s China business last year, has held informal talks with investors about raising billions of dollars to buy more time to build a profitable business model, according to people familiar with the matter.

Didi's investors, numbering more than 100, are divided over whether more capital is needed now, said the people, asking not to be named because the matter is private. Fundraising advocates argue more cash will help Didi develop autonomous driving technology and create a lucrative platform for services amid tighter ride-hailing regulations. Skeptics contend the firm has enough cash given the USD10 billion it had amassed last year and that raising more equity will only dilute existing shareholders, the people said. Didi, with backing from Apple Inc. and Tencent Holdings Ltd., hasn't notified some investors because it hasn't decided whether to proceed, the people said.

Some investors have approached Didi about investing more capital, rather than the company taking the initiative, one of the people said. If it goes ahead with a deal, Didi is likely to seek at least \$3 billion and is discussing whether it can hike its valuation, now \$34 billion, another person said. Didi may ultimately decide not to proceed with the fundraising, the people said.

Yuan's calm faces test with dollar rally as Fed rate bets surge

Robin Ganguly, Emma Dai

THE yuan's calm is about to be put to the test. After a six-week stretch of muted moves that pushed a volatility gauge to a three-month low, the currency is facing the twin pressures of a Federal Reserve interest-rate increase and the possibility of China's central bank allowing bigger swings once a key legislative meeting ends mid-March.

The key threat is a turnaround in the greenback, which is rebounding at the fastest pace in more than two months as the odds of a Fed hike this month surge. The People's Bank of China, which is seen wanting to keep the yuan stable ahead of the National People's Congress beginning this Sunday, can't maintain support permanently given that its foreign-exchange reserves have already slipped below USD3 trillion, said Aidan Yao, a Hong Kong-based senior economist at AXA Investment Managers Asia Ltd.



"The PBOC will allow the yuan to swing more against the dollar," said Fiona Lim, a senior currency strategist at Malayan Banking Bhd. in Singapore. She expects the yuan to weaken 0.5 percent the rest of this month. "Instead of accumulating depreciation pressure and falling suddenly as it did in August 2015, the monetary authority would rather release the pressure gradually and let the yuan be more volatile."

The Bloomberg Dollar Spot

Index has risen 1 percent in the past five days, the most since Dec. 20, to extend a February advance. The yuan's one-month implied volatility fell the most since 2005 last month amid muted dollar moves and tighter capital controls. The onshore spot rate was little changed Thursday at 6.8820 per dollar as of 5:28 p.m. in Shanghai, while the price in Hong Kong's overseas market retreated 0.09 percent to 6.8774.

China has stepped up efforts to choke capital outflows since December, asking banks to stop processing cross-border yuan payments until they balance flows and barring most offshore investments of \$10 billion. The Chinese currency has been helped also by tightening liquidity onshore as the PBOC pushes money-market rates higher to reduce leverage in the financial system. The nation this week gave overseas investors access to its foreign-exchange derivatives market to allow hedging of bond positions.

"Instead of defending the yuan with foreign-exchange reserves and tighter capital controls, it would be more effective to attract inflows to the onshore bond market," said AXA's Yao. "That's why China will not reverse the structural trend to liberalize its exchange rate. The recent opening up of the onshore currency derivatives market is another effort to make onshore bonds more appealing." **Bloomberg**

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POLLUTION

Lawyers sue authorities for not getting rid of smog

Louise Watt, Beijing

LAWYER Cheng Hai has an itemized list of compensation demands from Beijing authorities over the city's smog: 65 yuan (USD9) for having to buy face masks, 100 yuan (\$15) for seeing a doctor for a sore throat and 9,999 yuan (\$1,500) for emotional distress.

Fed up with what they consider halfhearted efforts to fight air pollution, Cheng and like-minded lawyers are putting China's legal system to the test by suing the governments of the capital and its surrounding regions.

"Some people might think that air pollution is inevitable with economic development, but they are wrong," said Cheng, 64. "We have laws to protect air quality, and major pollution can be avoided if they are fully enforced."

The lawsuits demonstrate the mounting frustration of China's middle class at the country's notoriously bad air, a topic that is expected to be discussed at the upcoming annual meeting of the country's parliament three

years after Premier Li Keqiang declared a "war on pollution" at the same event.

The dissatisfaction comes even as authorities in the capital are closing factories, getting rid of coal-fired boilers and taking older, heavier-polluting vehicles off the road.

Official data show those measures are having some effect, with Beijing showing year-on-year improvements since 2013.

Yet the city's average reading of the tiny particulate matter PM2.5 — considered a good gauge of air pollution — is still seven times what the World Health Organization considers safe.

"We are the victims of smog and we are entitled to ask for an apology and compensation from the government," said another of the lawyers, Yu Wensheng, 50, from Beijing.

The suits, which accuse authorities of failing to deal effectively with the smog, are important to show that the government is not above the law, said Yu.

"If the government is not restricted by law, then what else can restrict it?" said Yu, who

has spent time in detention accused of supporting Hong Kong pro-democracy protests in 2014 and for speaking up in support of detained rights lawyers.

Along with Beijing, the group has attempted to sue the neighboring province of Hebei and the port city of Tianjin. The region generally suffers the worst pollution in China and forms a front line in the central government's battle against the scourge.

The lawyers say their cases are more about drawing attention to government inaction rather than winning a settlement.

China is grappling with serious pollution resulting from three decades of breakneck growth that vastly improved living standards for many, but took a disastrous toll on the environment.

As people became more aware of the health issues associated with smog, the declaration of a "war on pollution" at the National People's Congress in 2014 resulted in measures to reduce pollutants in the air, including capping coal consumption. However, a particularly heavy bout of smog

at the beginning of this year still triggered pollution "red alerts" in more than 20 cities.

■ The lawsuits demonstrate the mounting frustration of China's middle class at the country's notoriously bad air

Beijing plans to spend \$2.7 billion on fighting air pollution this year, part of which would be used to close or upgrade more than 3,000 polluting factories, replace the use of coal with clean energy on the outskirts of the city and phase out 300,000 high-polluting older vehicles, according to the city's acting mayor, Cai Qi.

Despite efforts to enlist the public in the anti-pollution struggle, China's authoritarian Communist government heavily discourages protests and other forms of independent action, and at least one of the initial five lawyers in the case appears to have withdrawn his lawsuit under pressure from local authorities.

The Beijing press office said the government hadn't received any notices about the lawsuits and was unable to comment. The governments of Hebei and Tianjin didn't respond to requests for comment.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection has been sending out inspection teams to check on how well local governments

are implementing smog control measures. On Monday, it announced that the lists of companies that have to halt production during periods of heavy pollution drawn up by three lower-level governments under Beijing and Hebei included companies that were already no longer operating.

