



POPULATION DECLINED SLIGHTLY IN 2016

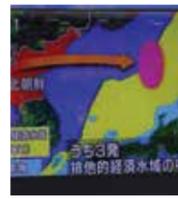
P3



EXPENSES UNRELATED TO SERVICE

Ho Chio Meng is being accused of allowing the MP to pay for hotel rooms and other expenses to people with no link to the service

P6



NORTH KOREA FIRES FOUR BALLISTIC MISSILES

North Korea yesterday fired four banned ballistic missiles that flew about 1,000km, with three of them landing in waters that Japan claims

P13



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS

AP PHOTO



CHINA-US The USS Carl Vinson, which is steaming through the South China Sea, is just one of several high-profile displays of U.S. naval power as President Donald Trump's administration weighs options of how to reassure allies and respond to an assertive China. The new U.S. administration has signaled a tougher approach. More on p11

VIETNAM-MALAYSIA

A lawyer for one of the women accused of poisoning the estranged half brother of North Korea's leader in Kuala Lumpur says there are serious holes in the case. The lawyer said allegations that Kim Jong Nam had existing health problems should be cause for a new autopsy.

AP PHOTO



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

was shaken by a magnitude 6.5 earthquake yesterday but no destructive tsunami was expected, officials said. The quake struck the South Pacific nation near New Britain island at a depth of 28 kilometers. There were no immediate reports of damage.

NEPAL

An Australian trekker has died near the Mount Everest base camp, possibly due to high-altitude sickness, police said yesterday. The 49-year-old man died Friday at Lobuche village, located just below the base camp, at 4,940 meters, Nepalese authorities said.

More on backpage



Arts Festival budget cut by MOP4 million

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PAULO BARBOSA



Football pitch close to Lilau makes way for car depot

P2 MDT REPORT





The car depot as pictured on Sunday



A map showing the demolished sport fields

Football pitch close to Lilau demolished to make way for car depot

Renato Marques

A land plot in the Penha Hill area that was being used as a sports ground and included a football pitch has been transformed into a car depot, which began operating last month.

According to official documents, the land, which was formerly known as “Mato do Bom Jesus” (Good Jesus Woods), was acquired by the Order of Discalced Carmelites around 1948 to build a convent. Historical documents organized by journalist João Botas on his blog “Macau Antigo” (Old Macau) show that construction of the facility began in 1950 by Italian architect and building contractor Oseo Acconci. The convent was inaugurated about a year later. After more than 20 years of use by the Order of Discalced Carmelites, the building was eventually demolished in the 1970s.

Recently, the space has been largely abandoned, with the exception of the sports faci-

lities built within the walls surrounding the land plot.

The sports facilities have now been demolished to make way for a car depot for a local car seller and importer, according to sources contacted by the Times.

Since it is a historical area, it could be used for a city park with a green and recreational area.

VIZEU PINHEIRO

Architect Francisco Vizeu Pinheiro told the times that the land plot is part of the Penha/Lilau heritage protection area, which carries limitations for its development, such as a height quota.

While he was uncertain if

there were further restrictions, Vizeu Pinheiro said: “It is still a historical area, although the most significant part of it [the convent] was one of the special characteristics of Macau [and] is already gone, and the only similar structure that still stands is the Saint Joseph’s Seminary.”

In the architect’s opinion, the best use for such a space would be “something... open to the public, regarding [the] parking of vehicles. If these aren’t for public use, I’m not sure if that’s a good use.”

“Since it is a historical area, it could be used for a city park with a green and recreational area,” Vizeu Pinheiro continued.

“I believe that [a] car park or depot should be a temporary thing.”

He remarked that it “would also be important to give that space to the younger generations and the elderly. There are also at least two big educational institutions around that area that could make use of the space. It would be im-

portant not to use it just for a car park or even worse, for housing, because we need more city parks.”

The Times reached out to several government bureaus regarding the transformation of the space.

The Sports Bureau (ID) was contacted for its opinion on the demolished football field, which had been one of the few remaining in central Macau.

“We learnt that the area was a school equipped with [a] football field, and that the area has already been surrounded with residential buildings and other facilities, as well as other ongoing construction works,” the ID stated.

“As an entity to promote the development of sports in Macau, the Sports Bureau is always glad to see more and more sports facilities are being provided for public use. However, due to social development, [the] usage of land may also be changed to a certain extent.”

The Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) stated

that none of the activities fall under their jurisdiction except for the placement of publicity and information boards, which it said were “unlicensed, [and] the responsible department [is] already acting on the case.”

The Times also received information that the sports grounds might belong to or were recently being used by educational institutions operating under the Roman Catholic Diocese of Macau, and contacted the Bishop’s office for additional information about the land and development.

However, the Office responded that they were “not aware of anything regarding that land plot,” adding that “the Bishop has no information released regarding the [mentioned] land.”

The Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) also informed the Times that the area is in fact composed by two different land plots, but postponed the provision of further details to a later date.

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NPC delegates: Kim Jong who?



Deputies from Macau during the annual NPC session in Beijing

SOME Macau legislators and deputies to the National People's Congress in Beijing have little or no knowledge of the half-brother of North Korea's leader, who resided in the region.

Kim Jong Nam was about to board a plane to Macau when he was murdered at Kuala Lumpur's airport.

Macau delegates were also unwilling to say whether Kim's family was still in Macau or are under police protection, Reuters reported.

José Chui, a cousin of Chief Executive Chui Sai On, was asked about the whereabouts of Kim's family. He said that he did

not understand the question and walked away.

Asked later in English whether Kim's family was still in Macau, Chui claimed he did not know.

"I have no idea [...] I read (about it) in the newspaper, but I have no information from my sources. I don't think I'm in a position to give you any details," said Chui.

Lionel Leong, secretary of Economy and Finance, was also questioned but declined to comment.

Lu Bo, president of Chinese-language paper Macao Daily News, stated that he knew nothing of the case and even added, "I'm not interested in it."



DEMOGRAPHICS

Population declined slightly in 2016

THE total population at the end of 2016 declined by 1,900 year-on-year to a total of 644,900. This marks the first year-on-year decline since 2009.

A reduction in the number of non-residents is understood to be the main cause in the drop in the region's population.

The senior citizen population made up 9.8 percent of the total, an increase of 0.8 percentage points year-on-year.

The proportion of the adult population aged 15-64 dropped by 1.4 percentage points to 77.7 percent of the total population.

Information from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) indicated that the ratio of older to younger individuals has been rising for

twenty consecutive years, up by 3.3 percentage points year-on-year to 78.9 percent.

A total of 7,146 live births were delivered in 2016, up by 91 year-on-year and the birth rate stayed the same as in 2015.

Mortality totaled 2,248 in 2016, up by 246 year-on-year.

The number of mortality cases from malignant neoplasms was the highest (815), comprising 36.3 percent of the total in this category, up by 0.1 of a percentage point year-on-year. The deaths from pneumonia and influenza (296) and hypertension (187), increased by 0.5 percentage points year-on-year to 13.2 percent and 8.3 percent respectively.

Meanwhile non-resident workers totaled 177,638 at end-2016, down by 4,008 year-on-year. Following

the completion of large-scale entertainment facilities, non-resident workers in the construction sector dropped significantly by 8,868 year-on-year.

DSEC noted that there were 6,327 Chinese immigrants in 2016, down by 2,141 year-on-year, with 4,876 coming from Guangdong Province.

Some 1,300 illegal Chinese immigrants were repatriated to the mainland, down by 488 year-on-year.

In 2016, there were 3,891 marriage registrations, up by 172 year-on-year; while the number of divorce cases increased by 77 year-on-year to 1,245. Divorce by mutual consent accounted for 91.7 percent of divorces.

At end-2016, the number of households totaled 189,200, down by 3,500 year-on-year.

Macau Daily Times contest



Three Phantoms - World Class Evening of Musical Theatre

Question for readers:

Which show did the three singers performed?

Please email the answers to:
threephantoms@macaudailytimes.com
Along with your name and contact details.

Tickets-Giveaway

Four sets of two tickets each will be awarded to the four readers who send us more correct answers the fastest. The contest will run for 4 days (Monday to Thursday), each day with a different question to be answered. Each ticket is valued at MOP480 for a total prize value of MOP3,840.

Tickets from MOP180 are now available through cotaiticketing.com or 2882 8818.

DISCLAIMER: Three Phantoms is in no way connected with and/or approval/endorsed by Really Useful Group or Andrew Lloyd Webber.

The Parisian Macao will be rocked, charmed, romanced and haunted when Three Phantoms, a musical theatre show featuring songs from some of the most well-known musicals in the world of theatre, comes to The Parisian Macao from Mar. 3 - Mar. 26, 2017. Tickets start from MOP180, and are available at all Cotai Ticketing box offices.

Described as "the best gala evening of musical theatre you are ever likely to see", Three Phantoms is a spectacular production featuring THREE singers who have performed the male lead in Andrew Lloyd Webber's genre-defining musical, The Phantom of the Opera. With thousands of performances as the Phantom to their names, as well as appearances in many other West End and Broadway shows, Kieran Brown (Scotland), David Shannon (Ireland) and Earl Carpenter (UK) will deliver a spectacular evening of music.

Carpenter has enjoyed a long and successful international career, performing lead roles in some of the world's greatest musicals over the past 25 years, including Les Misérables, The Witches of Eastwick, Sunset Boulevard, Evita and Beauty and the Beast. He is also the owner and creative director of Ginger Boy Productions, through which Three Phantoms was devised and directed.

Altogether a company of ten world-class singers and dancers,



comprising of critically acclaimed West End and Broadway performers involved with some of the world's greatest musicals, along with the Concert Philharmonic Orchestra, will present an outstanding show that has become the most exciting concert to tour Europe and critiqued as 'simply phenomenal'. Musical theatre fans are in for a real treat as Three Phantoms features songs from

huge productions such as Les Misérables, Miss Saigon, Mamma Mia!, Cats, The Phantom of the Opera, We Will Rock You, Chess and Wicked, performed by three of the most seasoned and charismatic performers. Incredible performances alongside beautiful staging and lighting will evoke the drama and excitement of these world renowned and much celebrated musicals.



CRIME

Singaporeans attracted to scam on VIP room investment

Renato Marques

TWO female Singaporeans were victims of a scam in an alleged investment scheme in a Macau VIP room, the Judiciary Police (PJ) stated during a press conference held yesterday.

The case goes back to last year when the two women met in Singapore with a 52-year-old male resident of the city-state who told them he owned a Macau-based company operating a VIP room in a Macau casino. He proceeded to ask if they were interested in investing in such a business due to its high revenue.

The women accepted and on December 18 last year they travelled to Macau where they were taken to a VIP room of a casino, which the suspect said belonged to his company.

