



CULTURAL AFFAIRS BUREAU HIRING SYSTEM SLAMMED
The Commission Against Corruption released last Friday a report highlighting several unlawful hiring practices

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A Guardian report issued yesterday focuses on the wide gap between the rich and poor in Macau

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WORLD BRIEFS



SOUTH KOREA President Park Geun-hye departure from the presidential palace came a day after tens of thousands of opponents and supporters divided the streets of downtown Seoul with massive rallies. Three people died and dozens were injured in violent clashes between Park's supporters and police. **More on p13**

CHINA's ruling Communist Party is hardening its rhetoric about Islam, with top officials making repeated warnings this past week about the specter of global religious extremism seeping into the country.



SINGAPORE Developer stocks soared as authorities eased some property-market curbs, with analysts saying the changes will buoy shares that have been weighed down by a three-year losing streak for house prices.

PHILIPPINES The government and communist rebels have agreed to resume peace talks and restore separate cease-fires after an escalation of deadly clashes, officials said yesterday. Just three days ago, President Duterte threatened to unleash an all-out war against the New People's Army guerrillas after they killed four policemen and wounded another. **More on p12**

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PHOTOGRAPHER, AUTHOR

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CCAC

Cultural Affairs Bureau's recruitment system slammed

Renato Marques

THE Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) released on Friday a new report highlighting several unlawful hiring practices at the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC).

The report was issued just weeks after a leadership change at the IC, in which former president Ung Vai Meng quit unexpectedly and was replaced by Leung Hio Ming, one of the bureau's former vice presidents.

Leung already stated that he was aware of the CCAC investigation, but that the contested procedures were not under his supervision.

The document, named "Investigation report on the employment of workers through acquisition of services by the Cultural Affairs Bureau", argues that the IC has "violated the law of open recruitment and central recruitment system [and] evaded the superior's assessment and supervision by hiring a lot of workers through acquisition of services over recent years."

The CCAC focuses on issues such as the IC's reported failure to publicize job openings, as well as carelessness, negligence and an alleged violation of the recusal system.

The anti-graft watchdog claims that during the investigations, which started in April 2016 and lasted for almost a year, it became clear that the IC had been hiring numerous illegal workers through acquisition of services in recent years.

The CCAC said it had identified similar flaws in other public departments and that, together with the Commission of Audit (CA), it had continuously pointed out these practices in their reports, recommendations and guidelines.

Such recommendations were acknowledged by "most of the public departments [that] have avoided hiring workers through acquisition of services," a situation that

RENATO MARQUES



did not happen for the IC, which has been using the method increasingly over the years.

According to the CCAC report, there were a total of 112 workers employed by the IC in 2014 using the aforementioned method, accounting for about 17 percent of all of the bureau's employees. A similar figure was noted in 2015 when 110 workers were hired through the same method.

Last year, although the bureau was already under investigation, the number of employees hired by that method still came to 94 workers.

The CCAC also noted in its report that, according to the information provided by the IC, apart from full-time workers, the bureau also recruited "a considerable number of part-time workers who were paid hourly to work in relevant sub-units every year. A total of 308 such workers were recruited in 2014; 293 and 416 workers were recruited in 2015 and 2016 respectively."

The CCAC added that the method was broadly used and that there was a complete system in place to supervise these employees' work differently.

"There were even special forms to record the attendance of such workers and for them to apply for annual leave. Arguably, the practice already became quite common, systematized and standardized," the CCAC report continued, adding that the IC had always justified the hiring process by citing "heavy workloads", "inadequate manpower" and the "time-consuming recruitment process."

During the investigation, the IC said, "the massive increase in the workloads in recent years and the inadequate manpower made them unable to cope with a multitude of additional projects; not to mention that it took too long to hire workers through the central recruitment system and that the authorities would not approve our exemption from initiating an open

recruitment process."

However, the CCAC investigations found that when recruiting workers through acquisition of services, the IC also failed to publicize their recruitment. Nor did they request job seeker information from the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP), resorting instead to internal recruitment that would reach only colleagues and friends, or by word of mouth in specific sectors.

"These acts were against the principle of openness in

the recruitment procedures of public servants," continued the CCAC, adding that the new recruits were often were not required to undergo any written proficiency tests, meaning that their hiring was solely dependent on resume analysis and personal interviews.

In some cases, workers were hired to perform specialized tasks such as "supervision of facility maintenance and engineering work" – which would often be carried out by a candidate without any relevant field training or work experience.

In another example, the CCAC cited a worker that was hired to "assist in handling the personnel salary payments as well as some other accounting-related tasks", when the candidate's work experience only mentioned "dormitory management and settlement of dispute in dormitories in a hotel of Macau", which appeared largely irrelevant from the CCAC's perspective.

"When the IC recruited workers through acquisition of services, its recruitment procedures were neither open nor transparent," the CCAC concluded, adding that "the recruitment criteria were neither clear nor regulated."

Moreover, there were circumstances in which "the relatives of some leaders and chiefs were able to be recruited by the IC through acquisition of services."

"Such acts were against the civil service recruitment policies of the Macau SAR Government which propose openness, fairness and justice," said the CCAC.

It described the illegal hiring as having led to many "unexplainable" and "difficult to control" situations, from illegal contract clauses to inexplicable salary adjustments.

IC PROMISES TO 'TACKLE THE ISSUE'

IN RESPONSE to the disclosure of the CCAC report, the IC said in a press statement that it would "immediately tackle the issue", beginning by analyzing the report together with CCAC's suggestions and acting in accordance with the law. Such a task would aim to "rectify the inappropriateness mentioned in the report as soon as possible," the statement said. "In the pro-

cess of this investigation, the IC has cooperated closely with the CCAC and agrees with the needs for improvement mentioned in the report," the IC added in the statement, expressing "heartfelt gratitude to CCAC for perceiving the inadequacies." The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam has given the IC 30 days to reply to the CCAC.

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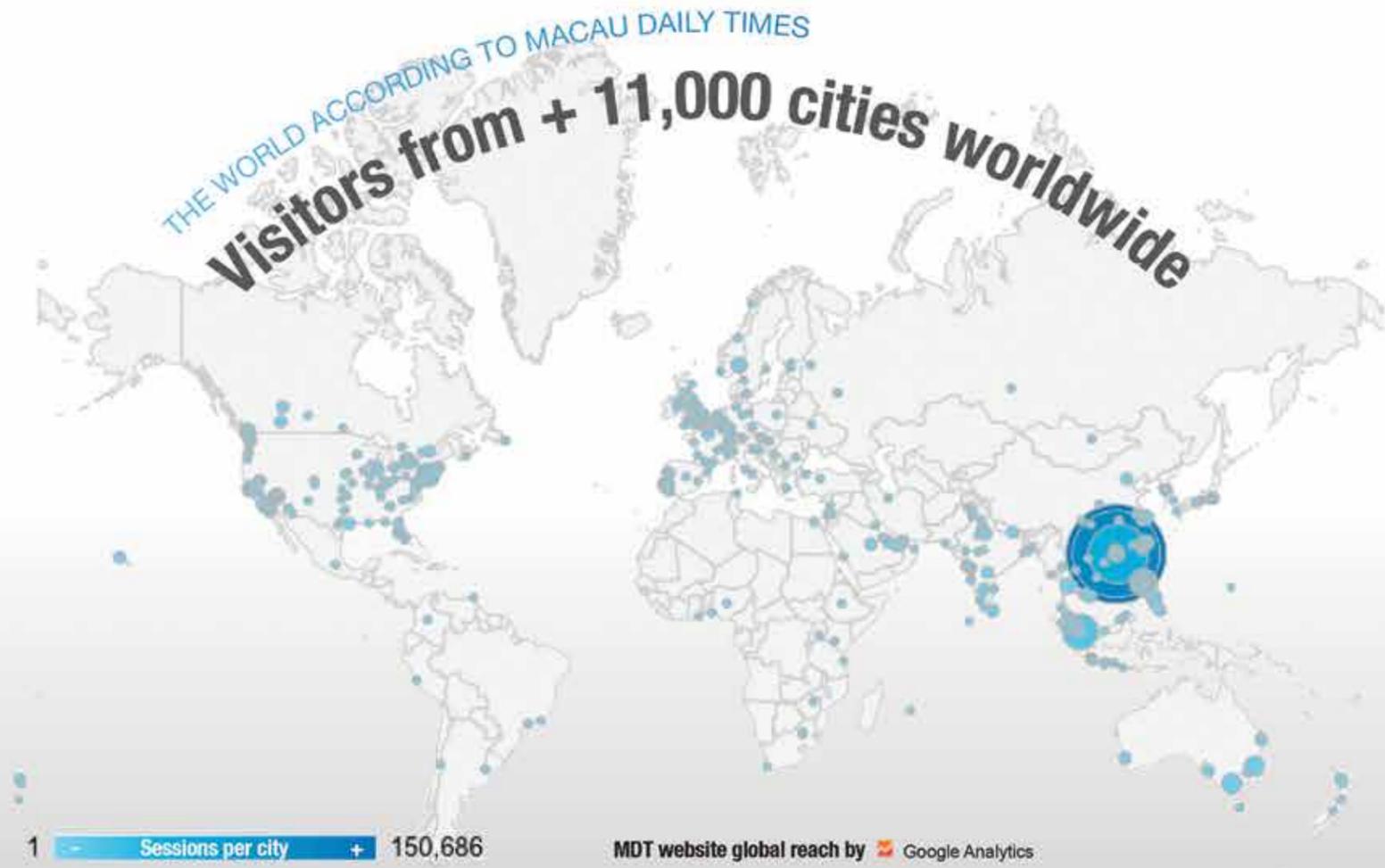
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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