A Beijing court has already twice rejected attempts by the lawyers to file cases, while a court in Hebei province's capital, Shijiazhuang, has yet to respond to a case filed more than two months ago. Similar attempts to file suits in previous years have also been derailed, and while a change in the law has allowed some environmental NGOs to bring cases against polluters since 2015, they are discouraged to do so by the high costs of investigating and proving environmental damage, and potential threats and harassment from those they're suing.

Wang Canfa, the director of a center that helps people bring lawsuits relating to pollution, said it would be difficult for the plaintiffs to establish a link between the governments' actions and the harm they have suffered.

"In this circumstance, the governments are not the ones that inflict harm, rather it is the companies that discharge emissions, and individuals who drive cars, who are the polluters," said Wang, who teaches at the China University of Political Science and Law.

Still, the lawyers appear to feel it's worth the risks and frustrations to make their point.

Another of them, Lu Tingge, who filed the Hebei case, said his mother suffers respiratory illnesses and the pollution makes it difficult for her to breathe.

He's asking for 10 yuan (\$1.50) in compensation for masks, 5,000 yuan (\$730) for "spiritual damage" and an official apology for the harm to his life and work.

"I know my chances of winning are small," said Lu, 47. "But I just want to make people understand that the government bears the main responsibility for dealing with smog and air pollution." **AP**

■ ■
We are the victims of smog and we are entitled to ask for an apology and compensation from the government.

YU WENSHENG
LAWYER



Lawyer Yu Wensheng at his office in Beijing

LAWYERS for a prominent detained Chinese human rights campaigner accused authorities of abusing their powers in publishing a purported interview with him yesterday in a state-run newspaper in which he allegedly confesses to pushing “fake news” to overseas media.

The Global Times said Jiang Tianyong told them he had concocted a story of a lawyer, Xie Yang, having been tortured by police. Xie has been held since July 2015 following a sweeping crackdown on civil rights lawyers and activists.

Jiang was detained in November after visiting Xie's wife and is accused of inciting subversion of state power.

Jiang's wife, Jin Bianling, told The Associated Press she planned to sue the Global Times for defaming her husband.

“The Global Times article is fake,” Jin said from California, where she moved in 2013 with the couple's daughter to escape harassment from security agents. “A reporter has been able to meet Jiang Tianyong, but the lawyers I have authorized to can't, so I want it to be made public how the reporter managed to meet (him).”

State television and other media have in the past carried alleged confessions by detained activists before they've been formally charged. Rights groups say such statements are scripted and violate due process.

The nationalistic Global Times tabloid is published by the ruling Communist Party's newspaper People's Daily and regularly lashes out at government critics.

Both Jiang and Xie took on politically sensitive cases as lawyers.

FAKE NEWS

Chinese activist's lawyers slam purported interview with him



Jiang Tianyong was detained in November

Jiang was disbarred in 2009, but continued his activism and helped publicize the plight of lawyers arrested in the crackdown that soon ensnared Xie. Jiang was also detained and beaten by police as part of his past human rights work involving some of China's most sensitive cases, including that of blind activist Chen Guangcheng and followers of the outlawed Falun Gong spiritual group.

In its article, the Global Times said four reports carried in October and November by uniden-

tified foreign media alleging that Xie had been tortured by police were “fake news.” During that time, overseas website Boxun, which publicizes allegations of corruption and abuse in China, printed at least three articles that said Xie had been tortured.

Global Times said Jiang planted the stories in an attempt to pressure police and smear the Chinese government.

Subsequently, Xie told his lawyers that he had been subjected to sleep deprivation, punched,

kicked and forced to sit with his legs dangling in the air, causing his legs to swell, according to transcripts of January meetings with his lawyers published by a rights group.

“It is absolutely true that Xie Yang has been tortured,” said one of his lawyers, Chen Jiangang. He told the AP that the Global Times “follows the orders of the authoritarian government to carry out propaganda and not real news reporting.”

Jiang's lawyers said in an open

letter that they have not been allowed to meet with him on the grounds that such a meeting might lead to the leaking of state secrets. They questioned on what conditions the Global Times was permitted to interview him.

Authorities have said Jiang is being held under “coercive measures” at a secret police-designated location, a form of detention that is often used against individuals accused of endangering state security.

The lawyers said in their letter to the Ministry of Public Security and others that there was “every reason to believe” that both Jiang and Xie had undergone torture in detention, and that the banning of lawyers and family members from visiting them had increased this suspicion.

“We are concerned about whether there is any legal basis for allowing Global Times journalists, whose credibility and trustworthiness are questionable, to meet Jiang Tianyong, while denying lawyers' access, and we seek to know whether the government is abusing power in doing so,” the letter read.

Beatings, sleep deprivation and other forms of abuse are believed to be common in China's criminal justice system, despite attempts by the judiciary to discourage them. **AP**

GREATER FIREWALL

Beijing seeks global support for cyber sovereignty framework

CHINA, which tightly censors the internet, called yesterday for a new model for governing the web based on rules and order rather than the unfettered access seen in democratic societies.

Speaking in Beijing, foreign ministry and cyberspace affairs officials made China's latest argument for being a global leader in managing the internet. Unveiling the country's first cyber policy paper, they also stated that China would beef up its cyberwarfare capacities to defend against hacking and other foreign threats.

“Cyberattacks, cyber espionage, surveillance have become major issues confronting all countries,” said

the coordinator for the foreign ministry's cyber affairs division, Long Zhou.

China has long defended its right to impose own standards in cyber fields such as censorship, data privacy and business regulation in the name of national security. The new policy paper effectively codified the Communist Party leadership's claim that countries should wield sovereign authority over all cyber-related matters within their territory.

Describing the internet as rife with subversive thought, religious extremism, pornography, fake news and financial scams, Long said China “stands ready to work together with Russia and BRICS partners,” as

well as other countries on new governance measures.

BRICS is an organization of large emerging economies grouping Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. China is hosting its annual summit this year as part of efforts to elevate the group's international status.

China made a major push for global internet leadership at a conference it hosted in 2015 in the eastern town of Wuzhen. In a keynote address, President Xi Jinping said that while there was the need to respect freedom of expression, the world also needed to “create a fine cyberspace order following relevant laws.”

The new policy paper emerges as the country's

leaders have talked up Beijing's desire to be a world leader in economic globalization and diplomatic multilateralism, at a time with President Donald Trump is questioning trade agreements and pushing his own brand of American economic nationalism. China is seen as sensing an opportunity to bolster its influence and aggrandize its blend of authoritarian politics, strict social controls and limited free market economics.

The sovereignty argument has underpinned China's justification for a massive internet censorship apparatus that critics say hampers free speech and open trade. Chinese officials have evangelized the concept at international forums in re-



cent years, arguing that developing countries should join Beijing in demanding a greater say over global internet governance, which is currently dominated by the United States and liberal Western thinking.