They finally decided to

invest USD50,000 each (around MOP400,000) and deposited the sum in an account that was set up in that VIP room.

Claiming that the contract would be signed later, the man soon vanished leaving the two women without any contact. They then decided to present a complaint to the PJ on January 8 this year.

The police started to investigate the case and on March 2, the man was caught while trying to leave Macau. The suspect admitted that the money was promptly withdrawn from the account right after the deposit, admitting also that he was never involved with the VIP room aside from having an open account there.

He also said that he lost all the money in gambling.

In a separate case, what initially would look like another episode of overcharging by a taxi driver eventually

revealed something bigger, leading to four people being held under police custody.

The case started with a couple of tourists hailing a taxi in Cotai that requested MOP100 to take them to the desired location.

The couple refused to pay and left the car, but in the rush they left a mobile phone inside.

This initiated some confusion, with the taxi driver picking up a call from the couple saying they had been passengers inside the taxi. The taxi driver then asked the person with him what the consequences of keeping the phone would be, and fearing he would get caught, passed it to this second individual who was also a taxi driver.

As the police received the complaint and started to investigate the first taxi driver, the police caught a man of around 50-years-old.

The second individual who was aged 30 years, feared for his security too, and decided to pass the phone to a third driver who then took it to a car detailing shop where he exchanged it for cash.

Multiple traces led the police to the car detailing shop where the police caught one of the employees, a Vietnam national, in the possession not only of the "lost" phone but a total of four mobile phones, all suspected of being stolen or lost by the lawful owners.

The shopkeeper then admitted that all the phones were bought by different taxi drivers who usually go to the shop to sell these kind of goods.

The first taxi driver was charged with unlawful appropriation of the good, while the other two drivers and the shop employee were charged with receiving stolen goods.



Macau will not join Olympic Committee

Following a meeting in Beijing with the Minister of General Administration of Sport of China, Gou Zhongwen (who is also the president of the Chinese Olympic Committee), the Chief Executive said that Macau is not eligible to be a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). "Macau understands that, given the fact that it is not a state, it can't be a member of the Olympic Committee," Chui said. The region requested to join the IOC back in 1989. Since 1996, the IOC only admits sovereign countries. Hong Kong started competing at the Olympic Games in 1952 as a British colony. The neighboring region has participated in the Summer Games since then (with the exception of the boycotted 1980 Games in the USSR).

IFT meets standards of QAA

The Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) has received an International Quality Review from the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), following a review process carried out in December 2016. The review team acknowledged that the IFT meets all ten standards set out in Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. A team of QAA reviewers visited IFT and judged that IFT's overall quality assurance policy, the academic and administrative standards, and the design and review of the programs, all met QAA's standards. The review report also noted that IFT's processes for the design and review of programs involves "an impressive range of stakeholders."

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Daniel Beittler

Arts Festival features 25 shows, MOP4m budget cut

THE 28th Macau Arts Festival, one of the biggest cultural events in the region, will feature 25 shows and exhibitions as well as more than 100 activities in total. The budget of the event stands at MOP23 million, MOP4 million less than in 2016.

The festival will be held from April 28 until May 31, taking the concept of "Heterotopia" as its theme. Heterotopia was a term discussed by the philosopher Michel Foucault to describe "spaces of otherness" that are simultaneously physical and mental. Instances of this can include making a phone call or seeing oneself in a mirror.

During a press conference yesterday, the esoteric theme was explained by Leung Hio Ming, president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), who took to the stage to introduce the first large-scale event over which he will preside in his new position as IC chief, a role that he assumed last month.

"Following the exploration of the multiplicity of time of [the festival] last year, this edition takes 'Heterotopia' as the theme and explores the possibilities of space," explained Leung. "[This is] a heterogeneous space that exists in the real world, whose existence is both strange and familiar."

Asked about this year's theme and how it followed from the pre-



vious edition, which dealt with the concept of "time", Leung said: "The art festival does have a continuity in its development and planning."

"My colleague and I planned almost five years ago four different themes for the coming years: 'time', 'space', 'localization' and 'human'. By the time we get to 'human', that will be the 30th anniversary of the [Macau] Arts Festival. Therefore you can see, I do plan, way in advance," he added. "For the International Music Festival, we plan 10 years ahead of

time... so everything has is with a continuity."

He also said that many works from China have been brought to this year's "grand annual cultural event," in addition to international productions and local performances, all of which will contribute to an exhibition of "multiple dimensions of culture."

Among the highlighted pieces in this year's edition is a "soundscape theater play", titled "Back to the Catastrophic Typhoon of 1874" and based on the novel of the same name, that was awarded at the

Macau Literature Competition.

"The Nether" portrays the seemingly limitless dividing line between the real and virtual worlds, while emerging Portuguese choreographer, Marco da Silva Ferreira, presents the ballet "Hu(r)mano".

From China, the National Peking Opera Company will bring an abridged adaptation of the classic "Lady Anguo", while the Macau Kaifong Cantonese Opera Juvenile's Troupe takes to the stage the Cantonese opera, "The Tale of Lady General".

Also during the festival, the Macau Orchestra will present the concert "Resonance through Space-Time", while the Macau Chinese Orchestra will perform "The Soul of Macau - Peking Opera Concert".

Moreover, a number of non-traditional shows and performances will also be held throughout the festival including "The Art of Zhang Daqian", "Constellation - Works by Nicolas Delaroche" and "Debris - Works by Alexandre Farto aka Vhils", with the aim of broadening artistic experiences in Macau.

Play and Play



FOR the opening show of the 28th Macau Arts Festival, the internationally acclaimed Bill T. Jones / Arnie Zane Company will present an inventive interpretation of classical music through its experimental works "Story/" and "Ravel: Landscape or Portrait?" at the festival.

Sometimes dubbed "the father of American modern dance", Bill T. Jones' company will offer debut performances as the opening pieces.

In "Story/", dancers employ a random series of movement accompanied by Franz Schubert's String Quartet No.14 ("Death and the Maiden") to "craft a conversation between rationality and sensibility," according to the program guide.

Meanwhile, in "Ravel: Landscape or Portrait?", the dancers explore music's complicated internal logic with body movements that are integrated with the stage for a consistent aesthetic.

The U.S. company is famous for its inventive choreography, for which Bill T. Jones has been awarded several New York Dance and Performance Awards. In the year 2000, The Dance Heritage Coalition named Jones "an irreplaceable dance treasure."

The dual shows will be held in one sitting at the Macau Cultural Center's Grand Auditorium at 8 p.m. on April 28.

The Seagull



IN "The Seagull", three women and six men discuss literature and love throughout a four-act play written by one of Russia's most famous playwrights, Anton Chekhov.

The play attempts to offer a glimpse into everyday life in Russia... except that this rendition sets the story in Iceland instead. The plot takes place at a luxurious lakeside summer house in Iceland with parties and karaoke, "yet the elements of suppression, paranoia, anger, desire and love remain," notes the festival guide.

Staged by Latvian-born director Yana Ross together with the Reykjavik City Theater, the update to the well-known story presents a truly Icelandic perspective.

Awarded Best Director in the International Festival Kontakt of Torun, Poland in 2016, Ross is an acclaimed theater director in Scandinavian nations for her unique style.

The two and a half hour performance will be held on May 27 and 28 to conclude the festival, with an additional post-show talk on May 27.

Stormy Luck



PATUA-language drama group, Doci Papiçam di Macau ("sweet language of Macau") will present a brand new show this year during the Macau Arts Festival (May 19 and 20), as they have done in previous editions.

This year's story, titled "Stormy Luck", will detail the journey of Bernardo - a man who is incessantly plagued by misfortune. One day, Bernardo is the lucky recipient of a winning Hong Kong lottery ticket, however a violent typhoon threatening the two SARs prevents him from traveling to claim his prize.

Doci Papiçam di Macau describes itself as "a group of local Macanese actors, [pointing] out social ills via sarcasm and condemnation," according to a summary published in the Macau Arts Festival catalogue.

"[The content] combines current affairs with humanistic feelings, reflecting the lifestyle of Macau and provoking people to think deeply," it continued, promising a truly "local flavor".

The theater group has been attempting for over 20 years to preserve the region's unique dialect which is a relic of Portuguese colonialism, mixing parts of Malay, Spanish, Canarese, English and Cantonese.

Julie Zhu

HO CHIO MENG

CCAC accuses MP of paying for trips unrelated to service

THE trial of the city's former top prosecutor, Ho Chio Meng, resumed its proceedings yesterday at the Court of Final Appeal.

Several witnesses from the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) were called to the stand. One of them, a CCAC senior investigator surnamed Cheong, revealed the existence of files, pictures, and videos found by CCAC during its investigation. He provided information related to hotel rooms, plane tickets and other items paid to individuals who had no link to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), most of whom were women. At the end of the session, Ho spoke to deny that he ever tried to scam the MP.

Cheong's testimony focused particularly on the Cheoc Van accommodation villa (which was rented by the MP) and on the Hotline Center 16th floor, where Ho allegedly set up a "secret room."

The testimony process, however, deviated from its previously established course. Instead of prosecutors questioning witnesses, yesterday morning Cheong himself initiated the session by displaying the documents and explaining the content of each of them.

Cheong first revealed CCAC's files regarding the Cheoc Van Villa, saying that CCAC found a blueprint, in Ho Chio Meng's house on which "Cheoc Van" was written.

Moreover, four keys were found at the house of Ho's late father in an envelope that was labelled "Cheoc Van."

According to Cheong, the CCAC doubted that the keys belonged to the Cheoc Van villa.

He also admitted that he was unable to prove whether the keys belonged to the property in question, as its locks had already been changed.

The MP has alleged that Ho used the Cheoc Van villa to store his personal belongings.

It has been alleged that after he was detained, Ho trusted his wife, Chao Sio Fu, to check on his various belongings collected from the MP.

Ho's lawyer then pointed out that Chao had never confirmed the existence of any of the aforementioned items.

During a second session, the witness testified in relation to four units used for MP offices located



at the Hotline Center 16th floor, in particular, ones involving the so-called "Teachers' Resting Room" (a facility used to host invitees of the MP).

According to the proof presented by the CCAC commissioner, the MP rented two units for the resting room because it needed more offices for work-related matters.

The CCAC also seized receipts from the office of another defendant, Chan Ka Fai, a former department head at the MP. These receipts indicate that one of the alleged shell companies involved in the case purchased daily products, including snacks and towels, for the two units.

All the receipts were paid for by the MP, with some indicating that the two MP rented units used a towel delivery and laundry service.

Cheong then played two videos recorded by the CCTV surveillance cameras located at the 16th floor. The videos show that one Sunday in November of 2014, Ho visited the Hotline Center's Teachers' Resting Room.