HKZMB checkpoint to be completed by year-end

The company responsible for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HKZMB) revealed the Macau checkpoint will be completed by the end of this year. Macau's checkpoint will be located on the southern side of the HKZMB's artificial island, covering an area equivalent to more than 75 football fields, according to TDM English news. The construction work will take place across four main sections, including the customs building, the parking lot and the administration building. State-owned CCC Fourth Harbor Engineering Company, which is one of the four companies in charge of construction, said it was confident that the bridge would be open to the public by the end of the year.

Resident arrested for burning clothes

A Macau resident in his sixties was arrested on Thursday night after he was found holding a burning pair of pants in the lobby of a casino located in the NAPE area. The Judiciary Police (PJ) said that the fire was eventually extinguished by casino security. According to the PJ, the fire did not lead to any injuries or property damage.

KIM JONG NAM MURDER

Malaysia hopes for talks with North Korea in 'next few days'

Eileen Ng, Kuala Lumpur

MALAYSIA'S foreign minister said Saturday that the government hopes to begin formal talks with North Korea in the "next few days" on solving a diplomatic dispute that has seen the two countries bar each other's citizens from leaving.

The dispute stems from the mysterious poisoning death of the estranged half brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Feb. 13 at Kuala Lumpur's airport. Malaysia says Kim Jong Nam died after two women smeared his face with the banned VX nerve agent, but North Korea — which is widely suspected to be behind the attack — rejects the findings.

Relations have steadily deteriorated, with each country expelling the other's ambassador. On Tuesday, North Korea blocked all Malaysians from leaving the country until a "fair settlement" of the case was reached. Malaysia then

AP PHOTO



barred North Koreans from exiting its soil.

Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman said Saturday that communication was ongoing with the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur and that both sides were ready for formal talks. He said many countries offered to help, but "we don't need a third party's help for the time being and hopefully will never need them."

"We are ready [...] they [also] want to start talking. We hope [to begin] in the next few days," Anifah told reporters after meeting with the families of the nine Malaysians still stranded in North Korea. "The safety of our people is our paramount con-

cern and we are doing everything possible."

He said the nine Malaysians — three embassy workers and their family members — were safe and allowed to move freely.

Anifah said the return of Kim's body would be part of the talks' agenda. "We don't want to keep the body more than what is necessary," he said. "Eventually we have to surrender the body to someone, whether to the government or next-of-kin."

North Korea has demanded the body back from Day One and objected to Malaysia's autopsy. Pyongyang also has refused to acknowledge that Kim Jong Nam was the

victim and has referred to him as Kim Chol, the name on the passport Kim was carrying when he was attacked in a crowded airport terminal.

On Friday, Malaysian police confirmed that Kim Chol and Kim Jong Nam was the same person, but refused to say how they identified Kim. Malaysian authorities have asked for Kim's immediate family to provide DNA samples to identify the body, but nobody has come forward. Malaysia's prime minister has said they may be too scared.

Although Malaysia has never directly accused North Korea of being behind the attack, many speculate that Pyongyang must have orchestrated it. Experts say the VX nerve agent used to kill Kim was almost certainly produced in a sophisticated state weapons laboratory, and North Korea is widely believed to possess large quantities of chemical weapons. **AP**

ONLY 315 NORTH KOREANS LEFT IN THE COUNTRY

MALAYSIA HAS lowered its estimate of how many North Koreans are in the country and barred from leaving amid a dispute over the killing of North

Korean leader Kim Jong Un's half brother, saying 315 remain. A Malaysian government official earlier estimated 1,000 North Koreans were in the country.

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LAI CHI VUN

Online petition calls for end to shipyard demolitions

JULIE ZHU



A group of architects and concerned locals have joined an online petition to halt the planned demolition of around a dozen shipyards in Coloane's Lai Chi Vun district.

The controversial demolitions, which are being conducted due to governmental concerns over the sites' safety, have prompted both cultural authorities and influential members of the public to intervene. They argue that the shipyards should be preserved for their intrinsic historic and heritage value.

The petition claims that the sites "constitute a form of architectural heritage" and should be preserved in line with the government's promotion of the cultural and creative industries.

"The shipyards of Lai Chi Vun represent the history of the shipbuilding industry, which in Macau was of great importance, particularly [...] when Macau depended almost exclusively on shipping," read a statement on the website hosting the petition.

"These buildings constitute a form of architectural heritage built by the shipbuilders themselves [which] is proof of a unique cultural identity."

The high-profile architects behind the petition include Maria José Freitas, who designed the Kun Iam Ecumenical Centre in the NAPE area, and João Palla, who has previously worked as an architect with several casino operators in the MSAR.

"It is not enough to have just one or two shipyards [left], you need the whole site to understand the scale of this industry," Palla told the Times. "They are in the minds and memory of many locals here and many want to see [the site] renovated."

Palla, Freitas and the other signatories are calling for the sites to be repurposed, possibly for future cultural activities.

They hope to attract around 1,000 signatures for the petition.

The demolition of the historic shipyard facilities was deemed necessary by Macau's Marine and Water Bureau, which argued in a statement last week that the structures are "seriously damaged due to lack of maintenance [...] creating a high security risk."

The Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau is responsible for the demolition works and began dismantling the sites last Wednesday.

In direct opposition to these works is a plan laid out by the city's Cultural Affairs Bureau to preserve the area and showcase the old shipyards as a heritage site.

The agencies' differing views have led some media outlets to question the effectiveness of intra-government communication.

It is not enough to have just one or two shipyards [left], you need the whole site to understand the scale of this industry.

JOÃO PALLA
ARCHITECT

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam, who admitted that he had only heard about the demolitions through media reports, nevertheless denied any miscommunication and refuted the speculation.

Macau's traditional shipbuilding industry drew its last breath in the 1990s after around 300 years of booming business, according to an article published on the University of Macau's website.

The industry retained its economic importance well into the mid-20th century, when it was estimated to account for as much as one-third of Macau's gross domestic product.

In the 1920s, Macau had over 30 shipbuilding factories. Before last week, the Lai Chi Vun area was home to 18 shipbuilding factories, 11 of which had reportedly fallen into disrepair. Four of the shipyards have applied to renew their licenses. **DB**

GUARDIAN ON MACAU

Wide gap between rich and poor remains, corruption rampant

A Guardian report issued yesterday describes Macau as Asia's Las Vegas, focusing on the still-wide gap between the rich and poor, as well as quoting a local lawmaker who claims that the government only has their ears turned to the elites.

The report mentions that on paper, Macau is listed as the world's third wealthiest city behind Luxembourg and Qatar, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Local government statistics claim that only about 2.3 percent of Macau's population lives in poverty, but the percentage is based on income and does not take into account the staggering costs of living.

The ever-rising costs of living have even forced some to leave the Asian gambling hub to seek a cheaper life across the border in China.

Lawmaker Pereira Coutinho is cited as saying that the government does not help the poor as corruption is rampant, adding that only the



A local woman stacks used cardboard boxes for recycling

rich have their voices heard by the government.

"The poor are ignored and suffer. All the land is reserved for casinos, and instead of building housing for the poor, the government is giving out more allocations for gaming tables," he laments in the report.