Beijing's sophisticated censorship tool, known as the “Great Firewall,” blocks a slew of foreign news sites and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. The government has broadened police powers to collect personal data for law enforcement and online discussion of sensitive topics such as the 1989 Tiananmen Square

crackdown is quickly squelched by the censors.

The officials yesterday extended an invitation to the international community, saying that China, with the world's largest online population and advanced technology, was willing to share its “wisdom, experience and resources” in governing the internet with other countries. They said developing nations were especially welcome to study the Chinese model, but that Beijing would not impose its values on countries with different traditions, cultural and national circumstances. **AP**

HAWAII

Bill targeting commercial fishing industry dies



A catch of fish is unloaded from a commercial fishing boat at Pier 38 in Honolulu

Cathy Bussewitz, Honolulu

A Hawaii bill that sought to change the way commercial fishing licenses are granted died after industry representatives told lawmakers it would wreck the business.

The bill sought more oversight of the fishing industry, but that's the role of the federal government, not the state, said state Sen. Brian Taniguchi, chairman of the Senate Committee on International Affairs and the Arts.

Two committees including Taniguchi's deferred the bill indefinitely yesterday, killing it for the legislative session.

The bill sought to restrict commercial fishing licenses to people who are legally allowed to enter the U.S., a redundant move because that already is codified. But despite what's currently in the law, the state issues fishing licenses to the men.

The bill would have required fishing license applicants to appear in person, creating a logistical barrier because most of Hawaii's foreign fishermen are confined to their boats. Supporters said that interaction would give foreign fishermen a chance to tell state officials if they were victims of human trafficking or having problems such as withheld wages.

"It's hard to set up a whole government procedure to just maybe bump into that problem when you have a federal agency that's actually supposed to enforce that," Taniguchi said after the hearing.

The bill was introduced after an Associated Press investigation found some foreign fishermen working without most basic labor protections while catching premium seafood. The 2016 investigation also found that foreign fishermen were confined to the boats while docked in Honolulu.

The fishermen have to stay on or near their boats because they lack the proper visas or documents to

legally enter the U.S.

Currently, fishing boat operators apply for licenses on behalf of the crew that can't leave the docks.

The Pacific Gateway Center, an anti-human trafficking group, said it has had direct contact with dozens of fishermen from the boats and heard allegations of human trafficking, beatings and a lack of food, water, toilet facilities and payment of full salaries.

"The people who are victims will have no voice and no way of getting help," said Tin Myaing Thein, the group's director, after learning the bill died. "These people will just go on the way they have been, and will continue to be exploited as before."

State Sen. Karl Rhoads, who introduced the bill, said there wasn't enough political support to pass the legislation.

"Because the jurisdiction is so split up between the different agencies and different levels of government, it's hard for the state to say we really have any serious jurisdiction over it, so people are saying you're trying to be the U.S. Department of Labor," Rhoads said about his proposal.

At a previous hearing, fishing industry officials said they would lose foreign workers and that hiring Americans for higher wages would drive up seafood costs if the bill passed.

"We fight all the time pricewise with imports," said Jim Cook of the Hawaii Longline Association.

Cook and others said the state's commercial fishing industry could shut down if the bill passed.

"I think they're probably right," Rhoads said Tuesday. "They wouldn't be able to get visas [for the foreign workers] and they won't be able to get enough Americans to do it at a wage they're willing to pay."

A House bill to require the state to collect contracts between fishermen and their overseas employers is still alive, but faces an upcoming legislative deadline. **AP**

AUSTRALIA'S prime minister said yesterday that he won't attend this year's Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras following a furor over his change of stance on same-sex marriage.

Malcolm Turnbull last year became Australia's first serving prime minister to attend the annual street parade that is staged in his wealthy electoral division, angering the more conservative elements of his ruling party.

But the Sydney gay community became split over whether he would be welcome at the event on Saturday due to his conservative government's policy on gay marriage.

Turnbull said that while he strongly supported the Mardi Gras, he would be out of Sydney on Saturday.

"I go most years. I'm not

AUSTRALIA

Prime minister rules out attending Sydney Gay Mardi Gras



Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull

going this year. I will be [interested] on other matters," Turnbull told reporters, without elaborating.

Turnbull has long been a vocal supporter of gay marriage. Before he became prime minister in late 2015,

I go most years. I'm not going this year. I will be [interested] on other matters.

MALCOLM TURNBULL

he argued that lawmakers should be allowed to decide the issue in Parliament wi-

thout being expected to vote along party lines.

But the more conservative lawmakers in the ruling party want to ask the Australian public their opinions in a national vote. Marriage equality opponents had supported the so-called plebiscite, while most gay marriage advocates oppose it, warning it would spark a divisive public debate.

Turnbull initially opposed the plebiscite, but agreed to go ahead with the plan for it in return for right-wing support when he was challenging then Prime Minister Tony Abbott for leadership

of the ruling party.

But the Senate in November rejected legislation that would have allowed the national vote to take place last month. Gay marriage is now off the government's agenda.

Also in November, a Mardi Gras annual general meeting voted to tell Turnbull he was no longer on the official guest list for the 2017 festivities because of his support for the plebiscite. But the Mardi Gras board of directors later rejected that, pointing to the festival's constitutional objective to build relations between gays and the wider community.

Turnbull is already under increased pressure, with an opinion poll published this week showing his popularity has reached a new low point and that his government was trailing further behind the center-left opposition. **AP**

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USA | RUSSIAGATE

Justice Dep't: Sessions spoke with Russian ambassador in 2016

Eric Tucker, Washington

ATORNEY General Jeff Sessions had two conversations with the Russian ambassador to the United States during the presidential campaign season last year, contact that immediately fueled calls for him to recuse himself from a Justice Department investigation into Russian interference in the election.

Sessions, an early supporter of President Donald Trump and a policy adviser to the Republican candidate, did not disclose those communications at his confirmation hearing in January when asked what he would do if "anyone affiliated" with the campaign had been in contact with the Russian government.

Sessions answered that he had not had communication with the Russians.

Justice Department spokeswoman Sarah Isgur Flores said yesterday [Macau time] that "there was absolutely nothing misleading about his answer."

That statement did not satisfy Democrats who even before Wednesday had sought his recusal from the ongoing federal investigation and had raised questions about whether he could properly oversee it.

Democratic House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, accused Sessions



Attorney General Jeff Sessions holds a meeting with the heads of federal law enforcement components at the Department of Justice in Washington

of "lying under oath" and demanded that he resign. Other Democrats called on him to step aside from the investigation.

In a statement, Sessions said, "I never met with any Russian officials to discuss issues of the campaign. I have no idea what this allegation is about. It is false."