The videos also show that two

of MP's former employees, Guan Tianwen and Lam I Na, appeared at the 16th floor, and visited the Teachers' Room while Ho was inside.

Ho's lawyer, Leong Wen Pun, then pointed out that when Guan got out of the office, he was carrying a file holder.

Leong questioned Cheong if he knew whether Ho and Guan had visited the location while working for the MP.

In response to a question from judge Song Man Lei, Cheong said that in 2014 Ho was recorded visiting the facility around ten times, and that in two of these occurrences he was alone.

Cheong also said that the CCTV recorded several "unknown" people visiting the place as well.

In a third session, Cheong gave testimony on another four units of the MP office located at the 16th floor. Cheong explained that some of these units were rented by the MP, using his documents to evidence this claim.

However, according to Cheong, the units were also used by Wong

Kuok Wai (a businessman involved in the opening of alleged shell companies and one of the defendants) who registered it as the address for the shell companies' phones and mail.

Cheong said that after Ho Chio Meng stepped down from his position, the related shell companies canceled their phone accounts and stopped receiving mail there.

During the remainder of the session, Cheong played more videos, showing other defendants, namely Ho Chio Sin, Lai Kun Pun, and Lam Hou Lam, visiting the alleged shell companies on the 16th floor, pointing out that Lam Hou Lam would visit one of the units during work time.

Cheong pointed out that previous employees of the companies would deliver snacks to the "Teachers' Resting Room."

In the afternoon session, Cheong, in another two separate testimonies explained how the CCAC obtained the documents pointing to Ho's guilt, as well as their investigation into such a possibility.

Cheong also provided documents regarding a trip taken by Ho and a female defendant, Wang Xiandi to North Europe and a trip to Dubai.

Cheong presented documents indicating that the MP paid flights to and accommodation in Beijing, Guangzhou, and Zhuhai for 18 people who were not MP employees.

Four people accompanied Ho on his trip: former MP employee Zhou Wensheng, his wife Chao, her brother, and Ho's nephew, Ieong Chon Kit. All four, despite not being MP employees at the

time of the northern Europe trip, were still paid by MP. The flight tickets cost around MOP200,000 in total.

Cheong, when answering Leong's questions, admitted that he never contacted the involved airlines to find out the real prices of the flights.

Cheong noted that some of the people the MP paid flights and accommodation for were around 17 to 18 years of age when they were paid for the first time.

Cheong said that Ho's border records indicated that he was in the mainland or Macau when these women were flying or staying at the same accommodations in those destinations.

Cheong also told Leong that he obtained information from China's Supreme People's Procuratorate regarding the trip to Dubai.

When Cheong finished his testimony, Ho Chio Meng made his statement. He started by saying that MP had always paid for non-MP employees on such trips, before going on to inform the court that the MP paid the Liaison Office flights for a trip to Shanghai.

Ho then said that in regard to a trip from Macau to Beijing for a training course, he paid for his family's flights.

Ho concluded by saying that the MP called him to give him the opportunity to claim his personal items which the department had seized from Cheoc Van villa, and he asked the MP to wait until the trial is finished.

Presiding Judge Sam Hou Fai, told Ho that he needed to have written a request letter to MP.

The trial will resume tomorrow.

A CONTROVERSIAL TESTIMONY

THE AMBIGUOUS testimony of CCAC top investigator Ao Pan San on Friday left many perplexed. TDM reported that Ao said different things when questioned by the MP and by the defense. Accused of

presenting suppositions as if they were facts during a PowerPoint presentation, Ao finally admitted that some of the accusations against Ho Chio Meng were based on "probabilities."

Book exchange activity kicks off

PUBLIC libraries under the administration of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) launched a book exchange activity yesterday, as part of the "2017 Macau Library Week."

In a bid to encourage residents who are book enthusiasts to share their resources, the book col-

lection period will be held until April 16.

According to a statement issued by the IC, residents interested in participating in the "Book Exchange" can bring their books to the bureau's libraries and receive a stamped score card in exchange.

As part of the activi-

ty, on April 22 and 23, residents can exchange books whose value is equivalent to the number on their scorecard at the Old Court Building.

Book collection locations include the Macau Central Library, Sir Robert Ho Tung Library, Patane Library and Mong Ha Library.

Residents can use the score card dispensed at the Preference Book Station at Anim'Arte Nam Van.

IC noted that library staff will categorize the books according to their original price with one point given for every MOP10.

The maximum score for



each book or set is 100 points, and books without price indication will be counted as MOP10.

Textbooks, dictionaries,

encyclopedias, indecent publications, books related to religion, and comics are ineligible for exchange.

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Volkswagen

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Tencent's Ma proposes Bay Area-like tech Zone in South China

TENCENT Holdings Ltd.'s Chairman Ma Huateng proposed to build China's own Bay Area equivalent with a technology zone in southern China that would include the financial center of Hong Kong and gambling city of Macau.

China's fourth-richest man said on Friday that setting up a "Guangdong-H.K.-Macau" technology area could help maintain stability in the two former colonies. Ma was speaking at a press conference two days before the National People's Congress convenes in the capital to set the year's agenda.

As a delegate at the country's most important annual convention, Ma suggested the proposed tech bay could leverage capital from Hong Kong and manufacturing prowess from Shenzhen and the Pearl River Delta. China "has the ability to create a world-class tech bay area, and preside over the global tech revolution of the future," said Ma, who runs the second-largest internet company in China. "It will also help the long-term stability and prosperity of Hong Kong and Macau."

Tencent's headquarters are in Shenzhen in Guangdong province - a region racing against Beijing and Hangzhou to forge China's equivalent of Silicon Valley. Responding to the central government's call to "ignite the innovative drive," more than 120 tech zones have mushroomed across the country, all vying for talent and capital.

Best known for the instant messaging app WeChat, Tencent has built an empire of news portals, movies, online books and online games including Clash of Clans.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has identified the internet as one of the most important sectors for official oversight -- a level of strategic importance on par with ethnic minority leaders or Taiwan's political parties. He has reminded the country's technology parvenus that they should "demonstrate posi-



Ma "Pony" Huateng, chairman and chief executive officer of Tencent Holdings

ve energy in purifying cyberspace" and called for regular contact with new media representatives to build support for the party's agenda.

Setting up a 'Guangdong-H.K.-Macau' technology area could help maintain stability in the two SARs, Ma

The elevated status puts billionaires like Ma and Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.'s Jack Ma, who isn't related, under extra scrutiny. Their riches and success have also inspired a younger generation of entrepreneurs, prompting 1.15 trillion yuan (USD167 billion) of funds to be amassed by the country's venture and private equity firms in the first 11 months last year, according to consultancy Zero2IPO Group.

Ma said Tencent would be willing to use its big data technology to help China built more ecological cities that, for example, would utilize marshlands to purify water. He also called for more protection of personal information and data.

Ma wants the country to place national strategic importance on digital content and advocated using Chinese capital to acquire overseas intellectual property.

Already, Tencent is making inroads in Hollywood, funding blockbusters including "Kong: Skull Island" and "Warcraft." It has an abundance of intellectual property for anime and online novels distributed via its websites. The company has aspirations to create a Marvel-like movie empire, as it competes with Alibaba for viewers.

In his policy proposal last year, Ma advocated making the internet more accessible, asking regulators to lower the barriers of entry to spur innovation and content creation.

With more than 800 million people using WeChat to communicate, share photos and post articles, the authorities have started efforts aimed at reining in the social media service.

China passed a controversial cyber security law in November requiring internet operators to cooperate with investigations involving crime and national security. Expected to take effect in June, the law also requires companies to give government investigators full access to their data if wrongdoing is suspected.

Since October, China's law enforcement agencies have been authorized to secretly request access to personal information posted on social media services including WeChat for investigating criminal cases.

Ma said he doesn't see China's cyber security law as a hurdle, adding that the legislation in fact is in favor of larger tech companies. **Bloomberg**

AUTO INDUSTRY

Mercedes taps rugged luxury trend with world's priciest SUV



MERCEDES-Benz is tapping into the popularity of ultra-luxurious all-terrain vehicles, with a new Maybach SUV that can ferry passengers over desert dunes with an open top and thermal cupholders.

The Mercedes-Maybach G-Class 650, shown at the Geneva auto show, will be the world's most expensive sport utility vehicle with a price of about USD500,000. It's Daimler AG's latest extension of the top-of-the-line Maybach marque that it resurrected amid surging demand for higher-end models. Limited to a run of 99, the SUV will have a V12 engine and a landaulet style, with a front row that's covered and a retractable fabric roof in the back.

"This car meets the highest demands for luxury and yet still has all the elements that make the G-Class a real off-roader," said Gunner Guethenke, who heads Mercedes's SUV business. Customers who buy the marque's G-Class - the segment is named for Gelandewagen, the German term for all-terrain vehicles - are looking for something "unique," he said.

Under pressure to foot the soaring bill of developing electric cars, autonomous-

driving features and ride-sharing platforms, Daimler is more aggressively targeting ultra-wealthy customers with high-margin models on the one hand, while also adding more affordable cars that sell in large volumes. That strategy helped Mercedes unseat rival BMW AG as the world's best-selling luxury marque last year and allowed Daimler to boost its research and development budget by almost a quarter.

After struggling for years to sustain a niche for Maybach, Mercedes revived the 1930's-era sub-brand in 2014 and has since expanded it with more opulent and spacious adaptations of popular models, such as convertible and three-row stretch limousine versions of the Mercedes S-Class sedan.

The Maybach G650, which will test customers' appetite for a full-production SUV from that marque, will have an electric - and dimmable - glass partition to separate passengers from the driver, retractable footrests and folding tables stashed in the middle console. To master truly rugged terrains, the vehicle is positioned almost half a meter (1.6 feet) above the ground. It'll be available for sale after September. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

CTM LAUNCHES E-COMMERCE PLATFORM



CTM officially launched its e-commerce platform "Macau Good Hands," aiming to facilitate the business expansion of local enterprises, particularly the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

"Macau Good Hands" has been soft opened for half a year.

In the initial phase, there were about 50 high quality merchants in the platform who offered commodities ranging from digital products to daily necessities, health products and food and beverage.

The platform combines features of big data, a search engine, and electronic payment.

Speaking on the sidelines of the opening ceremony yesterday at Macau Tower, CEO and commercial vice president Ebel Cham told the press that the platform aims

to provide residents with the convenience of purchasing items online - similar to how Taobao offers ease to its Chinese users.

"CTM hopes that it can create a platform that belongs to the Macau people. Hopefully it can help Macau's [SME's] to develop their e-commerce easily," said Cham.

Just like Taobao and western-based e-commerce companies, "Macau Good Hands" also provides a 24-hour service.

When asked how many transactions were made during the past six months, the CEO implied that transaction amounts were not high.