The local politician also voices regrets that the annual wealth partaking scheme worth MOP9,000 is only to "keep their [residents] mouth shut about politics."

Coutinho blames Macau's political system for the gap between the rich and the poor. He finds the system fundamentally flawed: an unelected committee chooses

the head of the MSAR, and professional organizations, together with Chief Executive Chui Sai On, appoint more than half of the legislature.

The report notes that the majority of members in the legislature, including the Chief Executive, are pro-Beijing, and concludes that "Macau politics are dominated by politicians and tycoons loyal to China."

Paul Pun, head of Caritas Macau, described the gap between the rich and the poor as "wide". He admitted that the government is aware of the issue but hinted that it lacks the courage to face the problem.

Caritas Macau estimates that some 10 percent of the population lives in poverty, with 7 percent struggling to fulfil basic needs such as food.

"The gaming industry should be required to provide housing for migrant workers: that would greatly lessen the problem," Pun suggested.

About a third of the region's 650,000-strong population are migrants.

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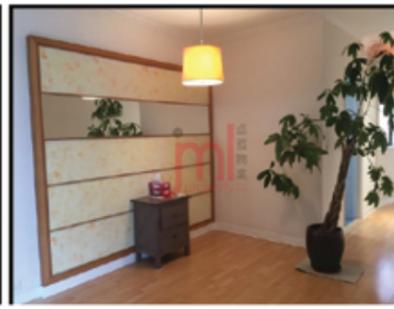
(Ref: 17010632)
6,000sq. ft. HKD60,000
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Nova Park, Taipa

(Ref: 15090537)
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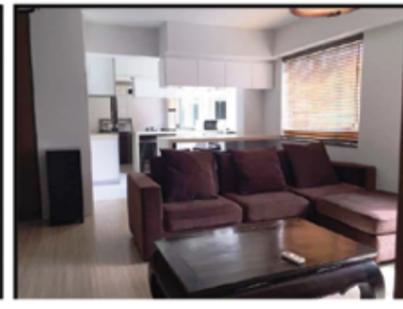
Two bedroom apartment in Taipa's newest complex, both bedrooms are doubles. Master bedroom has an en suite and has been newly furnished. Second bedroom left unfurnished can be furnished to the tenants request (bed, desk wardrobe etc). Living / dining furnished by IKEA furniture with a small balcony over looking Central Park. Galley style well fitted modern kitchen.



Poplar Court, Ocean Gardens, Taipa

(Ref: 17020640)
1,693sq. ft. HKD 14,800

Super three bedroom two shower room apartment in the well known complex of Ocean Gardens. Most unusual in Macau all three bedrooms are carpeted, making the property most luxurious. Lovely views from the back of the apartment over the Taipa mountain, while at the front the view is Macaus Friendship bridge. Good size oblong living room, with a dedicated dining



Houston Court-Coloane Village

(Ref: 15110549)
740sq. ft. HKD 11,800

Situated in the heart of the village. The apartment has a modern open plan kitchen, dining & living area, good size master bedroom with built in storage, separate walk in shower room, second bedroom has built in cabinets could be a large office or small double bedroom. Simply furnished the apartment was renovated in October which included: painting throughout / service of air conditioners / new lights installed / new kitchen cabinets / modernised shower room.



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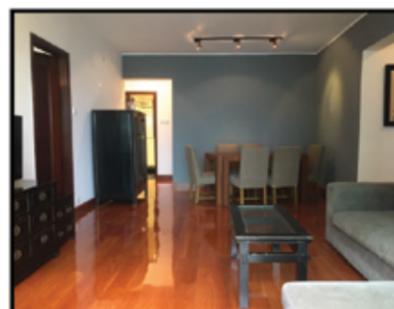
(Ref: 17020637)
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D Unit, Manhattan Taipa

(Ref: 16100627)
2,305sq. ft. HKD 26,200

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Kingsville, Taipa (I Unit)

(Ref: 17010631)
1,200q. ft. HKD 16,800

Popular building in Central Taipa this apartment is fantastic with great views across Taipa village, West facing. The apartment has two double bedrooms, one bedroom with en suite the second double bedroom shares a separate shower room with the third single bedroom. Lovely spacious living dining room with good size balcony. Recently redecorated; painted throughout, caulking of bathrooms, new mattress and bed frame in master bedroom, large two metre sliding door wardrobe, polished floors, air conditioners serviced



Edf. Nam Long - J Unit

(Ref: 17010634)
750sq. ft. HKD 12,800

Unique fully furnished 2 bedroom apartment located in Old Taipa Village.

Fully renovated modern fit out to a high standard with traditional balcony. Modern bathroom and shower. Fully fitted open style kitchen with oven. Separate utility room with washer / dryer. Walking distance to Cotai Strip. Viewing is highly recommended to appreciate such a rare and unique apartment.

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(Ref: 16095500)
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Hellene Gardens, Lot IV, Unit B, Carnation Court, Coloane

(Ref: 17025509)
1,663sq. ft. HKD 9.2M
Rate: HKD 5,532q ft

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Q&A PHILIPPE GRATON
PHOTOGRAPHER, AUTHOR

'We can bring Michel Vaillant back to Macau for a new adventure'

Julie Zhu

FRENCH photographer, writer and comic book author Philippe Graton was invited to the Macau Literary Festival 2017 "The Script Road." He is hosting a photo exhibition and a display of the original prints of the album *Rendez-vous à Macao* (1983) at the Old Court Building.

Since 1994, Graton has written scenarios for television and for the comic series *Michel Vaillant*.

In 2012, he re-launched the adventures of *Michel Vaillant* with a new season. At the end of 2015, he issued a 320-page illustrated biography of his father, Jean Graton, who originally created *Michel Vaillant* in 1957.

2017 marks the 60th anniversary of the *Michel Vaillant* character. In an interview with the *Times*, Graton revealed that he is thinking about bringing *Michel Vaillant* back to Macau, and shared some stories about the comics series and his passion for photography.

Macau Daily Times (MDT) - Are you really considering bringing Michel Vaillant back to Macau?

Philippe Graton (PG) - Thirty years after, I am thinking about bringing *Michel Vaillant* back to Macau, during my stay here for the Macau Literary Festival. I have been also observing places, thinking about what could be a new adventure for *Michel Vaillant* in Macau, because Macau has changed a lot with time.

Macau is still extremely interesting. It is very interesting to see it in a comic. There are a lot of clichés about Macau. Macau is not just casinos. Once you step a little bit aside, you see so many other things. [...] I almost fell in love with Macau and the Macanese people, because they are very nice people. It is very charming, and it's very interesting.

Culturally, you have people from not only Portugal and China, but all over the world. This mixing of culture makes them a little bit special; very open-minded to many things, interested in many things. So it seems that for all the nine days that I have been here, I have encountered very nice people and discovered the city. [...] I was in an incredible hotel: the MGM hotel, which is fantastic with a lot of taste [...] I have seen the construction site of the next MGM hotel in Cotai, which is simply amazing. I have been taking pictures there. I have been to Coloane Village: quiet places, with the trees, the small places, and you feel like being in Portugal. It's so different,



and you are one kilometer away. There is a rare richness that inspired me to write a scenario for the next comic. The *Macau Grand Prix* is also very spectacular. It's one of the toughest races whether it is by car, or motorbike, it's quite something. I think we can bring our character *Michel Vaillant* back to Macau for a new adventure. I am not sure, but I am really thinking about it.

Macau is not just casinos. Once you step a little bit aside, you see so many other things.

PHILIPPE GRATON

MDT - Is this your first time in Macau?

PG - It is my first time [in Macau] – not in Asia, because I have been travelling to other places. But for Macau, I can tell you that it will not be my last.

MDT - How is Macau different from other Asian cities you have visited?

PG - It is very specific, and I think it is due to this Portuguese history. It's not Asia, it's not Portugal, we are somewhere else. Even here, for example, the Portuguese culture and the Portuguese cooking are influenced by the fact that Portugal has conquered many countries in the world. Macau is a place of travelers, so even the cooking has been influenced by all that. You

are not eating the same way you eat in Lisboa, for example, so all that is really, really interesting. Because it gives Macau a very strong identity.

MDT - Did you find Michel Vaillant interesting from the very beginning, while your father was developing the character?