Sessions had more than 25 conversations with foreign ambassadors last year in his role as a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and had two separate interactions with the Russian ambassador, Sergey Kislyak, the department said.

One was a visit in September

in his capacity as a senator, similar to meetings with envoys from Britain, China, Germany and other nations, the department said.

The other occurred in a group setting following a Heritage Foundation speech that Sessions gave during the summer, when several ambassadors — including the Russian ambassador — approached Sessions after the talk as he was leaving the stage.

Revelations of the contact, first reported by The Washington Post, triggered calls from members of Congress for Sessions to back out of any involvement in the FBI's probe.

"If reports are accurate that

Attorney General Sessions — a prominent surrogate for Donald Trump — met with Ambassador Kislyak during the campaign, and failed to disclose this fact during his confirmation, it is essential that he recuse himself from any role in the investigation of Trump campaign ties to the Russians," said Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee.

I never met with any Russian officials to discuss issues of the campaign.

JEFF SESSIONS

"This is not even a close call; it is a must," he said.

Asked by reporters this week about the prospect of a recusal, Sessions said, "I would recuse myself from anything that I should recuse myself on."

At the confirmation hearing in January, Sen. Al Franken of Minnesota asked Sessions about allegations of contact between Russia and Trump aides

during the 2016 election.

He asked Sessions what he would do if there was evidence that anyone from the Trump campaign had been in touch with the Russian government during the campaign.

Sessions replied he was "unaware of those activities."

Then he added: "I have been called a surrogate at a time or two in that campaign and I didn't have, did not have communications with the Russians, and I'm unable to comment on it."

Flores, the Justice Department spokeswoman, said that response was not misleading.

"He was asked during the hearing about communications between Russia and the Trump campaign — not about meetings he took as a senator and a member of the Armed Services Committee," she said in a statement.

Franken, in a statement yesterday, said he was troubled that the new attorney general's response to his question was "at best, misleading." He said he planned to press Sessions on his contact with Russia.

"It's clearer than ever now that the attorney general cannot, in good faith, oversee an investigation at the Department of Justice and the FBI of the Trump-Russia connection, and he must recuse himself immediately," Franken said.

Separately in January, Sen. Patrick Leahy, a Judiciary Committee Democrat, asked Sessions in a written questionnaire whether "he had been in contact with anyone connected to any part of the Russian government about the 2016 election, either before or after election day."

Sessions replied simply, "No." **AP**

SHE DECIDES

Donors pledge nearly USD200 million for family planning

NATIONS and philanthropists pledged close to USD200 million yesterday for family planning at an international conference that aimed to make up for the gap left by President Donald Trump's ban on U.S. funding to groups linked to abortion.

Some 50 governments attended the hastily convened one-day conference in Brussels and the funding drive was boosted by Sweden, Canada and Finland each promising 20 million euros (\$21 million). Private donors like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provided tens of millions more.

Conference host and Belgian Deputy Premier Alexander De Croo said one anonymous U.S. donor

committed \$50 million, pushing the total up to a provisional 181 million euros (\$190 million).

One of Trump's first acts as president was to withhold an estimated half billion dollars a year in funding from international groups that perform abortions or provide information about them. The Trump administration said the ban is necessary because it doesn't want to provide funds for something it considers morally wrong.

Officials in many European nations and around the world say the move just hurts women and girls who need family planning the most and will lead to more abortions, not less.

"The purely ideological de-

cision of one country" can push women and girls back "into the Dark Ages," said conference host Belgian Deputy Premier Alexander De Croo.

"We will start making something great again," he said of the drive to boost family planning policies in developing nations, riffing off Trump's "make America great again" campaign slogan.

Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands had already committed to contributing at least 10 million euros each. African and Asian countries were also the conference, as well as officials from the European Union and the United Nations and private donors.

Finnish Development Mi-



Belgium's Deputy PM Alexander De Croo (right) and Dutch Trade Minister Lillianne Plouman address a media conference in Brussels

nister Kai Mykkanen said the U.S. moves "threaten to suspend a large number of projects helping to defend the health of millions of girls, even helping to save their lives. We respond to the situation fraught with distress by investing in the improvement of women's

and girls' rights even more than before."

The conference stressed that abortion was only a small part of family planning in developing nations. It emphasized the need for more sex education and more availability of contraceptives and warned

about the dangers of sexually related diseases and of female genital mutilation. It also backed sexual rights, so women and girls can stand up for the inviolability of their bodies.

U.S. bans on funding international groups that perform or even talk about abortions have been instituted by Republican administrations and rescinded by Democratic ones since 1984. Former President Barack Obama last lifted it in 2009. But under Trump, the ban has been massively expanded.

Participants said that instead of decreasing abortions, when bans were in place, the number of involuntarily pregnancies and abortions increased. **AP**

Jill Lawless, London

BREXIT

House of Lords chides May, backs EU citizens' rights

BRITAIN'S unelected House of Lords yesterday [Macau time] handed the government a stinging — though likely temporary — defeat on its plans to leave the European Union, resolving that EU citizens should be promised the right to stay in the U.K. after it quits the bloc.

By a vote of 358 to 256, Parliament's upper chamber inserted a clause protecting EU nationals' status into a bill authorizing the government to begin EU exit talks.

The Labour Party's Brexit spokeswoman in the Lords, Dianne Hayter, said Europeans living in Britain "need to know now, not in two years' time or even 12 months' time," what their rights are.

"You can't do negotiations with people's futures. They're too precious to be used as bargaining chips," Hayter said.

Pro-EU politicians hailed the vote as a symbol of commitment to Europeans living in Britain. But it is unlikely to turn out to be binding on the government. The change must go to a vote in the elected House of Commons, where there is a strong chance it will be rejected, since Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party has a majority in the lower chamber.

The government said it was "disappointed" by the Lords' vote, and is expected to try to overturn the amendment in the Commons later this month.

By leaving the EU, Britain will be withdrawing from the bloc's policy of free movement, which allows citizens of



House of Lords to PM: May not

the bloc's 28 member states to live and work in any of the others. That leaves 3 million EU nationals in the U.K., as well as 1 million Britons in other member countries, uncertain whether they will be able to stay in their jobs and homes once Britain reasserts control over EU immigration.

The government has said repeatedly that it plans to

guarantee the right of EU citizens to remain in Britain as long as U.K. nationals living elsewhere in the bloc get the same right. Critics accuse the government of treating people as leverage in the divorce negotiations.

The Lords' amendment commits the government to guaranteeing within three months that EU citizens li-

ving legally in Britain when the bill is passed "continue to be treated in the same way with regards to their EU-derived rights."

A stream of peers — most from opposition parties but a few from the governing Conservatives — stood to agree with her. Broadcaster Melvyn Bragg, a Labour member of the Lords, said EU citizens in

Britain had been "reduced to pawns in a government tragedy."