"One single transaction might involve a different amount of money," she noted.

To celebrate the official launch of "Macau Good Hands", new subscribers of CTM Home Internet Service will be rewarded a MOP100 coupon to be used for shopping on the platform. During the promotional period, specific merchants will offer up to 50 percent off.

To assist the entry of local enterprises into the e-commerce platform, CTM said it has offered a discount for business internet service for the merchants of the platform.

"Macau Good Hands" is available online and for both iOS and Android.

Cham noted that within this month, WiFi service would be installed in 900 local buses. According to her, more than 800 buses have already been installed with this service, which will facilitate the use of the platform everywhere. **LV**



Blogger Ye Haiyan poses for a photo in her art studio on the outskirts of Beijing

Louise Watt, Isolda Morillo, Beijing

CHINESE authorities have shut down activist Ye Haiyan's blogs and forced her to move from one city to another. Left with few options, she now produces socially conscious paintings to make a living and advocate for the rights of sex workers and people with HIV or AIDS.

Using calligraphy brushes, Ye creates images of naked women and sex workers alongside symbols such as the Chinese characters for equality, or paints roosters, a Chinese homonym for prostitute.

"I've started to understand that painting is also a form of expression and the natural reflection of my thoughts," said Ye, who is in her early 40s. She was recently evicted from her last home in an artists' enclave on Beijing's outskirts ahead of the annual meeting of China's ceremonial parliament that opened Sunday.

Far from the pomp of the 10-day gathering at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, Ye is among those caught up in an annual roundup of people the ruling Communist Party considers threats to the state, all to ensure the session passes without incident. Known critics are placed under tightened restrictions and ordinary people coming to Beijing with grievances are prevented from traveling or snatched off the streets of the capital.

This year's meetings also come amid China's broadest and most intense assault on civil society since nongovernmental groups were

Congress meeting brings crackdown on critics

grudgingly allowed more freedom to operate more than a decade ago.

Since coming to power in 2012, President Xi Jinping has shown little tolerance for dissent, and a sustained crackdown launched in July 2015 has seen hundreds of activists and independent legal professionals detained. More than a year and a half later, eight are still in detention or prison.

I've started to understand that painting is also a form of expression and the natural reflection of my thoughts.

YE HAIYAN

The environment for civil society "has been worsening every year since Xi Jinping came to power and this past year has been no different," said Frances Eve, research-

er at the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders.

Activists estimate that police arrested more than 100 people last year for exercising their right to freedom of expression, including Huang Qi and Liu Feiyue, who ran websites reporting on human rights abuses and critiquing government policies. A series of trials saw some activists convicted under vague laws against subversion and leaking state secrets, with prosecutors blaming unidentified troublemakers abroad for inciting anti-government activity.

China last year also passed a law tightening controls over foreign nongovernmental organizations by subjecting them to close police supervision.

"Promoting and protecting human rights is now considered a crime," said Eve. Many of those convicted confess under duress, including torture by police, she said. While China's high court forbids such practices, they are believed to remain common within a police force with broad powers to arrest, question and detain.

China routinely rejects accusations of human rights abuses, pointing to vast improvements in quality of life wrought by three decades

of economic development.

The U.S. State Department said in its annual human rights report published Friday that repression and coercion of organizations and individuals involved in civil rights advocacy remained "severe" last year.

Family members of rights defenders and lawyers are harassed and intimidated in retaliation for their work, the report said. Authorities generally fail to respect the Chinese constitution's protection of free speech, particularly when it clashes with the interests of the Communist Party, it said.

China has protested to the U.S. over the report, foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said yesterday, calling it "filled with prejudice."

"We urge the U.S. to stop interfering in China's internal affairs on the pretext of human rights," Geng added.

The authorities rarely comment on activists such as Ye, who used to have thousands of followers online and her own nongovernmental organization advocating for legalized prostitution and offering advice on sexual health.

Her efforts, including protests against light sentences given to the

abusers of schoolgirls, got her noticed by the public and, more ominously, the police, who she says pressured her to close her NGO and move several times. Worried about the impact on her 17-year-old daughter, she sent her to the U.S. last month to study with help from a U.S.-based filmmaker.

Ye says she's gotten a boost from internationally famous artist and activist Ai Weiwei, who bought one of her paintings "depicting a fat woman, a sex worker wishing to earn a lot of money and go home to build a house." Ai previously bought up her belongings when she was evicted from an apartment in 2014 and exhibited the household items — an old refrigerator, a washing machine, cardboard boxes — at one of his shows at the Brooklyn Museum.

Ye reluctantly left her studio in the village of Songzhuang last week on the orders of police. An officer reached at the local Public Security Bureau on yesterday declined to comment on the case. Ye said she went to stay with friends in the nearby village of Beisi and within days again ran into pressure to leave.

"The Communist Party secretary of the village told local residents not to rent to me because I've long been on the blacklist," Ye said.

Beisi party secretary Liu Wenbiao referred a request for comment to the Songzhuang police.

"They think that a person like me should be the target for 'social stabilization,'" Ye said, using government shorthand for suppressing dissent. **AP**

China beats stability drum as Fed outlook risks yuan decline

IF China is worried about the freshly hawkish Federal Reserve rocking the yuan, it isn't showing - yet.

Leaders of the world's second-largest economy conveyed a message of stability as the National People's Congress began Sunday in Beijing. Central bank deputies Pan Gongsheng and Yi Gang emphasized that the currency market was steady, with Pan reinforcing that any yuan volatility would be "normal," even if trading is affected in the short term.

"China's main goal is to keep the yuan stable in the first half," Li Daokui, a professor at Beijing's Tsinghua University and former adviser to the People's Bank of China, said in an interview on the sidelines of the NPC. "Conditions aren't ripe for allowing more volatility."

While stability pledges may be reassuring for other emerging markets, which are being anchored by Chinese policy amid shifting sands in the U.S., it could be a tough task.

With the Fed putting a March interest-rate hike in play over the past week, a turnaround in the dollar could test the PBOC. U.S. tightening erodes China's yield advantage, stepping up depreciation pressure on the yuan and potentially stoking



outflows just as policy makers seek continuity ahead of a rotation in the Communist Party's leadership later this year.

The PBOC may be reluctant to keep up by raising its benchmark interest rate as that would endanger the budding economic recovery, with the 2017 growth target of about 6.5 percent coming with the hopeful "or higher" qualifier on Sunday.

Given the rebound in the economy is still nascent, China's focus will be on controlling risk and deflating asset bubbles, said Zhou Hao, an economist in Singapore at Commerzbank AG. "This means that

monetary policy will gradually tighten."

China has so far managed to avoid an increase in benchmark borrowing costs, tightening conditions in money markets instead as it seeks to curb risks from an uptick in leverage.

Yi said the yuan will be basically stable in a reasonable range, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported Saturday. He previously told Chinese media that monetary policy should be not too loose, nor too tight, as it seeks to stick to its "prudent and neutral" mantra. Yi said yesterday decision-making around rates

will depend on the state of the domestic economy. Separately, the China Securities Journal cited Yi as saying that the yuan will remain credible and flexible against other major currencies and be stable overall.

With Fed Chair Janet Yellen basically locking in expectations for a March hike on Friday, and hinting at a more aggressive path beyond that, the PBOC's middle road may become harder to tread, according to Bloomberg Intelligence economists led by Tom Orlik in Beijing.

The PBOC "will be faced with a choice between raising rates more aggressively - adding

stress for indebted corporates - or accepting more pressure for yuan depreciation and capital outflows," they wrote in a report Sunday.

Orlik also pointed to a change in wording about the yuan in Premier Li Keqiang's work report as a sign officials may be ready to accept greater flexibility in the exchange rate.

With the Fed putting a March interest rate hike in play over the past week, a turnaround in the dollar could test the PBOC

Other analysts agree. While China will continue to target yuan stability this year, that doesn't mean they'll keep the currency rigid amid wider market volatility, said strategists at Macquarie Group Ltd. in Singapore.

Deputy Governor Pan said data will show the currency market stabilized in February and that foreign reserves remain ample. An update on the world's biggest stockpile is due this week, with economists projecting a decline to USD2.97 trillion. That would also be the eighth straight monthly drop, the longest losing streak in at least two decades of data. **Bloomberg**

THE USS Carl Vinson, which is steaming through the South China Sea, is just one of several high-profile displays of U.S. naval power as President Donald Trump's administration weighs options of how to reassure allies and respond to an assertive China.

The current makeup of the aircraft carrier strike group, which began routine operations Feb. 18, suggests it may not carry out an anticipated freedom of navigation operation (FONOP) just yet. The U.S. has challenged Beijing four times since 2015 by sailing close to Chinese-held islands in the disputed waters, but critics say the pace of such operations under the Obama administration failed to deter China from constructing the seven outposts that are now being fitted with radar and weapons systems.

The new U.S. administration has signaled a tougher

SOUTH CHINA SEA

US ramps up patrols, irritating Beijing



A U.S. Navy F18 fighter jet lands on the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson following a patrol off the disputed South China Sea last week

approach.

"We have operated here in the past, we're going to operate here in the future, we're going to continue to reassure our allies," Rear Adm. James Kilby, commander of the San Diego-based Carrier Strike group 1, told journalists

who toured the ship over the weekend as it was sailing between China's southernmost island of Hainan and Scarborough Shoal, which China seized from the Philippines in 2012.

He said there have been no incidents and "everyone

we've encountered so far has acted professionally as we would hope they would do in accordance with international rules, standards, norms and laws."

At the moment, the carrier was accompanied by one warship, making it unlikely the sole escort would break off for a possible freedom of navigation operation, retired Navy officer and analyst Steven Stashwick wrote in The Diplomat, which tracks military and diplomatic developments in the region.

The U.S. military in general has not publicly announced all its freedom of navigation operations, which have existed globally since 1979. But its operations in the South China Sea have been scrutinized closely, and officials have been ca-

reful about raising expectations that such action was anything more than routine enforcement of international maritime law.

China has scoffed at U.S. patrols and sent its sole aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, in January as well as bombers, fighter jets and surveillance aircraft through the region.

A spokesman for the country's top political advisory body, Wang Guoqing, said it was "perfectly normal" for China to build facilities, including those for necessary defense purposes, on its territory. He also dismissed U.S. concern that China was threatening freedom of navigation.

"Though peace reigns over the land, the stupid people create trouble for

themselves," Wang was quoted as saying.

Government spokeswoman Fu Ying said that the situation depends on U.S. intentions. "American actions in the South China Sea have a definite significance in terms of which way the winds blow," she said.

The carrier group is expected to join an exercise in South Korea in mid-March. Later in the summer, a pair of San Diego-based destroyers are expected to beef up the group in the contested waters, the San Diego Union-Tribune reported. It said the Navy's Third Fleet commander, Vice Adm. Nora Tyson, plans at least two more trips for the carrier group in the next three months.