PG - I [thought] my father had the most boring job on earth, because I never realized the glamour of it. At six in the morning, my father was in his studio and drawing, and he was doing that all day, and I would see him at dinner before going to bed.

So my father would disappear into the attic at the beginning of the day and come back at the end of the day. And I said that it was the stupidest work you could have. It was only at school that I saw in the eyes of my schoolmates, of my friends, that maybe he was doing something special. [...] But soon my father brought me to races. And of course, I met a lot of very interesting people. Some great car drivers and things like that. Then I started working with him. It was just supposed to be giving him a hand, for a short time. But it just so happened that I continued. By accident, I started writing the stories of *Michel Vaillant*.

MDT - Is taking photos of celebrities the same as taking photos of strangers?

PG - Due to my job, I meet famous people. Whether I am taking a photograph of a king, or an actor, or a stranger, I have the same rules. I photograph them the same way. Some people say that is interesting because it captures different things than when [other] photographers take portraits of celebrities.

MDT - How was your talk at the School of the Nations [on Friday]?

PG - It was for pupils around 15 years old, so that's not the easiest [audience]. You will never know if they are obliged, because of the teachers, to go listen to that guy, or if they are coming because they are interested. [...] In my case, I didn't prepare at all because I did not know what they were expecting from me and what I should be talking about. [...] When I arrived, I showed them on the screen, in three or four minutes, how a comic is made. And I showed them a few photographs I took. They were very interested and asked a lot of questions that surprised me. I was quite happy not to have to make a long exposé for one and a half hours.

MDT - Why black and white pictures? Simply because you like it?

PG - Yes, I wouldn't do it if I didn't like it. Because I found life very complicated. There are many things in life; there are filming, movements, and colors. Taking photographs helps me understand things and people. Sometimes when I take photographs I understand much more of what I see. In reality, I am distracted by everything that is around me. The light that's moving, the color, what people say. When you take photography, you focus on the essentials, especially in black and white. It's the shapes, the lines and the expressions itself; you go from three dimensions to two.

It's like a map that allows you to read what's happening. I am taking pictures every day, and sometimes even of my everyday life, my children at the table waiting for dinner. We can't wonder why we take pictures at that moment. When I look at these pictures afterward, I see things that I don't see in real life.

The relationship between people, the way they stand around each other, the hierarchy: you don't catch that in real life because it's moving too fast. In photography, it really helps me to understand life and people, and to see things in a different way. I like black and white very much because of that. You go to what's essential.

MDT - Are you interested in coming to Macau for another year of the Literary Festival?

PG - I would certainly come every year [if I could]. But they will not invite the same artists back.



Wei Zhao not applying for third mandate at UM

The rector of the University of Macau (UM), Professor Wei Zhao, will not apply for a third mandate as head of the tertiary institution, as reported by Radio Macau. Wei, who has led the UM since 2008 and is now on his second mandate, revealed his intentions yesterday to the academic community. Wei's mandate finishes in November 2018, after which UM leadership will change hands.

Authorities extend use of overseas e-channels

Since Macau passport holders gained access to countries such as Japan and Australia's automated clearance system, the authorities have been in talks with other regions for similar deals. According to a TDM report, DSI director Ao Ieong U said the MSAR passport could be technologically compatible with any country's automated clearance system, depending on whether those countries would accept it. However, Ao declined to disclose the countries and territories with which the Macau authorities are in talks. Meanwhile, Immigration Department senior officer Wong Kim Hong, citing recent statistics, said 60 percent of the 164 million people who entered and exited Macau used the Automated Passenger Clearance System, or e-channels.

Scientists: Air pollution due to local emissions

A recent study by air scientists from Macau and Hong Kong concluded that both territories contribute large quantities of "particulate matter" to their own atmospheres, as opposed to the more widely held view that the majority originates from mainland China. This means that the build-up of pollutant particles in Macau's air is not entirely due to the northerly winds from the mainland. Instead, the source of the pollutants is most likely local vehicle emissions or light industry. "It's not easy to argue in [all cases] that winds were blowing particulate matter to Hong Kong [from mainland China]," argued co-author Professor Chan Chak Keung, according to an article in the *South China Morning Post*. The paper was published in scientific journal *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics* in November 2016.



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Scotiabank in talks to sell Malaysia unit

BANK of Nova Scotia is in talks with Cathay Financial Holdings Co. to sell its Malaysian operations as the Canadian lender looks to exit a country it's been in for 44 years.

The Taipei-based company's Cathay United Bank and Cathay Life Insurance units have exclusive rights until April 30 to bid for Bank of Nova Scotia Berhad, according to a March 8 regulatory filing with the Taiwan Stock Exchange. The proposed takeover is subject to further negotiations and regulatory approvals from Taiwan and Malaysia.

"We are evolving our business in the Asia-Pacific region with a focus on serving cross-regional clients in priority sectors and core markets," Debra Chan, a spokeswoman for Toronto-based Scotiabank, said last week in an emailed statement. "As a result, a decision was made, to enter into discussions with the goal of finding the right buyer for our franchise in Malaysia."

The Canadian lender has been in Malaysia since 1973, and incorporated its operations there as Bank of Nova Scotia Berhad in 1994, according to the company's website. The business, based in Kuala Lumpur, had assets of about USD4.37 billion Malaysian ringgit (\$980 million) as of April 2016, according to financial statements. Scotiabank valued the company at CAD311 million (\$230 million) in its 2016 annual report.

Scotiabank has been reviewing its Asia businesses while focusing on domestic banking. The lender closed its global banking and markets office in Taiwan and is reevaluating its 49 percent stake in Thai lender Thanachart Bank Pcl.

Bloomberg

BLOOMBERG



China orders Hershey-Lotte candy factory to halt operations

Heejin Kim, Sohee Kim, Craig Giammona

LOTTE Shanghai Foods, a joint venture between Hershey Co. and South Korea's Lotte Group, has been told by Chinese authorities to stop production at its factory for a month, joining a growing list of South Korean businesses in China that have been ordered to suspend operations.

The latest order, confirmed by Lotte Group, comes as South Korean companies say they are facing economic retaliation from China for their country's decision to deploy a missile defense system to counter North Korea's provocations, including the test firing of four ballistic missiles on March 6.

Lotte Group and its affiliates have incurred the brunt of the recent actions against South Korean businesses after Lotte agreed to provide a golf course that the U.S. will use to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile system. China opposes the deployment, saying it undermines its own security. In recent weeks, Lotte's Chinese website has been hacked and

Chinese authorities, citing alleged fire safety violations, have suspended 55 Lotte Mart stores, or more than half of the shops Lotte operates in China.

Chinese authorities ordered the production stoppage because of alleged safety violations, according to a Lotte representative, who asked not to be identified, citing company policy. The month-long halt could cost the joint venture about 4 billion won (USD3.5 million) in lost sales, according to the company official. The factory makes chocolates and cocoa products.

Hershey suspended production at the facility to "perform maintenance activities," according to a company statement.

"This action is being taken in connection with a routine inspection and we are working closely with the government on these matters," the company said.

Hershey established the joint venture with Lotte in 2007 and owns a 50 percent controlling stake, according to company filings. The shutdown is the latest trouble for the chocolate giant in China. Hershey generates almost all of its revenue selling

chocolate in the U.S., though it has looked abroad for growth in recent years. In 2014, it bought Shanghai Golden Monkey to expand in China. But distribution and payment collection problems have weighed on that business, and Hershey's international unit posted a loss in the past two years.

The shutdown is the latest trouble for the chocolate giant in China

The chocolatier said last week it will cut about 15 percent of its workforce as part of a cost-savings program aimed at boosting profit margins, with the layoffs focused on hourly employees outside the U.S. Michele Buck, a company veteran who took over as chief executive officer on March 1, said earlier this month that growth in the Chinese chocolate market will

be slower than the company anticipated.

The broader Chinese retaliation may hurt South Korea's economy. The China National Tourism Administration has ordered travel agents to stop selling tour packages to South Korea starting March 15, according to the state-run Korea Tourism Organization. South Korean government officials also said Chinese customs are rejecting certain cosmetic shipments.

In addition, the Agricultural Bank of China, the country's third-largest lender, asked branches to examine the lending it does with Lotte, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

South Korea is closely monitoring the situation with China and will work to minimize any negative impact to Korean citizens and companies by expanding economic and diplomatic efforts, Finance Minister Yoo Il-ho said last week after a meeting with government ministers.