He said Britain should "tell those who are here now that we want them to stay here and welcome them."

But Conservative peer Nigel Lawson said the amendment was merely "virtue-signaling" and would have no concrete impact. And his Conservative colleague Michael Howard said it could backfire by delaying a deal on residence rights between Britain and the EU.

He said the best course was to launch formal negotiations "and then to negotiate to give these people the rights they deserve to stay in this country."

The prime minister wants to trigger Article 50 of the EU's key treaty, starting two years of exit negotiations, by March 31. But she can't do that until Parliament passes legislation sanctioning the move.

The House of Commons approved the bill last month and can overturn any changes made by the Lords when the legislation comes back.

Back-and-forth between the two chambers — a process known as parliamentary ping pong — will delay passage of the legislation and potentially threaten May's timetable for starting EU exit talks. **AP**

SWEDEN

Leftist gov't reintroduces military draft for first time in 7 years



Swedish Army personnel as they take part in the annual gay Pride Parade in Stockholm

Jan M. Olsen, Copenhagen

SWEDEN'S left-leaning government yesterday reintroduced a military draft for both men and women because of what Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist called a deteriorating security environment in Europe and around Sweden.

Sweden abolished compulsory military service for men in 2010 because there were enough volunteers to meet the region's military needs.

The government said "the all-volunteer recruitment hasn't provided the

Armed Forces with enough trained personnel. The re-activating of conscription is needed for military readiness."

In September, non-NATO-member Sweden stationed permanent troops on the Baltic Sea island of Gotland, which Hultqvist described as sending a signal after Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and its "increasing pressure" on the neighboring Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

There have been reports of airspace violations by Russia's military aircraft in the region and a military buildup in the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, which sits across the Baltic Sea from Sweden.

Under the plan approved yesterday, at least 4,000 18-year-olds could be called up each year, starting Jan. 1.

The Swedish govern-

ment which often has described itself as "feminist," said "modern conscription is gender neutral and will include both women and men."

Sweden's armed forces lack 1,000 active troops as well as 7,000 reservists, according to the coalition government of Social Democrats and Greens, adding enrolment should be made possible from July 1, and basic military training with compulsory service from Jan. 1.

About 20,000 people work for the Swedish armed forces, of whom 84 percent are men and 16 percent women, according to the forces' website.

Over the months, 13,000 young Swedes will be called upon and 4,000 will be enrolled. As in the current system, Swedes will still be able to volunteer for military service. **AP**

TV canal macau



FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:00	Criminal Minds S.8
17:40	Castle S6 (Repeated)
18:20	Labirint (Repeated)
19:10	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Miscellaneous
22:10	Labirint
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Portuguese Movie
01:10	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
02:00	RTPi Live

SATURDAY

10:35	Comedy
11:05	Blaze Riders
11:30	Documentary Serie
11:55	Miscellaneous
12:25	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Soap Opera
18:35	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	Miscellaneous
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:55	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:10	Young Adult
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
17:10	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
22:05	The New Gypsy Kings
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
23:50	Europa League Magazine
00:45	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeat)
01:20	RTPi Live

Offbeat

EEK! MOUSE DELAYS LONDON-TO-SAN FRANCISCO FLIGHT FOR 4 HOURS

How he squeaked through security is anyone's guess. A little mouse made for a big delay on a British Airways flight from London to San Francisco.

The passengers were all buckled up and ready to go when the crew told them that a mouse-spotting meant they couldn't take off.

The crew joked that the mouse couldn't enter US airspace without a passport, and told everyone they needed a whole new plane. That meant a four-hour delay.

They told KGO-TV in San Francisco after the flight arrived yesterday [Macau time] that despite the delay most passengers were happy to be on a mouse-free aircraft, especially knowing they'd be eating on the flight.

British Airways apologized and said they were satisfied that only two-legged passengers were on the flight once it took off.

cinema



CINETEATRO

02 MAR - 08 MAR



THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS

ROOM 1

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

Director: Colm McCarthy

Starring: Gemma Arterton, Glenn Close, Sennia Nanua

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 111min



JOHN WICK: CHAPTER TWO

ROOM 2

2:30, 9:30pm

Director: Chad Stahelski

Starring: Keanu Reeves, Ian McShane, Ruby Rose

Language: English (Chinese)

LA LA LAND

ROOM 2

4:45, 7:15pm

Director: Damien Chazelle

Starring: Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone

Language: English

Duration: 128min



A CURE FOR WELLNESS

ROOM 3

2:30, 9:00pm

Director: Gore Verbinski

Starring: Dane DeHaan, Jason Isaacs, Mia Goth

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 146min

KANCOLLE THE MOVIE

ROOM 3

5:15, 7:15pm

Director: Keizô Kusakawa

Language: Japanese (Chinese)

Duration: 91min

MACAU TOWER

02 MAR - 15 MAR



LOGAN

2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30pm

Director: James Mangold

Starring: Hugh Jackman, Patrick Stewart, Dafne Keen

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 137min

this day in history



1995 MPs MOVE TO OUTLAW HUNTING

A bill which would ban hunting with hounds in England and Wales has become the first such proposal to get a second reading in parliament.

The private member's bill, introduced by Labour MP John McFall, would outlaw fox and stag-hunting and hare-coursing.

There was cheering in the House of Commons chamber and the public gallery as it was passed by 253 votes to nil after its first reading.

But the bill is still unlikely to become law as its opponents in the Conservative ranks decided not to vote against it in the early stages.

However, when it comes up for discussion in committee they are expected to use delaying tactics so it runs out of parliamentary time.

A spokesman for the British Field Sports Society said the bill stood no prospect of reaching the statute book unless the "anti-country sports" elements were dropped.

But the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals (RSPCA), one of the bill's main backers, insisted the end was in sight for blood sports.

A statement issued by the RSPCA said: "This is a historic first step towards a better deal for Britain's wild animals."

"It is just a matter of time before wild mammals get full protection in the law."

But without the help of the government the bill is unlikely to get enough parliamentary time to get on to the statute books.

The governing Conservatives, traditionally the party backed by the hunting lobby, could not afford to be seen to support such a bill.

However, any future Labour government is expected to allow a free vote on the issue.

Courtesy of BBC

IN CONTEXT

John McFall's bill was rejected by the House of Lords.

In 1998 the new Labour government failed to back another anti-hunting bill by one of its MPs in spite of its election pledge to "ensure greater protection for wildlife".

However, the following year Prime Minister Tony Blair made a surprise announcement that he planned to make fox-hunting illegal.

In a free vote to gauge opinion in March 2002 MPs overwhelmingly backed a complete ban on hunting with dogs, rejecting two other compromise options.