MDT/AP



Retired police officer Arturo Lascanas testifying before a Senate inquiry yesterday

PHILIPPINES

Ex-cop links Duterte to killings in Senate inquiry

Jim Gomez, Manila

A retired Philippine police officer testified yesterday that President Rodrigo Duterte and his men were linked to nearly 200 killings that the officer and a "death squad" carried out when Duterte was mayor of a southern city.

Arturo Lascanas outlined at a Senate inquiry some of the key killings he and others allegedly staged "with the prior knowledge, direct orders, consent, tolerance or acquiescence" of Duterte, who was mayor of Davao city. "What is related here is just the tip of a bloody iceberg," Lascanas said in a statement distributed to senators.

Duterte is also under fire for his more recent national anti-drug crackdown that has left thousands of suspected dealers and users dead since he became president last June. Pro-administration senators grilled Lascanas in the televised inquiry, asking why he had

earlier denied both any involvement in the Davao killings and the existence of a "Davao death squad."

Duterte's spokesman, Ernesto Abella, described Lascanas as a "perjured witness" and called his testimony "fabricated and unacceptable."

Lascanas said yesterday he had lied earlier about his role because he was concerned about his family's safety.

He testified that he was given large amounts of money and monthly allowances by Duterte, a few times directly and often through other police officers, for carrying out the Davao killings and for "blind obedience and loyalty" to the mayor.

Lascanas said he knew of Duterte's direct involvement in some of the killings, and that his group carried out other attacks led by police officers who told him the assaults were ordered by Duterte.

One target was radio commentator Jun Pala, who had angered Duterte with critical broadcasts. Lascanas said he was in a group of gunmen who killed Pala in 2003, and that Duterte personally gave him a reward of 1 million pesos (\$19,800).

In a separate Senate inquiry last year, alleged gunmen Edgar Matobato linked Lascanas to the Davao killings. Lascanas, who also testified, denied under oath

that he took part.

Lascanas, 56, who retired as a Davao police officer last December, said Monday that his conscience bothered him and that he had a spiritual awakening after suffering a kidney ailment that prompted him to publicly confess. He said he had two of his brothers killed for their involvement in illegal drugs.

"I regret what I did and I know I have to answer for all my misdeeds before the people, the law and before God," he said in the written statement. Some crime suspects were taken to Duterte before they were killed, he said.

Lascanas first made the allegations at a news conference two weeks ago, and repeated them under oath in Monday's Senate hearing. He gave details of other killings and suggested Duterte's son, now the vice mayor of Davao city, and the current national police chief may have been aware of the extrajudicial killings.

There was no immediate reaction from Duterte's son or the police chief.

Lascanas said the victims included 11 Chinese drug suspects who tried to bribe their way out of trouble but were gunned down in a quarry on orders from Duterte. He said his group also killed a supposed Pakistani terror suspect on an island near Davao city. AP

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Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

North Korea fires 4 banned ballistic missiles into sea

NORTH Korea yesterday fired four banned ballistic missiles that flew about 1,000 kilometers on average, with three of them landing in waters that Japan claims as its exclusive economic zone, South Korean and Japanese officials said. The test-launches appeared to be a reaction to huge U.S.-South Korean military drills that those countries consider routine but that Pyongyang insists are an invasion rehearsal.

It was not immediately clear the exact type of missile fired, but the tests will be viewed as a provocation by the Trump administration, which is working on its policy for North Korea. The New York Times reported over the weekend that the United States still can't effectively counter Pyongyang's actions despite efforts to perfect cyber and electronic strikes against North Korea's missile program.

Pyongyang has test-launched a series of missiles of various ranges in recent months, including a new intermediate-range missile in February; it also conducted two nuclear tests last year. The ramped-up tests come as leader Kim Jong Un pushes for a nuclear and missile program that can deter what he calls U.S. and South Korean hostility toward the North.

There have been widespread worries that the North will conduct an ICBM test that, when perfected, could in theory reach the U.S. mainland. Washington would consider such a capability a major threat.

U.S. national security adviser H.R. McMaster and his South Korean counterpart Kim Kwan-jin talked by phone after the missile firings. The two condemned the launches and

AP PHOTO



South Korean army soldiers conduct a river crossing operation on the Hantan river in Yeoncheon, near the border with North Korea, yesterday

agreed to boost cooperation to get the North to face more effective sanctions and pressure, according to South Korea's presidential office.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said three missiles landed in the 200-nautical-mile offshore area where Tokyo has sovereign rights for exploring and exploiting resources. He said a fourth missile fell "near" Japan's exclusive economic zone.

It's the third time that North

Korean missiles have fallen in the Japanese zone, beginning last August. Japanese leaders see the launches into nearby waters as a growing threat.

European Union foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini said the launches were "in utter disregard" of several U.N. resolutions and that the EU would consult with Japan and international partners on how to react. She also said North Korea needed to immediately halt plans

for more such missile launches.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that yesterday's launches were made from the Tongchang-ri area in North Phyongan province. The area is the home of the North's Sohae rocket launch site where it has conducted prohibited long-range rocket launches in recent years.

U.S. State Department spokesman Mark Toner said, "We remain prepared — and will conti-

nue to take steps to increase our readiness — to defend ourselves and our allies from attack, and are prepared to use the full range of capabilities at our disposal against this growing threat."

Seoul and Washington call their military drills on the Korean Peninsula, which remains in a technical state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice and not a peace treaty, defensive and routine. AP

BLOOMBERG



Australian leader to continue free-trade talks in Indonesia

AUSTRALIA'S prime minister said yesterday that he was looking forward to discussing a free-trade deal with Indonesia while attending a regional forum in Jakarta.

Malcolm Turnbull today will attend the first Indian Ocean Rim Association leaders' summit in the 20-year history of the 21-nation organization.

Turnbull's one-day visit to Jakarta comes nine days after Joko "Jokowi" Widodo ended his first Australian visit as Indonesia's president.

The leaders used that Sydney visit to commit to finalizing a bilateral free-trade agreement this year after 17 years of negotiations. Jokowi said the deal

must remove all Australian barriers to the importation of Indonesian palm oil and paper.

Turnbull has welcomed trade concessions that Indonesia has already made, including reduced tariffs on Australian sugar and fewer restrictions on Australian live cattle imports.

"We're making very good progress there and I look forward to discussing it further when I'm in Jakarta tomorrow," Turnbull told reporters in the Australian city of Melbourne.

Indonesian trade official Thomas Lembong, chairman of Indonesia's Investment Coordinating Board, told Australia's Fairfax Media that his government wanted to see

"concrete proof of unfettered and natural trade" in Indonesia palm oil, paper and wood products.

David Brewster, an Australian National University researcher on Indian Ocean security, said he expected Turnbull would be one of the few national leaders to attend the summit that will be chaired by Jokowi.

"His attendance at the meeting is probably primarily driven by the Jakarta relationship, wanting to show solidarity with Jokowi," Brewster said.

Turnbull later said in a statement that Australia had a fundamental interest in ensuring economic development in the Indian Ocean region and enhan-

cing dialogue on shared security challenges.

The summit will agree to a statement on shared values and objectives, including a commitment to international law, and a declaration on countering violent extremism.

Australian interest in the grouping of predominantly developing states on the Indian Ocean fringe has deepened in the past five years, with the economic growth of India and China and a relative decline in influence in the region of the United States, Australia's most important strategic partner, Brewster said.

India is a member of the group while China has observer status. AP



Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull (right) meets with President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo



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USA

Trump hotel is the place to be in the nation's capital



Julie Bykovicz, Washington

AT a circular booth in the middle of the Trump International Hotel's balcony restaurant, President Donald Trump dined on his steak — well-done, with ketchup — while chatting with British Brexit politician Nigel Farage.

A few days later, major Republican donors Doug Deason and Doug Manchester, in town for the president's address to Congress, sipped coffee at the hotel with Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif.

After Trump's speech, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin returned to his Washington residence — the hotel — and strode past the gigantic American flag in the soaring lobby. With his tiny terrier tucked under an arm, Mnuchin stepped into an elevator with reality TV star and hotel guest Dog the Bounty Hunter, who particularly enjoyed the Trump-stamped chocolates in his room.

It was just another week at the new political capital of the nation's capital.

The USD200 million hotel inside the federally owned Old Post Office building has become the place to see, be seen, drink, network — even live — for the still-emerging Trump set. It's a rich environment for lobbyists and anyone hoping to rub elbows with Trump-related politicians — despite a veil of ethics questions that hangs overhead.

"I've never come through this lobby and not seen someone I know," says Deason, a Dallas-based fundraiser for Trump's election campaign.

For Republican Party players, it's the only place to stay.

"I can tell you this hotel will be the most successful hotel in Washington, D.C.," says Manchester, adding that he would know because he has developed the second-largest Marriott and second-largest Hyatt in the world. Manchester says Trump's hotel will attract people based on its lo-

cation near the White House and Congress, the quality renovation and the management team.

Then there's also the access.

Although Trump says he is not involved in the day-to-day operations of his businesses, he retains a financial interest in them. A stay at the hotel gives someone trying to win over Trump on a policy issue or political decision a potential chit.

That's what concerns ethics lawyers who had wanted Trump to sell off his companies as previous presidents have done.

"President Trump is in effect inviting people and companies and countries to channel money to him through the hotel," said Kathleen Clark, a former ethics lawyer for the District of Columbia and a law professor at Washington University in St. Louis.

She said the "pay to play" danger is even greater than it would be if people wanted to donate to a campaign to influence a politician's thinking. Spending money at a Trump property "is about personally enriching Donald Trump, who happens to be the president of the United States."

The White House strongly disputes there's any ethical danger in Trump's business arrangements.

Trump can see his hotel from the White House. When a Fox News interviewer mentioned that to him recently, Trump responded, "Isn't that beautiful?" But while the interviewer pointed out that he can see the property from his desk in the Oval Office, Trump said, "I'm so focused on what I'm doing here that I don't even think about it."

Still, Trump couldn't resist the short trip over there for dinner on his only weekend night out in Washington since becoming president.

A reporter for the website Independent Journal Review was tipped off about Trump's dining plans and sat at a table near him. He noted the president's dinner fare and companions, who included daughter Ivanka Trump and her husband, Trump adviser Ja-

red Kushner.

On other nights, the posh hotel is the kind of place where on a mid-February evening, you could bump into Trump television personality Katrina Pierson having cocktails with Lynne Patton, a former Trump Organization executive who's now working at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Trump campaign and inauguration hands Tom Barrack, Boris Epshteyn, Nick Ayers and Rick Gates are among the many who have stayed there in recent weeks.