Shares of Lotte Confectionery Co., the Lotte unit that runs the Shanghai chocolate-making joint venture, fell last week in Seoul. **MDT/Bloomberg**

corporate bits

ICE WORLD BACK AT THE VENETIAN MACAO

The annual indoor frozen wonderland, "Kung Fu Panda Adventure Ice World with the DreamWorks All-Stars," is returning to The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo from March 16 to July 9.

Supported by the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO), the event features

thousands of multi-colored ice blocks carved into sculptures by a team of craftsmen from Harbin in northern China, which will be displayed across seven zones.

The team, led by Wei Xiangji, comprises about 40 craftsmen including ei-

ght ice carvers and 28 ice builders, as well as lighting designers and power technicians. Wei has visited countries including the U.S., Germany, Cambodia, South Korea, Malaysia and Thailand for professional exhibitions and events.

The team is co-led by Xu Yuping, who has also travelled abroad for ice sculpture events, winning prizes

at events such as the Sun Island International Snow Sculpture Art Expo.

According to organizers at a recent media preview, 2.5 million pounds of ice will be used to create the frozen art.

This year's event includes lights and sound effects, as well as a host of colorful new DreamWorks Animation characters from "Kung Fu Pan-

da," "Madagascar," "Shrek," "How To Train Your Dragon," "The Croods" and "Trolls".

New additions to the event include themed games and desserts, as well as meet-and-greets with DreamWorks All-Stars characters.

Other attractions include a "Heroes Mask Creation" activity, a merchandise corner and a game corner. **LV**





Delegates from Xinjiang meet in the Xinjiang Hall of the Great Hall of the People on the sideline of the National People's Congress

NPC

Communist Party officials harden rhetoric on Islam

Gerry Shih, Beijing

CHINA'S ruling Communist Party is hardening its rhetoric on Islam, with top officials making repeated warnings about the specter of global religious extremism seeping into the country and the need to protect traditional Chinese identity.

Shaerheti Ahan, a top political and legal affairs party official in Xinjiang, yesterday became the latest official from a predominantly Muslim region to warn political leaders gathered in Beijing for this month's National People's Congress about China becoming destabi-

lized by the "international anti-terror situation."

Over the past year, President Xi Jinping has directed the party to "Sinicize" the country's ethnic and religious minorities, while regional leaders in Xinjiang, home to the Uighur (pronounced WEE-gur) ethnic minority, have ramped up surveillance measures, police patrols and demonstrations amid an uptick in violence blamed on Islamic separatists.

Although some scholars question whether global jihadi networks have indeed penetrated the country, top Chinese officials, including those overseeing areas outside Xinjiang,

are increasingly echoing certain strands of international discourse to back up claims that Islamic extremism is growing worldwide and needs to be rolled back.

Officials from Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region — which has an ethnic Hui population that is predominantly Muslim but, unlike Xinjiang, rarely sees separatist or religious violence — warned similarly this past week about the perils of Islamic extremism. Speaking at a regional meeting open to the media, Ningxia Communist Party secretary Li Jianguo drew comparisons to the policies of President Donald Trump's ad-

ministration to make his point.

"What the Islamic State and extremists push is jihad, terror, violence," Li said. "This is why we see Trump targeting Muslims in a travel ban. It doesn't matter whether anti-Muslim policy is in the interests of the U.S. or it promotes stability, it's about preventing religious extremism from seeping into all of American culture."

There's a strengthening trend of viewing Islam as a problem in Chinese society.

MOHAMMED AL-SUDAIRI
EXPERT ON ISLAM IN CHINA

Wu Shimin, a former ethnic affairs official from Ningxia, said that ideological work must be strengthened in the region to promote a Chinese identity among its Hui population, the descendants of Muslim traders plying the Silk Road centuries ago.

"The roots of the Hui are in China," Wu said. "To discuss religious consciousness, we must first discuss Chinese consciousness. To discuss the feelings of minorities, we must first discuss the feelings of the Chinese people."

Mohammed al-Sudairi, a doctoral student at the University of Hong Kong and an expert on Islam in China, said the comments by Ningxia party officials reflected the increasingly anti-Islamic rhetoric that has been rolled out over the past year by the top leadership in Beijing.

"There's a strengthening trend of viewing Islam as a problem in Chinese society," al-Sudairi said. "Xi Jinping has been quite anxious about what he saw as

the loss of party-state control over the religious sphere when he entered power, which necessitated this intervention. I don't think things will take a softer turn."

In Xinjiang, where hundreds of people have died in recent years in violent attacks, the government's rising rhetoric has coincided with new security measures that activists say exacerbate a cycle of repression, radicalization and violence. The government, meanwhile, says Xinjiang faces a grave separatist threat from Uighur fighters linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, though it provides little evidence for such claims. IS released a video in late February purportedly showing Uighur fighters training in Iraq and vowing to strike China, according to the SITE Intelligence Group.

Yesterday, a delegation of Xinjiang leaders appeared at a news conference at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, but absent was the region's new top leader, Chen Quanguo, who has led a series of high-profile anti-terror rallies that have involved phalanxes of police and armored vehicles rumbling through the streets of the regional capital. As was the case for several other regions and provinces, most of the Xinjiang delegation's meetings were conducted with top Chinese leaders behind closed doors this past week, according to state media reports.

On Friday, Xi met with Xinjiang officials, according to state media, and directed them to safeguard the region's stability by erecting a metaphorical "great wall of iron."

It was a reference loaded with historical and martial overtones: Former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping praised the People's Liberation Army as a "great wall of iron and steel" in June 1989, days after the military quashed a pro-democracy protest in Tiananmen Square in a bloody assault. **AP**

CHINA'S new Commerce Minister Zhong Shan said he looks forward to meeting his "excellent" U.S. counterpart Wilbur Ross for a shared mission of increasing cooperation and managing differences between the world's largest economies.

"I noticed that Mr. Ross used to be an excellent entrepreneur, a good negotiator and, I can say, he's very excellent," Zhong said at his first press conference as trade minister on Saturday in Beijing. "I'm willing to deal with excellent people, because excellent people are good at

Zhong Shan looks forward to meeting 'excellent' Ross

thinking strategically for the long term."

Managing differences can be a challenging job for the two top trade officials. U.S. President Donald Trump accused China of unfair trade practices and has threatened to introduce punitive measures. Commerce Secretary Ross, a 79-year-old billionaire businessman who called China the most protectionist of the world's major econo-

mies, has said that a plan of action will be announced "as soon as we have a proper case."

A trade war between China and the U.S. would harm both countries and offer no benefits to either side, Zhong said, citing their "intertwined" economic relations. The official, who was promoted to lead his ministry Feb. 24, said he believes the two governments will make the "correct

assessment" on bilateral economic ties. "Now everybody is watching and waiting," he said.

"Many American and western friends think that China can't live without the U.S., and they're half right," Zhong said at the press conference, held on the sidelines of the annual legislative session of the National People's Congress. "Similarly, the U.S. also can't live without Chi-

A trade war between China and the U.S. would harm both countries and offer no benefits to either side, Zhong said

na," he said, citing U.S. exports of Boeing Co. airplanes, soybeans and

automobiles to China.

American exports to China expanded an average 11 percent in the past 10 years, outpacing the 6.6 percent growth in Chinese shipments to the U.S. during the period, according to Zhong.

Zhong, 61, previously served as a ministerial-level international trade representative and vice commerce minister. Before that, he was a deputy governor of exporting powerhouse Zhejiang province and worked under Chinese President Xi Jinping, the then-party chief for the region. **Bloomberg**

NPC

Courts praised for punishing state security crimes

Louise Watt, Beijing

THE convictions of a prominent defense attorney and his associates were among the country's top legal achievements last year, China's chief justice said yesterday, highlighting a case that has been criticized by Western governments and rights groups.

In a report to the national legislature, Zhou Qiang also said that China, which is believed to execute more people than the rest of the world combined, gave the death penalty "to an extremely small number of criminals for extremely serious offenses" in the past 10 years.

The actual number of executions in China is a state secret. A 2007 decision that all death sentences must be reviewed by the Supreme People's Court is belie-



China's Chief Justice Zhou Qiang

ved to have reduced the number of executions dramatically.

Zhou praised courts for severely punishing crimes against state security and violent terrorism, and said the trend will continue in order "to resolutely safeguard the country's political security."

The only case of subverting state power he highlighted was that of Zhou Shifeng, director of a law firm that used to be one of the country's best-known advocates

for human rights. He was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in August for attempting to manipulate public opinion and harm national security.