In the Queen's Speech in November 2002 the government announced its intention to bring forward a bill after consultation with all sides in the debate.

In Scotland hunting with hounds was banned in February 2002.

At Westminster the hunting bill continued to ping-pong between Commons and Lords until it was finally passed and became law on 18 February 2005.

The new law bans hunting with dogs but it is still legal to use dogs to chase a scent trail. If a real fox is cornered, no more than two dogs can be used to flush it out and the animal must then be shot.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
If people came with warning labels, yours would say something like 'Danger. Do not test me.' Heaven help anyone who decides that it might be fun to see just how far you can be verbally pushed.

Taurus
April 20-May 20
You're feeling even more secretive lately, so if you do decide to let someone in on what you're feeling and how you've arrived at your decision, they'd better understand just how special that makes them.

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
If anyone knows how wonderful it is to have entertaining friends, it's you. You've spent a whole lot of time cultivating just such a crew, and you don't take their affection lightly.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You've always had a great relationship with your superiors. In fact, they often treat you as if you're a peer; and most times, you feel as if you're part of a family.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
When you're happy, everyone's happy. There's no way around it. Your fiery nature just won't allow anyone to be depressed in your immediate vicinity --not if you can do anything about it.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
If you're not sure about how to handle a certain situation that's far too delicate for prime time, don't mention it to anyone - not just yet. You know as well as they do that there are still issues to be resolved.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22
Your lucky other half - or prospective other half - will enjoy all kinds of wonderful attention, all aimed at ensuring that they know not only how deeply you care, but also that those feelings aren't going anywhere.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
If anyone can make plans - good ones - and see them through to the end without even thinking about aborting the mission, it's definitely you. You're a planner and a plotter, equal parts detective and analyst.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Generosity and excess is a dangerous pair of qualities to tote around, and it takes a special kind of person to do it. Those are your burdens. For the most part, you're up for the challenge and happy about it.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You won't be shy now, but if you start to feel a bit of it coming on, remind yourself that if anyone has the right to be confident, it's you - especially since you've been so diligent and hardworking for so long.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
If you're at all worried that you might say or do something to offend someone, especially if you're pretty darned sure about who it is and what the situation might be.

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20
You're not much in the mood to shop at the moment, but that doesn't mean there isn't something out there that will appeal to you so much that you won't go through hell to have it.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

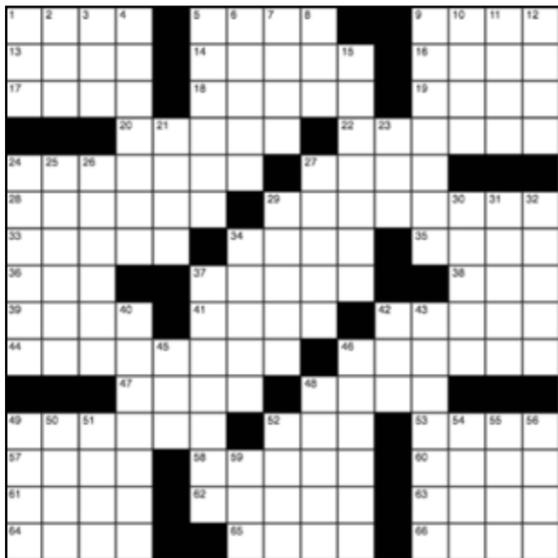
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	13	clear
Harbin	-17	-3	snow
Tianjin	3	12	clear/cloudy
Urumqi	-7	-1	clear/cloudy
Xi'an	3	15	cloudy
Lhasa	0	11	clear/cloudy
Chengdu	7	12	overcast
Chongqing	10	13	drizzle
Kunming	7	20	cloudy/clear
Nanjing	0	14	clear/cloudy
Shanghai	4	13	clear/cloudy
Wuhan	3	15	overcast/cloudy
Hangzhou	2	15	clear/cloudy
Taipei	14	19	drizzle/cloudy
Guangzhou	10	23	clear
Hong Kong	15	22	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	1	4	drizzle
Frankfurt	-1	12	sleet/overcast
Paris	4	10	overcast
London	5	9	overcast/moderate rain
New York	0	10	cloudy/clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- "Garfield" drooler; 5- Historical times; 9- Small amounts; 13- Author Uris; 14- Not as many; 16- Zeno of ___; 17- "Consarnit!"; 18- Physicist Enrico; 19- Grumble; 20- Inspire anew; 22- Soul; 24- Sucker-armed swimmer; 27- Old Pontiacs; 28- Former county in SE England; 29- Woman's loose dressing gown; 33- Head lock; 34- TV horse; 35- Business letter abbr.; 36- Back muscle, briefly; 37- Quit; 38- Ltd., in Paris; 39- Scots Gaelic; 41- Complexion woe; 42- Depressed spirits; 44- African antelope; 46- Willows; 47- Bear in the air; 48- Later!; 49- Male domestic feline; 52- Chat room chuckle; 53- Robin's digs; 57- Village People hit; 58- Ridiculous; 60- K-12, in the ed biz; 61- ___ moss; 62- Lid; 63- Strip of wood; 64- Feminine ending; 65- States; 66- Utah lily;

DOWN: 1- No longer young; 2- Narc's org.; 3- Charged particle; 4- Absorb; 5- Expiration; 6- Stagers; 7- Out of kilter; 8- Religious sch.; 9- Lord's estate; 10- Baseball's Felipe; 11- Ray of light; 12- Yemen's capital; 15- Dangerous current; 21- Gorillas, chimpanzees and orangutans; 23- Eggy drink; 24- Stableman; 25- Arrow poison; 26- African fly; 27- Gaggle members; 29- Trick; 30- When prompted; 31- More frigid; 32- Like non-oyster months; 34- Birthplace of Muhammad; 37- Sarcastic; 40- Send to school; 42- Youth org.; 43- Pride woman; 45- Bikini top; 46- Edmonton team; 48- Brooklyn's ___ Island; 49- Sort; 50- Black cat, maybe; 51- Thom of footwear; 52- Molten rock; 54- Vogue competitor; 55- Layered hairdo; 56- Bandleader Puente; 59- Refusals;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- 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
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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FOOTBALL WEEKEND

Luis Enrique says he's leaving Barcelona at end of season



THE Luis Enrique era at Barcelona will end this season.

The coach said he will leave the Spanish champions to get some rest after three years in charge.

He made the surprise announcement following the team's 6-1 win over Sporting Gijon in the Spanish league.

"I need to rest," Luis Enrique told the post-match news conference. "I won't be the coach of Barcelona next season."

"It was a very difficult decision for me, very well-thought out," the 46-year-old former Spain international said. "The reason clearly had to do with the way of life I need to have in this profession, constantly having to find solutions, constantly trying to im-

prove my team. That means very little time to rest, very little time to disconnect. After this season it will be good for me to get some rest."