Rooms start at above USD500 most nights, according to the hotel's website and a receptionist. That's up hundreds of dollars from when the hotel first opened, not long before Election Day. Patricia Tang, the hotel's director of sales and marketing, declined to answer questions about how business is going.

The hotel has become a staging area for big political events.

Eric and Donald Trump Jr. posed for dozens of selfies with admirers at the hotel that bears their name before attending their father's White House ceremony

in late January to announce Judge Neil Gorsuch as the president's pick for the Supreme Court.

Deason ran into the Trumps and fellow Texas donor Gentry Beach while at a meeting at the hotel that day with Trump's campaign adviser Rudy Giuliani. During inauguration week, when Trump himself repeatedly visited, the hotel was "literally the center of the universe," Deason said.

Last Tuesday, as Trump gave his first address to Congress, lobbyists and politicians watched the four large flat screens above the bar, two tuned to Fox news and two to CNN. In what hotel staff said was an effort to avoid some of the obvious politics of the place, the TVs were muted, so people followed along on their own devices.

As Trump wrapped up, applause rose through the lobby and bar. Mnuchin waved to admirers gathered in the bar as he strolled through after Trump's speech.

Mnuchin is one of the New Yorkers working in Washington who call it home during the week. White House economic adviser Gary Cohn is another. Linda McMahon, who heads the Small

Business Administration, also has been staying there.

Administration officials "have been personally paying a fair market rate" for their accommodations, White House spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said.

Even Trump's closest friends pay to stay.

Billionaire Phil Ruffin, Trump's partner for his Las Vegas residential tower, said he shelled out \$18,000 per night while he was in town for the inauguration, which he said surprised him since he'd given \$1 million to Trump's inauguration committee. Ruffin said he lightly complained about the high rate to the president.

"He said, 'Well, I'm kind of out of it.' So I didn't get anywhere, didn't get my discount," Ruffin recalled.

Trump's continued ownership of his hotel and other businesses has spawned lawsuits and ethics complaints, but so far no action on any of them. One accommodation Trump says he is making on the ethics front is to donate profits from foreign governments that spend money at his hotels.

Last week, Kuwait's ambassador, Salem Al-Sabah, and his wife hosted a reception in the hotel's presidential ballroom, in what was one of the first known instances of foreign money changing hands with the hotel division of the Trump Organization since he became president. A spokeswoman for the Trump Organization did not respond to questions about whether the money from the Kuwait Embassy has been or will be donated. **AP**



Congress to probe Trump wiretap claim, FBI disputes it

KEY members of Congress say they will honor President Donald Trump's request to investigate his unsubstantiated claim that Barack Obama overstepped his authority as president and had Trump's telephones tapped during the election campaign. A U.S. official said the FBI has asked the Justice Department to dispute Trump's allegation, though no such statement has been issued.

Obama's intelligence director also said no such action was ever carried out.

Trump's startling claim of presidential abuse of power, made without evidence in a series of tweets Saturday, capped a week in which the positive reaction to his address to Congress quickly evaporated amid the swirl of allegations — and revelations — about contacts between Trump aides and Russia's ambassador to the U.S., both during and after a presidential election Russia is believed to have meddled in.

Trump is said to be frustrated by his senior advisers' inability to tamp down the Russia issue. Compounding the situation was the revelation last week that former U.S. senator and now Attorney General Jeff Sessions, an early Trump campaign supporter, had met twice with the Russian official but didn't disclose that to lawmakers when he was asked about it during his Senate confirmation hearing.

Separately, an Indiana newspaper reported that Vice President Mike Pence used personal email to conduct state business when he was governor of

Indiana. The revelation recalled the use of personal email by Trump's 2016 opponent, Hillary Clinton, when she was secretary of state.

"It's sort of like getting nibbled to death by ducks," said Rutgers political science professor Ross Baker.

The House and Senate intelligence committees, and the FBI, are investigating the contacts, and Trump demanded yesterday that they broaden the scope of their inquiries into Russian meddling in the 2016 election to include Obama's potential abuse of his executive powers.

Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr, R-N.C., said in a statement that the panel "will follow the evidence where it leads, and we will continue to be guided by the intelligence and facts as we compile our findings."

Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, said in a statement that the committee "will make inquiries into whether the government was conducting surveillance activities on any political party's campaign officials or surrogates."

Trump's request carries some risk, particularly if the committees unearth damaging information about him or his associates. Committee Democrats will have access to the information and could wield anything negative against the president. Asking Congress to conduct a much broader investigation than originally envisioned also ensures the Russia issue will hang over the White House for months. **AP**

what's ON

THREE PHANTOMS

TIME: 8pm (Tuesdays to Fridays)
2pm & 8pm (Saturdays)
2pm & 6pm (Sundays)

UNTIL: March 26, 2017

VENUE: The Parisian Theatre, The Parisian Macao Hotel

ADMISSION: MOP180, MOP280, MOP480

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 8818

ARTEFACTS OF EXCELLENCE - SEAL CARVINGS BY LUO SHUZHONG FROM THE MAM COLLECTION

TIME: 10am-7pm (Last admission at 6:30pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: July 2, 2017

VENUE: Macao Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

4:35 - WORKS BY LEI CHEOK MEI

TIME: 12pm-7pm (Closed on Tuesdays)

UNTIL: April 26, 2017

VENUE: Intersection of Av. do Coronel Mesquita and Av. do Almirante Lacerda

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2853 0026

TRANSCIENCE: DAREDEVILS AND TOWERING WEBS

TIME: 12pm-8pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: March 31, 2017

VENUE: Taipa Village Art Space, 10 Rua dos Clerigos, Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2857 6118

MACAU GIANT PANDA PAVILION

TIME: 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm daily (Except Mondays, closed on the following day instead if a public holiday falls on Monday and no admission after 4:45 pm; six viewings per day)

VENUE: Seac Pai Van Park, Coloane

ADMISSION: MOP10

ENQUIRIES: Civil and Municipal Affairs Bureau (853) 2833 7676

Offbeat

LAS VEGAS: MAN ARRESTED AFTER ATTACK ON HOMELESS PERSON 'DECOY'

A man accused of attacking a mannequin that Las Vegas police positioned to resemble a homeless person following two slayings remained jailed Friday.

A judge has set bail at USD50,000 for Shane Schindler, who is charged with one count of carrying a concealed weapon, the Las Vegas Review-Journal (bit.ly/2InlDOa) reported. Schindler was arrested last week following the Feb. 22 incident.

Schindler's arrest report says police set up the mannequin resembling a sleeping man after detectives had no leads on the slayings of two homeless men earlier this year in downtown Las Vegas. Authorities hadn't ruled out the possibility of "thrill kills" and placed the blanket-covered mannequin on the same spot where one of the two men was killed.

The report says Schindler, 30, approached the "decoy," looked around for traffic and struck it with a 4-pound engineer's hammer he had in a bag. Surveillance video captured the incident.

According to the report, Schindler told police he "knew it was a mannequin" before hitting it. But police dispute that statement.

"The decoy mannequin was staged in a manner which would have made it impossible for Schindler to have determined the mannequin was not a human being before he struck," according to the arrest report. "Schindler swung the hammer using both arms to generate maximum force to his blow."

Deputy public defender Ashley Sisolak described Schindler's bail as excessive. She said her "client has proclaimed his innocence, and I look forward to fighting these allegations."

Daniel Aldape, 46, and David Dunn, 60, were bludgeoned to death within a month's time earlier this year. Both had suffered apparent head trauma.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
15:30	Nos League: Feirense - Benfica (Repeated)
17:10	Criminal Minds S.8
17:50	Labirint (Repeated)
18:40	TDM Sport (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:40	Once Upon A Time S2
22:10	Labirint
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

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)

Duration: 128min

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



1969 ISRAEL ELECTS FIRST FEMALE LEADER

Golda Meir, the "grand old woman of Israeli politics", is to become the first female prime minister of Israel.

The 70-year-old's candidature was officially accepted by the Labour Party in Tel Aviv after she received 287 votes from her own central committee. Forty-five MPs abstained.

On Sunday she will formally succeed her political friend and colleague Levi Eshkol, who died of a heart attack last week.

Mrs Meir, who has come out of retirement to take up the role, pledged to maintain national unity and called on the people who worked with Mr Eshkol to "continue in the same framework" in her government.

She added: "I have never failed to accept party decisions and I shall not refuse now."

"I have faced difficult problems in the past but nothing like the one I'm faced with now in leading the country."

With her party controlling the largest faction in parliament, Acting Prime Minister Yigal Allon and Defence Minister Moshe Dayan have agreed to step aside and reserve their own bids for power until later in the year.

Following their decision, she was the only nominee put forward before the central committee.

Mrs Meir, a former schoolteacher in America, previously served as Israeli foreign minister for 10 years before she retired following ill health.

Because of her age and condition, her appointment is regarded by many as a stop-gap, intended to maintain national unity before the Labour Party chooses a leader for the October general elections.

Many supporters within the party consider General Dayan to be a more suitable candidate.

Acting Prime Minister Mr Allon also has substantial backing within the party leadership.

Both are younger than Mrs Meir and considered national heroes.

Despite such opposition, General Dayan, who is expected to retain his post as defence minister, said he would be honoured to work with Mrs Meir.

Her government is expected to reflect the same parties and ministers who previously served under Mr Eshkol.

Details of her new cabinet will be announced in the next few days.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Following her appointment Golda Meir won a convincing vote of confidence when she presented an identical cabinet to parliament to that of her predecessor.

Although many critics thought she would act as a stop gap, Mrs Meir went on to win Israel's general election in October 1969.

The Israeli prime minister governed using coalitions and to remain in office she had to ensure that she was publicly seen to support General Dayan despite the fact they were often at odds with each other.

For the next four years she remained in control but she was blamed for being caught off guard when war broke out between Israeli and Arab forces in 1973.

The Arabs eventually buckled under a sustained Israeli counter-attack but her reputation never recovered.

Mrs Meir won the general election in 1973 but continued to face stiff criticism.

As a result she resigned in April 1974.

She died four years later.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You're famous for going through obstacles, not around them. Impulse may be your middle name, but for the time being, determination will run a close second.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21
If it becomes clear that they're going out of their way to make things melodramatic, don't be afraid to give them their walking papers. The universe is most definitely on your side.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Ready to be the boss? To pass out tasks, delegate authority and make sure everyone under you is towing the line? Of course you are. You've been studying for the part your entire life. Well, it's show time.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22
Some secrets just won't stay hidden, no matter how hard you try. Apparently, you've run into one of them. So now, when this issue just refuses to stay put, your mission will be to put on a happy face

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Fevers aren't just physical in nature, as you already know. They can also be emotional, spiritual and intellectual. At the moment, you're feeling warm to the touch, and it's not just your forehead that will tell the tale.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Fortunately, everything that's going on now was more or less personally orchestrated by you. Count your blessings and resolve to be patient if it's not always this way.