Rights groups and Western governments including the U.S. had urged China to release Zhou and other activists and lawyers detained in a sweeping crackdown that began in 2015. Critics say it's about the ruling Communist Party silencing opponents.

The chief justice's report didn't say how many people were prosecuted or convicted of such offences, or how many cases were handled.

The actual number of executions in China is a state secret

Hundreds of people have been killed in recent years in attacks in the northwestern Xinjiang region, which Beijing blames on Islamic militants and separatists from the Uighur minority. Activists say repressive government policies have exacerbated tensions and radicalized local youth.

For the past four years, Chi-

na has also carried out a crackdown on corruption intended to net officials at all levels. Chief Justice Zhou said that Chinese courts dealt with 45,000 cases of graft involving 63,000 people last year, an increase from 2015. A total of 35 were at or above ministerial or provincial level, he said.

In a separate report to the assembly, China's top prosecutor, Cao Jianming, said that the government last year initiated investigations against 47,650 people for taking advantage of their official posts. He said 48 officials above the rank of minister were prosecuted, including Ling Jihua, a former chief of staff to ex-President Hu Jintao who was sentenced to life in prison in July for taking bribes, illegally obtaining state secrets and abusing power.

Dui Hua, a U.S.-based rights group, estimated that about 2,400 people were executed in China in 2013, one-tenth the number in 1983. It said that according to its sources, the number of annual executions remained largely unchanged in 2014 and 2015.

China typically hands out death sentences in cases of murder, rape, robbery and drug offenses. AP

Beijing says economy showed signs of improvement

CHINA'S economy has shown signs of improvement in the first two months of the year with little risk of a hard landing, senior Chinese officials said.

China's macroeconomy stabilized in the beginning of 2017, Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics, said at the sidelines of the annual legislature meeting in Beijing yesterday. Industrial output in January and February grew more than 6 percent, and the services sector expanded over 8 percent, he said.

In combination with rising retail sales and fixed asset investment data, "these readings would suggest robust growth momentum continued in early 2017," Bloomberg Intelligence Chief Asia Economist Tom Orlik wrote in a recent note.

Ning's remarks indicated that policy makers in the world's second-largest economy are more upbeat as they set a 2017 growth target of about 6.5 percent. Premier Li Keqiang had earlier war-



A worker walks in front of a storage area in a logistics center in Shanghai

ned of "graver" internal and external challenges in his work report to the gathering of the National People's Congress, while stressing economic fundamentals remain sound and systemic risk is under control.

Industrial activity also picked up, with electricity generation, power consumption and rail volume all posting steady growth, according to Ning. The country's campaign to cut overcapacity also appears to be bearing fruit. The coal and steel industries reported negative growth and property inventories in China's third- and fourth-tier cities declined in the first two months, he said. A slew of China's economic data is schedu-

led to be released on Tuesday.

Domestic demand has been robust and the market expectation on China's economy has improved, the statistics chief said. He reiterated the government's determination to root out fake data, saying 15 cases of statistics fraud in nine provinces last year had been probed.

Meanwhile, other senior officials also expressed optimism. China's economy faces "almost zero big downside risk," Li Wei, head of the Development Research Center of the State Council, said yesterday. Short-term volatility is still possible, but economic restructuring in general is speeding up, he added. AP

Minister tries to reassure foreign companies over industry plan

Gillian Wong, Beijing

CHINA'S industry minister on Saturday defended a manufacturing development plan and rejected complaints foreign makers of electric cars and other goods might be pressured to hand over technology or forced out of promising markets.

Miao Wei, minister of industry and information technology, tried to reassure foreign companies that the "Made in China 2025" industry plan treats all companies equally. "The strategy and its related policies are applicable to all businesses in China, be them domestic or foreign," Miao told a briefing.

Miao was responding to a report by the European Union Chamber of Commerce earlier this week that said China is violating its free-trade pledges by inducing foreign firms to give up encryption and other technology to potential Chinese competitors.

Technology is a growing flashpoint in trade tensions with Washington and Europe, which worry their competitive edge is eroding as Beijing buys or develops skills in semicon-



A Chinese woman demonstrates the ability of Baxter, an industrial robot from U.S. company Rethink Robotics

ductors, renewable energy and other fields. China has faced mounting complaints the government improperly shields its fledgling developers of robotics, software and other technology from competition.

The plan calls for China to be able to supply its own high-tech components by 2020 and materials by 2025 in 10 industries from information technology and aerospace to pharmaceuticals. A broad outline was issued in 2015 and officials have been gradually releasing details.

Miao said targets for domestic brands' share of the market in some sectors should be seen as forecasts rather than mandatory. "When we were drawing up the plan, we did not deliberately pursue these

targets," Miao said.

The European chamber noted that China's strategy says two of the top 10 global brands in electric cars should be Chinese by 2025. It said that rules out joint ventures created by foreign companies with Chinese partners.

The chamber called the strategy "a large-scale import substitution plan aimed at nationalizing key industries, or at least severely curtailing the position of foreign business in them."

In an apparent response to such criticism, Premier Li Keqiang promised in a speech at the opening of China's annual legislative sessions a week ago that foreign companies would receive "equal treatment" under the manufacturing plan. AP



Singapore teen blogger Amos Yee

Teen blogger seeking US asylum fears return to Singapore

Sophia Tareen, Chicago

A teenage blogger awaiting a Chicago immigration judge's ruling on his asylum request to stay in the United States said Friday that he's afraid of returning home to Singapore, where he was jailed after posting scathing blog posts about the government.

Amos Yee, 18, has been detained in the U.S. since mid-December, when he was taken into custody at O'Hare International Airport. His closed-door immigration proceedings unfolded in a Chicago courtroom on Tuesday, with a judge saying he'll decide within weeks.

"I'm most definitely fearful now that the Singapore government knows I am trying to escape to another country so I can continue to criticize them freely," Yee told The Associated Press by phone from a Wisconsin detention center. "I'm really worried."

Yee, an atheist, was jailed twice in Singapore on charges including hurting the religious feelings of Muslims and Christians. However, many of his posts on YouTube, a blog and social media berate Singapore's government. He caused a stir in 2015 as the city-state was mourning the death of its first prime minister and he posted an explicative-laden and,

at times, crude video about Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew just after his death.

Such open criticism of political leaders is frowned upon in Singapore. Yee's case has drawn a lot of attention because he was imprisoned at age 16 alongside adults. Experts say the case, which is being watched closely abroad, raises questions about free speech and censorship, particularly online.

Singapore's embassy in Washington didn't immediately respond to requests seeking comment.

Yee said being jailed in Singapore was traumatizing and left

him with suicidal thoughts. He believes he'll be targeted again if he returns. He had been planning on seeking asylum in the U.S. for weeks and had lined up a place to stay in Illinois. Singapore nationals don't need a visa to visit the U.S., but Yee was taken into custody after immigration agents questioned him at O'Hare and he revealed his plans.

Yee has been outspoken from a young age and friends praise his intellect. He began blogging at age 12 and won a local filmmaking prize at age 13.

"I have the moral obligation to speak out against a tyrannical government that has been making

the people in Singapore suffer," he said. "Don't ever become so fearful that you become silent."

Yee's attorneys in the U.S. have argued that he was persecuted based on laws restricting freedom of expression and he's likely to be convicted again if he returns. Human rights groups, including Amnesty International, have urged U.S. officials to let him stay.

A spokesman for the Executive Office for Immigration Review, which oversees U.S. immigration courts, declined to comment on the case. The Department of Homeland Security, which is contesting Yee's asylum application, didn't immediately reply to an email seeking comment.

I have the moral obligation to speak out against a tyrannical government that has been making the people in Singapore suffer.

AMOS YEE

Either way, Yee said he'll continue to speak out if he returns home or gains legal permission to stay in the U.S. He's already started writing a book and is considering work on movies and a T-shirt line.

"I have an infinite amount of ideas of what to do," he said. **AP**

Philippines, communist rebels agree to resume talks, truce

Jim Gomez, Manila

THE Philippine government and communist rebels have agreed to resume peace talks and restore separate cease-fires after an escalation of deadly clashes, officials said yesterday.

Government and rebel negotiators will resume talks early next month and discuss the terms of a broader cease-fire, presidential adviser Jesus Dureza said. Norway, which has been brokering the negotiations, hosted two days of informal talks in the Netherlands that led to a decision to resume the negotiations on ending one of Asia's longest-running rebellions.