The news was first given to the players in the locker room after the game at the Camp Nou.

"He told us about his decision and we have to accept it," midfielder Ivan Rakitic said. "We want to finish the season with victories and enjoy what's left of it."

With this win, Barcelona moved into first in La Liga, one of the leading soccer leagues in Europe. Here's what to watch out for in the Spanish and other major leagues this weekend:

SPAIN

This weekend, the two-time defending champions play Celta Vigo, the last team that defeated

them in the league before embarking on an 18-game unbeaten run.

Celta's 4-3 win in October wasn't a rare blip for Barcelona against the northwest team. Celta, sitting in 10th place, has beaten Barcelona three times in the last five games, but only one of those victories was at the Camp Nou, where the Catalan club routed Celta 6-1 last year.

Real Madrid, having surrendered the lead for the first time since October but still with a game in hand, now visits Eibar on Saturday. Seventh-place Eibar has won four of its last six matches, including the last three at home. And don't discount third-place Sevilla from the title race, with a home match on Monday against mid-table Alaves.

ENGLAND

Liverpool and Arsenal have dropped out of the Premier League title race since the turn of the year. Now they face a struggle to stay in the four Champions League qualification spots. The teams meet at Anfield on Saturday for the standout match in England with Arsenal in fourth place and Liverpool one point and one place behind.

With in-form Manchester United just behind them and at home against relegation-threatened Bournemouth on Saturday, either Arsenal or Liverpool could be in sixth place by Saturday night.

Chelsea, the leader by 10 points, is already looking like the champion-elect and heads to West Ham on Monday. Second-place Tottenham hosts Everton and third-place Manchester City is at last-place Sunderland.

GERMANY

Two coaches tasked with avoiding relegation are in the spotlight.

Darmstadt's Torsten Frings is returning to former club Werder Bremen for the first time as a coach and Andries Jonker makes his debut at Wolfsburg.

Jonker, who was coaching in Arsenal's academy until this week, starts off at Mainz on Saturday. Wolfsburg is two points above the relegation zone, with Darmstadt 10 points further back in last place.

Relegation rivals Ingolstadt, Hamburger SV and Bremen are sandwiched in between. Ingolstadt visits fourth-place Hoffenheim and Hamburg hosts fifth-place Hertha Berlin on Sunday.

Bayern Munich, which routed Hamburg 8-0 last weekend, vi-

sits Cologne on Saturday, while second-place Leipzig plays at Augsburg today.

FRANCE

The French title race is increasingly seen as a straight fight between free-scoring Monaco and defending champion Paris Saint-Germain. But against all expectations, Nice still has a great chance.

Nice was tipped to fade away by now but the team is level on points with PSG and three behind Monaco.

While PSG and Monaco are chasing domestic trebles and are involved in the Champions League, Nice has only the remaining 11 league games to focus on. Nice's hopes, however, rest largely with the unpredictable Mario Balotelli.

With top scorer Alassane Plea out for the rest of the season, Nice needs Balotelli at his brilliant best rather than his erratic worst. The impulsive Italian striker returns from another suspension as Nice travels to play Dijon tomorrow, where Balotelli hopes to score his first away goal of the campaign.

PSG faces struggling Nancy at home tomorrow, while Monaco is at home to mid-table Nantes on Sunday.

ITALY

Napoli and Roma will both have to put poor Italian Cup results behind them when they meet in Serie A.

Roma lost at city rival Lazio 2-0 in the first leg of the semifinals on Wednesday, while Napoli was defeated 3-1 by Juventus the previous night.

Roma is second in the league, five points above Napoli. Second place in Serie A secures direct entry to the Champions League while the team which finishes third has to go through the playoffs.

Napoli lost for the first time in 14 league matches last weekend when it was beaten 2-0 by Atalanta.

League leader Juventus, which is bidding for a record sixth straight title, has a seven-point advantage over Roma and visits struggling Udinese. **AP**

Michelle Wie rolled in several clutch putts yesterday and had six birdies in a 10-hole stretch to take a one-stroke lead after the first round of the HSBC Women's Champions.

The 27-year-old Wie, who has struggled with injuries and form since winning the U.S. Open in 2014, shot a 6-under 66 at the new Tanjong course.

"It's a marathon this week, it's not a sprint," said Wie. "But I have to say I'm very proud of where I've positioned myself today."

Five others were tied for second after 67s — Olympic champion Inbee Park, Brooke Henderson, Mo-

GOLF

Michelle Wie opens with 66, takes 1-stroke lead at Singapore

Martin, Anna Nordqvist and Ariya Jutanugarn.

Among other scores in the 63-player field, Stacy Lewis and Paula Creamer had 68s, top-ranked Lydia Ko shot 69, Shanshan Feng and Lexi Thompson 70, Karrie Webb 75 and Cristie Kerr 77.

"I still feel like I'm a little bit rusty, but hopefully that rust goes away as quickly as possible," said Park, who is playing just her second



tournament after taking a six-month break. "One round doesn't really matter. I have

to do this for the rest of the three days."

Park spent much of the ear-

ly part of last year sidelined with a left thumb injury, and the break helped give it time to heal.

Wie, who had eight birdies and a pair of bogeys, has managed just one top-10 finish since 2014 and only got into the \$1.5 million LPGA tournament on a sponsor's invitation after her ranking slumped to No. 179.

But she was in vintage touch despite playing in tricky

winds and light rain.

After making a bogey-5 at the third, Wie's putter suddenly got hot as she made three birdies in a row to go out in 34.

She made another three birdies at the start of the back nine, draining a 12-foot putt on the 11th and then sinking another long putt from below the hole on the 501-yard, par-5 13th to take the early lead at a tournament featuring nine of the world's top 10 players.

Wie slipped a shot behind Nordqvist when she bogeyed the 15th after an errant tee shot and the Swede picked up her sixth birdie, but Wie regained the lead with back-to-back birdies at 16 and 17. **AP**

opinion

Bizcuits
 Leanda Lee



DRAGONS ABREAST

Ideas have their own time, I've been told. In late 2013, I was stopped by a gentleman while overseas who notices my Macau-embazoned sports slicker. He was curious about my connection with Macau as he had fond memories here as an international Dragon Boat race-caller. As one topic lead to another, he spoke of Dragons Abreast, a breast cancer survivors' paddling movement which had started in Canada in the late 90s.

At my age there are too many women around me taken down by this dreaded disease, and so the seed to explore this pink paddling phenomenon had been planted with that one conversation. As happens, I am reminded of this gentleman's fervour by a confluence of March events: International Women's Day (March 8), "The March Charge" campaign of the Australian Cancer Council, and the opening of applications for the Dragon Boat race teams in Macau.