Taurus April 20-May 20
Regardless of what the universe tosses your way or how suddenly it's tossed, you've always been much more liable to wait, think and consider what to do next than to react immediately.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22
The nurturer in you loved that, and ever since, you've done your best to foster that reputation. A serious challenge is en route now - one that will take all your best efforts to resolve.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22
Ordinarily, you're quite merciful when it comes to verbal debates with those who obviously aren't in your intellectual league. You'll do that now for as long as you possibly can, but if they push the envelope...

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
When the person you adore asks for something they think is so above and beyond the call of duty that even you might not be able to pull it off, you'll be just tickled to announce that doing something like this for them is nothing.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Now, then, when times are anything but tough, you're also more likely to express your gratitude and appreciation in a wonderful, thoughtful yet practical way. Just don't be too, too practical.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20
You've been dealing with that type of thing for days and you're tired of it, but there's light at the end of this tunnel now, and you know it - the kind that will actually show you something.



SUDOKU

Easy

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8				9	2			
9			2	7				
2		3	5					

Easy+

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Medium

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Hard

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		7	3					
1								
2	4			3				
		1						
								6

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	12	clear
Harbin	-10	-1	clear
Tianjin	3	12	clear/cloudy
Urumqi	-7	2	clear/cloudy
Xi'an	8	12	cloudy/overcast
Lhasa	1	13	cloudy/overcast
Chengdu	13	22	cloudy/overcast
Chongqing	17	22	cloudy/overcast
Kunming	7	23	clear
Nanjing	9	21	cloudy
Shanghai	10	21	cloudy
Wuhan	11	22	cloudy/overcast
Hangzhou	11	23	cloudy
Taipei	16	24	cloudy/drizzle
Guangzhou	18	26	cloudy
Hong Kong	19	22	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	0	3	drizzle
Frankfurt	0	2	drizzle
Paris	1	8	drizzle
London	0	6	sleet/clear
New York	0	2	cloudy/clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Actress Sorvino; 5- Assistant, particularly to heads of state; 9- Israeli desert region; 14- Biblical garden; 15- River of Flanders; 16- Win by ___; 17- Turner of "Peyton Place"; 18- ...___ forgive our debtors; 19- Come together; 20- Capital of Bhutan; 22- More reasonable; 23- Loudness units; 24- Get hitched quick; 28- An organization; 34- Suppress; 38- Letters on a Cardinal's cap; 39- Potpourri; 40- Clan emblems; 41- Threatening words; 43- Space; 44- NFL scores; 47- Talks back to; 48- Underwater coral collection; 51- Water vapor; 52- Spud; 57- Attorney follower; 61- Trap; 63- Clamp; 64- Other, in Oaxaca; 66- Ski lift; 67- Punctuation mark; 68- Hourly rate; 69- Joy Adamson's lioness; 70- Point in the desired direction; 71- First name in stunts; 72- Visualized;

DOWN: 1- Thaws; 2- Spud state; 3- Kidney enzyme; 4- Make ___ for oneself; 5- Indian nursemaid; 6- Flows out; 7- Drops on the grass; 8- Before, to Byron; 9- Sickness at the stomach; 10- Sicilian resort; 11- Enter; 12- Italy's Villa d'___; 13- Swerve; 21- Sacred song; 25- ___ Angeles; 26- Fall mo.; 27- Furry; 29- Stanza of six lines; 30- Some digits; 31- Misfortunes; 32- River to the Seine; 33- Refusals; 34- Wild guess; 35- When said three times, a 1970 war movie; 36- Roman road; 37- Phobia; 42- Floating platforms; 45- Dr. of rap; 46- Lady of Sp.; 49- Honest!; 50- Come out; 53- Pays to play; 54- Put off, as an agenda item; 55- Wipe away; 56- Aired again; 57- Basics; 58- Jog; 59- Weak, as an excuse; 60- Wile E. Coyote's supplier; 62- Yuletide; 64- Be in the red; 65- The last letter of the Hebrew alphabet;

Yesterday's solution

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

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 | EPL ROUNDUP

City, Spurs win to stay chasing pack

Rob Harris, London

IN Chelsea's slipstream, Tottenham and Manchester City are amassing points and hoping the Premier League leaders collapse.

Harry Kane's double gave Tottenham a 3-2 victory over Everton to go seven points behind Chelsea this weekend, while third-placed Manchester City is a point further back after sweeping to a 2-0 victory at Sunderland.

City's players, who have 12 games to overturn Chelsea's eight-point advantage over them, know all about throwing away a lead. Pep Guardiola's side was eight points ahead of Chelsea six games into the season before the tables were turned.

Now, according to Guardiola, Chelsea is "almost unstoppable."

"It's a pity that the distance between Chelsea is so big, but that's true," Guardiola said. "We started the season with 10 games winning [in a row], but our game was not like today."

"I feel we are playing quite well

and that's why we are getting results."

Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino, whose side was four points behind City after four games, now has Chelsea in its sights.

"It's up to us to be there if they fail," Pochettino said.

TOTTENHAM 3, EVERTON 2

Kane upstaged Everton's Romelu Lukaku to assert himself as the Premier League's sharpest striker after the duo entered this showdown level on 17 goals.

Kane moved into top spot on England's scoring leaderboard as Tottenham claimed a ninth successive home league win.

Despite missing 10 games of the campaign through injury, Kane has amassed 24 goals in all competitions — only four behind last season's haul with more than two months remaining.

Kane had already sent Tottenham into a two-goal lead, including an audacious, dipping strike from 30 yards (meters), when Lukaku finally managed

to score in the 80th minute. Lukaku became the first opponent to beat goalkeeper Hugo Lloris in the league at White Hart Lane since December.

Tottenham had been cruising but it was a nervy conclusion. Even after Dele Alli clipped Harry Winks' free kick into the net in the 90th minute, Everton immediately reduced the deficit again at the other end from a set-piece that Enner Valencia completed.

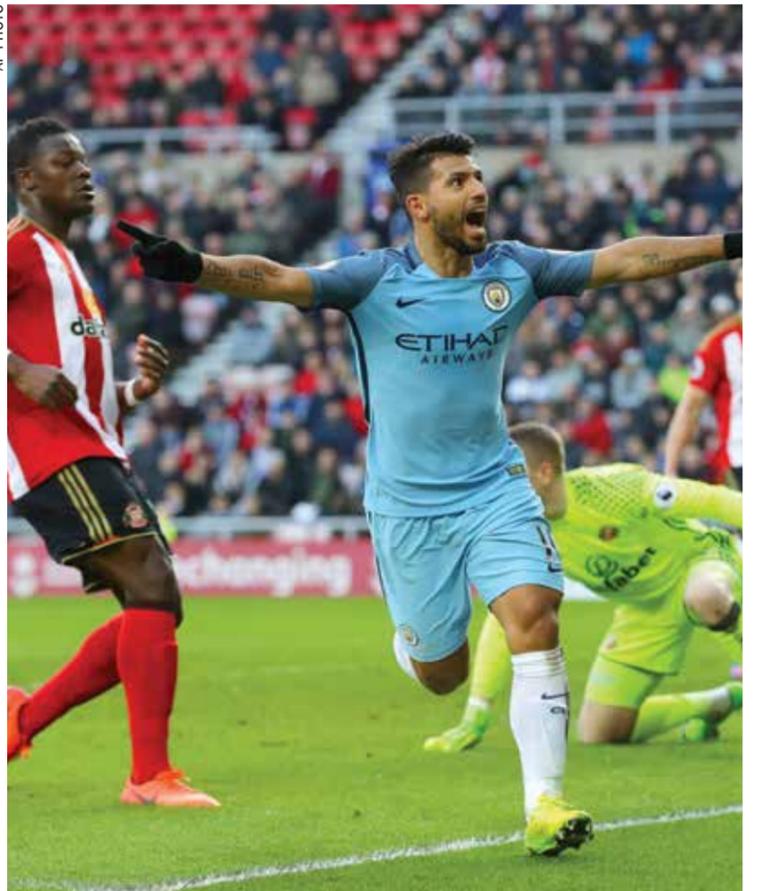
But Tottenham held on to end a nine-game unbeaten run for seventh-placed Everton.

SUNDERLAND 0, MAN CITY 2

David Silva set up both goals as City won a fourth successive league match since being held by Tottenham.

Silva's 38th-minute cross was turned into the net at point-blank range by Sergio Aguero and the Spanish playmaker's defense-splitting through-ball in the 59th released Leroy Sane to net his sixth goal in 10 games.

Sunderland remains bottom, six points from safety. AP



City's Sergio Aguero celebrates scoring his side's first goal of the game during the match between Sunderland and Manchester City at the Stadium of Light, Sunderland

AD



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SOUTH Africa rallied to beat Fiji 19-12 in a wind-swept final to the Las Vegas Sevens yesterday [Macau time] to claim their fourth title from five rounds of this season's World Rugby Sevens Series.

Olympic champions and defending title-holders Fiji scored first to lead 5-0 before the Blitzboks clicked into gear and scored 19 unanswered points to lead 19-5 with three minutes remaining. Fiji hit back with a late try and wide-angled conversion to cut the lead to seven points but time ran out before it could achieve a tying score.

South Africa has now taken an almost unassailable 24-point lead on World Series standings after tournament wins in Dubai, Wellington, Sydney and Las Vegas. It failed only to win its home tournament in Cape Town, where it was beaten by England in the final, and now has 107 championship points while Fiji has 81, New Zealand 71 and Australia and the United States have 52.

"Without a doubt this tournament was the most difficult one of them all," South Africa captain Philip Snyman said. "Hats off to the guys. I think in difficult conditions they really played well and really kept composure towards the end."

Fiji started the match playing into the teeth of an almost gale-force wind which had a significant influence on the final.

After winning back-to-back penalties which put them into the attack, Fiji appeared to have scored through Jerry Tuwai but the

RUGBY | WORLD SEVENS SERIES

South Africa beats Fiji 19-12 to win Las Vegas Sevens



England's Alex Davis (right) and James Rodwell tackle South Africa's Philip Snyman, left, in the final at the World Rugby Sevens Series tournament in Sydney, Sunday

South African defense pulled off a miraculous save by dispossessing Tuwai over the goal line.

Masivesi Dakuwaqa then matched the feat for Fiji, stealing the ball from Ruhan Nel and wading through tackles to score.

Fiji was reduced to six men when Vatembo Ravouvou was sin-binned in the fifth minute for a no-arms tackle on Nel and South Africa quickly capitalized with its

first try. The wind played a part in the score when it caught Roscoe Speckman's long cross-field pass and carried the ball several meters forward.