Just three days ago, President Rodrigo Duterte threatened to unleash an



Activists burn a defaced image of Philippine military chief Eduardo Anjo outside a school in Quezon city

all-out war against the New People's Army guerrillas after they killed four policemen and wounded another in an ambush in southern Davao del Sur province.

"I'm ready for all-out war, another 50 years," Duterte said Thursday at the policemen's wake. "I can assure you that the armed

forces and the Philippine National Police would respond. This time I'm using everything [...] rockets and bombs."

Duterte did not mention the talks' resumption in his speech at the annual graduation of cadets at the Philippine Military Academy yesterday in northern Baguio city, where

he instead condoled with the families of government troops who died in combat. He promised better and more weapons for soldiers and thanked "those who risked their lives and limbs to defend this country's sovereignty as well as those who continue to offer their sweat and blood to fortify the pillars of a great nation that we are presently trying to build."

The military welcomed news of the breakthrough but said it would await formal notice from government negotiators and Duterte's instructions. "Pending this, all military operations will continue and remain at current state," the military said in a statement.

The Maoist guerrillas said they would remain

vigilant because of continuing military and police counterinsurgency operations but added they were optimistic with the talks' resumption.

"Instead of putting the lives of millions of people in harm's way, such as Duterte's all-out-war declaration, better yet we try to settle our differences on the negotiating table," said the rebels' Melito Glor command, which has a presence in the mountainous provinces south of Manila.

Founded in 1968, the rural-based guerrilla group has unsuccessfully tried to negotiate with five Philippine presidents before Duterte. Battle setbacks, surrenders and infighting have weakened the rebel group, which is consid-

ered a terrorist organization by the United States and remains a major Philippine security threat.

The rebels and the government declared separate cease-fires last year as they resumed peace talks. That allowed the government to withdraw troops from battlefields to focus on an offensive against the Abu Sayyaf and other Muslim extremist groups in the country's south.

In a joint statement with the rebels, the Philippines also agreed to release a rebel consultant to the talks and reinstate immunities from arrest for other guerrilla consultants. It pledged to release soon four other consultants and 19 detainees the guerrillas regard as political prisoners. **AP**

South Korea's ousted leader leaves presidential palace

Kim Tong-Hyung, Seoul

OUSTED South Korean President Park Geun-hye left the presidential palace yesterday evening, two days after the country's Constitutional Court removed her from office over a massive corruption scandal.

South Korean television showed Park's motorcade leaving the Blue House and heading for her private home in southern Seoul, where hundreds of police officers, reporters and supporters were gathered in anticipation of her arrival.

The Constitutional Court formally removed Park from office on Friday, upholding an impeachment motion filed by lawmakers in December amid suspicions that she colluded with a confidante to extort money and favors from companies and allowed the friend to secretly manipulate state affairs.

The ruling ended a power struggle that had consumed the nation for months and marked a stunning downfall for Park, who convincingly defeated her liberal opponent in 2012 with overwhelming support



from older South Koreans, who remembered her dictator father as a hero.

Hundreds of Park's supporters stood near her private home for hours yesterday before she vacated the Blue House. They waved the South Korean flag and photos of Park and her late father, Park Chung-hee, singing the national anthem and shouting "Nullify impeachment!"

Members of Park's conservative party also gathered at her home.

Workers were earlier seen unloading a television, washing machine, bed and other household items

from trucks and carrying them into Park's house.

Park no longer has immunity from prosecution and may face criminal charges including extortion, bribery and abuse of power.

She has not made a public statement since Friday's court ruling. She earlier apologized for putting trust in her jailed friend, Choi Soon-sil, but strongly denied any legal wrongdoing.

South Korea now has to elect a new president by early May. Opinion polls show liberal Moon Jae-in, who lost to Park in 2012, as the favorite to become the country's next leader. **AP**

INDONESIA

Politicians caught up in USD170m graft case

INDONESIAN politicians with key roles in President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo's governing coalition have been caught up in a corruption scandal in which officials allegedly pilfered more than USD170 million of government money.

The justice minister, a former interior minister, the current speaker of parliament and provincial governors are among those named in an indictment presented to a special corruption court on Thursday at the start of a trial of two Interior Ministry officials.

The case could turn into a test of Jokowi's ability to take a hard line against corruption, which is at epidemic levels in Indonesia and holds back development of the nation of more than 250 million people.

Indonesia's anti-corruption police allege that a network of about 80 conspirators and several companies used the introduction of a \$440 million electronic identity

card system in 2011 and 2012 to steal more than a third of the funds.

Local media reported that parliament's speaker and the justice minister denied involvement.

Irman and Sugiharto, the two officials currently on trial, are charged with receiving \$4.4 million. Prosecutors say the rest of the stolen \$172 million was distributed among the dozens of other people involved.

The justice minister and parliament's speaker are from political parties that have thrown their support behind Jokowi's government, which initially did not command a parliamentary majority following the election of the maverick candidate in 2014.

Transparency International in 2016 gave Indonesia a corruption score of 37 on a 1 to 100 scale, where 100 is completely free of corruption. Out of the 176 countries ranked, Indonesia was 90th, far from its goal of reaching 50th place by 2016. **AP**

AD

Mike Corder, The Hague

WITH his flamboyant shock of blonde-dyed hair and fiery anti-Islam rhetoric, Dutch politician Geert Wilders comes across a man who doesn't mind the limelight.

Yet for the past dozen years, the right-wing populist has spent much of his time holed up in anonymous safe houses or in a heavily guarded wing of Parliament.

Tight security surrounds Wilders night and day, and he hardly ventures outdoors. For his handful of campaign events ahead of a March 15 election, he traveled in convoys of armored cars.

"It's a total lack of freedom. That's how I would say it," Wilders, who leads the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, told The Associated Press in a recent interview.

The elaborate protection apparatus that surrounds him is a reaction to death threats from extremists enraged by his fierce criticism of Islam.

Wilders has made headlines and drawn condemnation for more than a decade for his anti-Islam rhetoric, which has included comparing the Quran with Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and calling for a tax on the veils some Muslim women wear.

At the same time, support for his party has grown in fits and starts, mirroring what he calls a "Patriotic Spring" sweeping Europe. Despite slipping in the polls recently, the Party for Freedom remains on track to become one of the biggest parties in the 150-seat lower house.

He also is regularly compared to President Donald Trump, for his policies and also his penchant for communicating via Twitter.

Anti-Islam Dutch lawmaker fans flames from security bubble



Firebrand anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders poses for a picture during a campaign stop in Breda

As protests and riots unfolded this weekend in Rotterdam over a Dutch government decision to block the visits of two Turkish ministers, Wilders fired off regular incendiary tweets.

Tight security surrounds Wilders night and day, and he hardly ventures outdoors

"Go away and never come back [...] and take all your Turkish fans from The Netherlands with you please. #byebye," he said in one as Turkey's family affairs minister was at the center of a

tense standoff at the Turkish consulate.

His one-page election manifesto is light on economic policy and heavy on pledges to "de-Islamize" the Netherlands, a nation of 17 million where an estimated 5 percent of the adult population is Muslim.

Wilders calls Islam a threat to western democracy and vows to close all mosques and ban the Quran, if he wins power.

But he has alienated so much of the political mainstream that even if he wins the popular vote he is considered unlikely to be able to form a ruling coalition in a nation where no single party has ever ruled alone.

Crucially, Prime Minister Rutte has ruled out working together after the election. Polls show Rutte's center-right People's Party for Freedom and

Democracy with the most voter support in the days leading up to Wednesday's election.

Rutte rejects Wilders' polarizing rhetoric, but also harbors hard feelings over Wilders' decision to effectively torpedo Rutte's first minority government in 2012.

After weeks of negotiations on a tough austerity package, Wilders, who pledged to prop up the government by marshaling party lawmakers for key votes, backed out, forcing fresh elections.

"We know they walk away when the going gets tough, 'that they make problems bigger not smaller,'" Rutte said of the Party for Freedom.

Even so, Wilders' message has found strong support in a nation known for its long history of religious tolerance and personal freedoms.

Wilders' opposition to Islam dates back to the days when he could still move freely around the world. In his youth he lived in Israel, which he saw as a democratic oasis surrounded by oppressive regimes in the Middle East.