In many countries exercise for cancer patients remains frowned upon, but recent studies are finding evidence of positive effects during and after treatment that cannot be ignored. A 1996 Canadian study by exercise physiologist Dr Don McKenzie of the University of British Columbia was to put to the test the prevailing view that rigorous upper body exercise increased risk of lymphoedema in breast cancer patients. Lymphoedema is debilitating fluid retention due to an impaired lymphatic system.

Dr McKenzie took 24 breast cancer volunteers and trained them for 3 months in dragon boat paddling. His paddlers showed a marked improvement in not only physical health – a minimisation in post treatment fatigue and other side effects and no patient developing lymphoedema - but also psychological health. The social nature of paddling offered an added bonus, as social support has been shown to improve survival.

As more dragon boat paddling groups set up, Dr McKenzie saw that over time a paddler's focus moved from recovery, minimisation of side effects and regaining control of their lives to the sport itself – the races, the techniques, the competition. They became fitter, healthier and happier, and this has now been repeated with informal groups set up across the globe and formally with dragon boat teams in 20 countries having joined the International Breast Cancer Paddlers Commission. 7 countries competed in London's dragon boat races in 2012; over 3,000 breast cancer survivor paddlers got together in Sarasota in 2014; and there were 15 crews in the Breast Cancer Survivor Challenge in the 2015 Dublin Dragon Boat Regatta. Teams compete at dragon boat festivals throughout the world where there are races for cancer survivors.

Exercise and the fight against cancer is going mainstream. The Cancer Council in Australia also focuses on fitness to fight cancer as it has been shown that one third of cancers could have been prevented by healthy lifestyles. "Get Active" is an ongoing banner under which multiple campaigns are run every year to help not only with awareness and raising funds for research but also in the prevention of cancer and to support cancer patients. This month's event is "The March Charge", a personal fitness challenge asking Australians to log the kilometres they walk or run in the month.

International Women's Day, on March 8th this year, challenges us to donate time and effort to drive gender parity in the #BeBoldForChange campaign. The IWD website suggests that one way to drive parity is to support and strengthen the vulnerable and another is to reinforce and support women's triumphs. The cancer surviving Dragon Ladies of the Pink Paddling machines are exemplars of both. The Dragon Boat Association of Macau could diversify their program, joining a growing number of cities beyond London, Dublin and Florence in fighting the good fight. They might borrow a motto: "Doctors save our lives. Dragon boating saves our spirits."

THE ELVIS PRESLEY'S GRACELAND OPENING
BUZZ NEW ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX

A USD45 million entertainment complex featuring exhibits and restaurants focused on the life and career of Elvis Presley is scheduled to open at Graceland in Memphis.

Priscilla Presley, the former wife of the late rock 'n' roll icon, is scheduled to appear at the grand opening of the complex in Tennessee yesterday.

The 200,000-square-foot complex is located across the

street from Graceland, Presley's longtime home. It features a comprehensive Presley exhibit, a showcase of the cars he owned and used, a soundstage, two restaurants and retail stores. The complex will replace the aging buildings that have housed Presley-related exhibits for years.

The center is part of a \$140 million Graceland expansion, which includes a 450-room hotel that opened last year.

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

SOURCE: DSMG

Ex-CIA agent freed in Europe thanks Trump administration



Barry Hatton, Lisbon

A former American CIA agent released from prison in Portugal hours before her planned extradition to Italy is thanking President Donald Trump for what she describes as his administration's intervention in her case.

Sabrina de Sousa told The Associated Press yesterday that U.S. officials were in contact with authorities in both Portugal and Italy ahead of her release.

Officials in the United States, Italy and Portugal were not immediately available for comment.

De Sousa walked free Wednesday, a day after Italy dropped its extradition request. An Italian court had convicted her of taking part in the kidnapping of a Muslim cleric in Milan 14 years ago as part of the U.S. "extraordinary rendition" anti-terrorism program, which was launched after the September 11, 2001 attacks. The program saw suspects kidnapped and transferred to centers abroad, where they

were interrogated and often tortured.

De Sousa was arrested on a European warrant at Lisbon airport in October 2015 while en route to India to visit her mother. She repeatedly fought her extradition and complained that former president Barack Obama's administration had abandoned her.

She lost several appeals after her arrest. But on Tuesday, Italian President Sergio Mattarella granted her partial clemency, shaving one year off her four-year sentence. She could now serve community service instead of prison time, possibly in Portugal or Italy.

After her release, de Sousa tweeted to Trump: "THANKYOU!! Your admin did more on my case in the last 30 days than was done in prior 8 years!"

She directed requests for further details to her spokesman, former Michigan Congressman Peter Hoekstra.

Hoekstra confirmed the Trump administration was involved, saying he provided officials with "real-time status and background on the case

as it developed."

He said in an email to the AP that he worked with "a number of different agencies/groups within the administration," as well as some former colleagues in Congress. He did not name any of those involved.

"The administration was totally responsive, professional, focused," Hoekstra said, adding that the U.S. embassy in Lisbon was also "very helpful." The embassy did not immediately reply to questions.

"Feedback from other sources indicated the Portuguese and Italian government[s] were very cooperative in getting to a result," Hoekstra said. "Everyone wanted to solve Sabrina's immediate problem, and not have any damage to intergovernmental relations."

In evaluating de Sousa's request for clemency, Mattarella's office said he took into account "that the United States has interrupted the practice of extraordinary renditions" – a reference to the Obama administration's decision to halt the program.

Mattarella and his predecessor cited the same circumstances in previously granting clemency to other defendants in the case. De Sousa was one of 26 Americans who were tried and convicted in absentia for the cleric's kidnapping. Full or partial clemency has been granted in just four of the cases. AP

WORLD BRIEFS



SWEDEN's left-leaning government introduced a military draft for both men and women yesterday because of what its defense minister called a deteriorating security environment in Europe and around Sweden.

More on p15



USA A Hawaii bill that sought to change the way commercial fishing licenses are granted died after industry representatives told lawmakers it would wreck the business. The bill sought to restrict commercial fishing licenses to people who are legally allowed to enter the U.S., a redundant move because that already is codified. More on p12

INDIA Traders angry at a US-based animal rights group that pushed for a 2014 ban on the popular tradition of bull-taming have turned their ire on two iconic American brands, pulling Coke and Pepsi from shelves in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

AFGHANISTAN The Health Ministry says the death toll from simultaneous suicide bombings in the capital has climbed to 22, with another 120 people, most of them civilians, wounded in the attacks. Spokesman Ismail Kawasi said yesterday that hospitals near the site of the twin explosions the day before have been overwhelmed with wounded people, many in serious condition.

SYRIA Government forces battling the Islamic State group re-entered Palmyra yesterday in their quest to again take the historic town they had lost to the militants in December, state media reported.

times square by rodrigo