The Fiji players hesitated, expecting the referee to call a forward pass but he determined the ball had gone back from the hands and been carried forward by the wind.

Cecil Afrika reacted quickly, re-

covering the loose ball and scoring under the posts, converting his own try for a 7-5 lead at half-time.

South Africa quashed any immediate threat of a Fiji rally with a strong start to the second half. Speckman danced through a narrow gap in the Fiji defense and turned the ball infield to Chris Dry, who scored for a 14-5 lead. Speckman was then rewarded for a match-winning performance with his own try, running almost 60 meters after an intercept.

Waisea Nacuqu's late try reduced Fiji's deficit, but any chance of a comeback was snuffed out when Sevuloni Mocenacagi was sent off for a dangerous tackle

from the restart.

South Africa and Fiji had come from behind to win semifinals Sunday. Fiji conceded two early tries including a penalty try to trail New Zealand 14-0 before scoring 19 unanswered points to win 19-14. South Africa trailed the U.S. 12-0, rallied to lead 15-12 then fell behind again 17-15 before a late try by Dylan Sage clinched their final berth.

The U.S. beat New Zealand 19-15 to take third place. England beat Australia 10-7 for fifth.

The series' next leg begins in Vancouver, Canada on Saturday, before tournaments in Hong Kong, Singapore, Paris and London. **AP**

SUPER RUGBY: BLUES' LUATUA BANNED FOR FOUR WEEKS FOR HIGH TACKLE

BLUES AND All Blacks back-rower Steven Luatua has been suspended for four weeks after being sent off for a high tackle in Friday's Super Rugby match against the Chiefs. Luatua pleaded guilty to the dangerous tackle charge and accepted the penalty recommended by the foul play

review committee which comprised Nigel Hampton, Stefan Terblanche and John Langford. Luatua was shown a red card for the off-the-ball tackle on Chiefs winger Tim Nanai-Williams just before halftime in the match at Hamilton, which the Chiefs won 41-26.

London mayor approves Chelsea's plans to redevelop Stamford Bridge



LONDON Mayor Sadiq Khan has approved plans for Chelsea to redevelop Stamford Bridge, the latest hurdle overcome by the Premier League leaders in the building process.

Chelsea has decided to turn its existing home into a 60,000-seat stadium rather than relocating in west London.

Chelsea says "further steps lie ahead, both during and after the planning process, before

construction work can commence."

The new stadium will eventually give Chelsea a similar capacity to Arsenal's Emirates Stadium and the new venue for Tottenham being built next to its current White Hart Lane home.

In a statement, Khan says he was "satisfied this is a high-quality and spectacular design which will significantly increase capacity within the existing site."

CRICKET

Pujara-Rahane stand gives India a 126-run lead vs Australia



India's Abhinav Mukund watches his shot during the third day of their second test cricket match against Australia in Bangalore, yesterday

CHETESHWAR Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane combined in a 93-run stand for the fifth wicket to help India reach 213-4 at stumps yesterday, giving the hosts a 126-run lead and the mo-

mentum in the second test against Australia.

Pujara was unbeaten on 79 and Rahane was not out 40 at the end of the third day.

Australia had all the momentum in the series

until the last session, when Pujara and Rahane took a positive approach to both pace and spin, using good footwork to negotiate the bowling attack.

Australia won the first test by 333 runs at Pune and bowled India out for 189 on day one at Bangalore despite losing the toss.

The Australians resumed on day three at 237-6 and extended the first-innings lead to 87 before being dismissed for 276 in reply, with India's left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja adding three wickets in the morning session to his three on Sunday and returning 6-63 for the innings.

Josh Hazlewood took 3-37 as India slumped to 120-4 in its second innin-

gs as Australia worked hard to limit India's total in a bid to make for a comfortable run chase.

But Pujara and Rahane were resilient, and India survived a session unscathed for the first time in the series.

First, they helped India cross 150 in the 49th over. Pujara then reached his 14th test half-century off 125 balls. Overall, he faced 173 deliveries and hit six fours.

The pair rotated the strike with ease and their 50-partnership came up off 110 balls. They took India past 200 — for the first time in the series — in the 68th over as the lead started swelling on an uneven wicket.

Their partnership was the highest of this series to date. **AP**

opinion

Our Desk
Renato Marques



RESTRAINED CREATIVITY

The call for the development in Macau of the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) has been championed by various residents and acted upon in the government's policy and by officials at several levels.

Building and bolstering the creative industries in Macau seems to be "one of the priorities" of the central government in order to achieve its goal "of turning Macau into a World Center for Tourism and Leisure (WCTL)," however, according to the most recent orders from mainland, apparently the MSAR government has misinterpreted the word "incentive."

As seems to happen very often with many other initiatives, the time that it has taken to plan the initiatives has been drawn out and they have been implemented across society in an ineffectual manner.

In my naiveté I was hoping to see something done at a fundamental level in society to promote CCI, such as changes to the education system (or similar). I was hoping for more time dedicated to the arts in its many forms, to thinking, and to a valorization of what is new.

Instead, we were given initiatives that invest public funds into private companies in order to stimulate people to establish other companies that promote more companies. Sounds confusing? Good! Because it is confusing!

Honestly, I do not think that the system that has been in place deserves much of my time and as such, it isn't even the main focus of this article.

What I want to talk about is education and breaking it down to its most important form: schools.

What has changed in schools for the last 50 years? Small details, maybe, a few subjects that changed designations although the content continues to be generally the same. We have seen the introduction of a longer and more strenuous timetable! What else, though? Not much, right?

I would risk saying that schools today are 80 to 90 percent the same when compared to what they were in our parents' time, or even in our grandparents' time.

So how can we develop a new society with new (and creative) ideas if we continue to be focused entirely on the mechanisms of a hundred-year-old system?

What we need today, to achieve our "given goals," is simply new knowledge and new ideas to test new solutions for both the new problems and the old ones we have yet to solve.

Of course, nurturing an enhanced value of concept and design, seems to be totally incompatible with a system based on the positivism and functional mechanism.

But still we base everything on a binary system of "yes or no," "on or off," because we want to be assured of scientific certainties. We want proof, we need that proof.

As parents we do not care (or sometimes dare) to know what our children are capable of or not. We want a report with numbers (preferably close to the 100 mark) as we strive for quantity and not quality.

The same happens with the CCI. We want to have figures on number of companies created, the number of companies supported, and sums of money budgeted for that support, but we would not dare to ask if they are really working, if they are really being successful, if they are in any way sustainable and, if not, why not?

Well, in my opinion, there is a good reason for us not to ask those questions.

In fact, that was a lesson learned in many of our school systems. They taught us not to ask difficult questions and take for granted everything that we were told by our teachers. In modern days, new generations continue to do the same just resorting not to the teachers but to internet search engines.

THE BUZZ AFTER OUTCRY, ISRAELI ARAB TOWN REMOVES SIGN HONORING ARAFAT

Israel's interior ministry says an Arab town that named a street after the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has removed the sign bearing his name.

Ministry spokesman Barak Seri says the village of Jatt in northern Israel informed them yesterday the street sign honoring Arafat had been taken down.

The previous day Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said before a Cabinet meeting that he won't allow streets "named after murderers of Israelis and Jews."

Despite winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994, Arafat is widely remembered in Israel as leading militants who targeted civilians. Palestinians view him as a national icon of their movement for independence.

Surgeons remove 915 coins swallowed by Thai sea turtle



Jerry Harmer, Bangkok

TOSSING coins in a fountain for luck is a popular superstition, but a similar belief brought misery to a sea turtle in Thailand from whom doctors have removed 915 coins.

Veterinarians in Bangkok operated yesterday on the 25-year-old female green sea turtle nicknamed "Bank," whose indigestible diet was a result of many tourists seeking good fortune tossing coins into her pool over many years in the eastern town of Sri Racha.

Many Thais believe that throwing coins on turtles will bring longevity.

Typically, a green sea turtle has a lifespan of around 80 years, said Roongroje Thanawongnuwech, dean of Chulalongkorn University's veterinary faculty. It is listed as an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The loose change eventually formed a heavy ball in her stomach weighing 5 kilograms. The weight cracked the turtle's ventral shell, causing a life-threatening infection.

Five surgeons from Chulalongkorn University's veterinary faculty patiently removed the coins over four hours while "Bank" was under general anesthesia. The stash was too big to take out through the 10-cm incision they had made, so it had to be removed a few coins at a

The result is satisfactory. Now it's up to [turtle] Bank how much she can recover.

PASAKORN BRIKSAWAN
SURGEON

time. Many of them had corroded or partially dissolved.

"The result is satisfactory. Now it's up to Bank how much she can recover," said Pasakorn Briksawan, one of the surgical team. While recovering in Chulalongkorn University's animal hospital, the turtle will be on a liquid diet for the next two weeks.

Bank was brought in to veterinarians by the navy,

which found her ailing in her seaside hometown.

It was only after a detailed 3D scan that veterinarians pinpointed the weighty and unexpected problem. As well as the coins they also found 2 fish hooks, which were also removed today.

The surgery team leader said yesterday that when she discovered the cause of the turtle's agony she was furious.

"I felt angry that humans, whether or not they meant to do it or if they did it without thinking, had caused harm to this turtle," said Nantarika Chansue, head of Chulalongkorn University's veterinary medical aquatic animal research center.

Thai media began publicizing the turtle's tale last month after she was found, and in response, some 15,000 baht (USD428) in donations was raised from the public to pay for her surgery. **AP**



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

WORLD BRIEFS



PAKISTAN Islamic militants attacked several Pakistani military posts in tribal regions along the Afghan border, killing six soldiers, the army said yesterday. Pakistani troops repulsed the attackers, who had crossed overnight from Afghanistan into the Mohmand tribal region, the army statement added.



BAHRAIN's government filed a lawsuit yesterday to dissolve a secular political party, the second-such organization it has targeted in the last year as part of an intense crackdown on opposition in the island nation.

HUNGARY The European Union has cleared Hungary to provide state aid to build two nuclear reactors with Russian help after Budapest made commitments to safeguard competition in the energy sector. The Hungarian deal, which was struck three years ago, had been held up because of the EU's regulatory demands.

SERBIA-MONTENEGRO A Serbian court has rejected a second extradition request by Montenegro for suspects in an alleged pro-Russia plot to overthrow the Balkan country's government.

UK-RUSSIA Britain's foreign secretary says he will encourage Russia to change its ways and win back international trust in talks soon with his Russian counterpart. Boris Johnson said that "Russia has to be engaged on a twin-track basis."

PANAMA A bus carrying farm workers went off a highway and ended up in a stream southwest of Panama's capital, causing 18 deaths and injuring 37 others, authorities said.