After working for a Dutch government welfare organization, Wilders gravitated into politics and joined the party now led by Rutte. But he quit in 2004 over his opposition bringing Turkey into the European Union.

Two years later, he formally established the PVV, the Dutch acronym for the Party for Freedom.

Wilders set up his party so that

he is its only member, allowing him to keep a tight rein on its message and lawmakers.

Wilders "rules his kingdom like an emperor," brother Paul Wilders said in a recent interview with Dutch broadcaster RTL. "Whoever contradicts him is finished, family or not."

The extraordinary security measures that surround him were put in place after an Islamic extremist murdered Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam street in November 2004.

Wilders, already an outspoken critic of Islam, was whisked with his wife, Krisztina, into a netherworld of heavily guarded safe houses due to fears that he could become the next victim.

He says he misses the routines of a conventional life.

"Not being able to do all the things normal people can do from [...] emptying your own mail box, to doing some shopping or walking freely or driving my own car," Wilders said. "It's all impossible, and there is always that threat that people might do something."

The circumstances haven't caused Wilders to hold his tongue.

He was acquitted of hate speech charges in 2011, but found guilty in a separate trial last year of insulting and inciting discrimination against Moroccans.

He is appealing the conviction. Just last month, he blamed what he called "Moroccan scum" for street crime. AP

Netherlands PM Rutte seeks to de-escalate tensions with Turkey

Mike Corder, Raf Casert

AFTER an unprecedented diplomatic fight between the Netherlands and Turkey, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said yesterday he would seek to control the damage caused by the weekend incidents when he prevented two Turkish ministers from campaigning in the Netherlands.

Rutte's actions, which came two days after several German municipalities canceled rallies that Turkish Cabinet ministers had planned to address, prompted Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday to accuse the Dutch of being "Nazi remnants."

At the same time, Turkey kept its drive going to rally people of Turkish descent living in European Union nations to back a referendum that would expand Erdogan's powers.

After being denied landing rights in the Netherlands on Saturday, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu addressed crowds in the French city of Metz, where the French government had no qualms about permitting government representatives to Turkish rallies.

The Netherlands said Turkish attempts to campaign here touched at the heart of Dutch citizenship, although hundreds of thousands have Turkish roots

and many still feel committed to their ancestral homeland.

"The biggest problem in this case is that Turkey is talking about Turkish citizens who they want to talk to," Rutte said. "These are Dutch citizens who possibly also have voting rights in Turkey."

The diplomatic fight comes at a tough time in the Netherlands, which has national election on Wednesday, and where issues of Dutch identity and relations with migrant communities and Islam have taken center stage. In a neck and neck race, the parties of either Rutte or populist firebrand Geert Wilders could end up

the most votes.

Rutte said it was important for his government not to bow to Turkish pressure, especially, he said, after Ankara threatened sanctions if the Dutch kept its ministers out.

"Turkey is a proud nation; the Netherlands is a proud nation. We can never do business under those sorts of threats and blackmail," said Rutte.

Still, added the prime minister, his government "will keep working to de-escalate where we can. If the Turks choose to escalate, we will have to react, but we will do everything we can to de-escalate."

After a tense standoff ou-



A Dutch riot policeman tries to get his dog to let go of a man after riots broke out during a pro Erdogan demonstration at the Turkish consulate in Rotterdam

tside the Turkish consulate in Rotterdam on Saturday night, Turkey's family and social policies minister, Fatma Betul Sayan Kaya, was escorted back to the German border.

Police in Rotterdam said they arrested 12 people as a demonstration outside the Turkish consulate in the city devolved into rioting.

Police spokeswoman Pa-

tricia Wessels said the arrests, made for alleged violence and public order offenses, came as protesters pelted police with bottles and rocks early yesterday. Police responded with baton charges and a water cannon.

Wessels says seven people were injured in the brief explosion of violence, including one police officer who suffered a broken hand. AP

Now-fired Preet Bharara proud of 'absolute independence'

Larry Neumeister, New York

A defiant Manhattan federal prosecutor, in announcing his firing after he refused to resign, says "absolute independence" was his touchstone for over seven years as he battled public corruption.

Preet Bharara, 48, revealed his firing Saturday on his personal Twitter account. Several hours later, it was learned President Donald Trump had reached out through a secretary on his staff to Bharara on Thursday but the two men never spoke.

The attempted contact — described by a person told about the conversations who requested anonymity — continued the unusual dynamic between Trump and the high profile prosecutor that stretched to Nov. 30, when Bharara emerged from a Trump Tower meeting with Trump to say the then-president-elect had asked him to stay on the job.

The person who requested anonymity because of the talks' private nature said the secretary



Preet Bharara

late Thursday left a voicemail asking Bharara to call back. Bharara reported the call to Attorney General Jeff Sessions' chief of staff, Joseph "Jody" Hunt, who agreed it was best that Bharara not speak directly with Trump, the person said. Bharara then called the White House, telling the secretary he had spoken to the Justice Department and it was agreed he and Trump should not speak.

Bharara was informed he was fired by Dana Boente, the acting deputy attorney general, shortly

after it became widely known Saturday that he did not intend to step down in response to Sessions' request that leftover appointees of former President Barack Obama quit.

"I did not resign. Moments ago I was fired," Bharara said in a tweet.

In a statement later, he said: "Serving my country as U.S. Attorney here for the past seven years will forever be the greatest honor of my professional life, no matter what else I do or how long I live. One hallmark of justice is absolute

independence, and that was my touchstone every day that I served."

He said current Deputy U.S. Attorney Joon H. Kim will serve as acting U.S. attorney.

The Justice Department late Saturday confirmed Bharara was no longer U.S. attorney but declined to expound.

Meanwhile, Michigan Rep. John Conyers, the House Judiciary Committee's top Democrat, requested Saturday that the committee receive a summary of probes linked to Trump, whether they touch on his administration, transition, campaign and organization, "so that we can understand the full implications of this weekend's firings."

He said he suspected Bharara "could be reviewing a range of potential improper activity emanating from Trump Tower and the Trump campaign, as well as entities with financial ties to the president or the Trump organization."

Bharara was appointed by former President Barack Obama in 2009. In frequent public appearances, Bharara has decried pu-

blic corruption after successfully prosecuting over a dozen state lawmakers, Democrats and Republicans alike.

Sessions' decision to include Bharara's name on the list of 46 resignations of holdovers from the Obama administration surprised Manhattan prosecutors.

While it is customary for a new president to replace virtually all of the 93 U.S. attorneys, it often occurs at a slower pace. Sessions lost his position as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Alabama in a similar sweep by then-Attorney General Janet Reno in 1993.

The request from Sessions came as Bharara's office is prosecuting former associates of Democratic Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo in a bribery case. Also, prosecutors recently interviewed New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio as part of a probe into his fundraising. The mayor's press secretary has said the mayor is cooperating and that he and his staff had acted appropriately.

The request for resignations came after Trump last weekend claimed Obama tapped his telephones during last year's election. FBI Director James Comey privately asked the Justice Department to dispute the claim because he believed the allegations were false. Bharara worked for Comey when he was U.S. attorney in Manhattan under President George W. Bush. AP

AD



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Duffy's Bar
St. Patrick's **March 17**

SINGERS: DECLAN CARRUTHERS & DECLAN GREENE

ARTIST: BARRY JAZZ FINNEGAN

IRISH DANCERS; HANNAH & EMILY HELBIG

RAFFLE DRAW

CAESAR SALCEDO & IN-HOUSE BAND

THE ROADHOUSE MACAU

what's ON



MONKEY KING

TIME: 8pm daily

UNTIL: March 31, 2017

VENUE: Sands Cotai Theatre

ADMISSION: MOP420, MOP520, MOP780,

MOP1080, MOP1580

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 8818

BETWEEN GAZE AND HALLUCINATION - BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOÃO MIGUEL BARROS

TIME: 2pm-7pm (Closed on Sundays)

UNTIL: March 25, 2017

VENUE: Creative Macau, G Floor, Macao Cultural

Centre, Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2875 3282

SOLO EXHIBITION BY HO SI MAN

TIME: 11am-10pm

UNTIL: March 26, 2017

VENUE: Lakeside Gallery, Anim'Arte Nam Van

ENQUIRES: (853) 2836 6866

FORMER HOME OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADER YE TING

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (Except Wednesdays, open on public holidays)

VENUE: 76, Rua Almirante Costa Cabral

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699

Offbeat



SEA TURTLE FLAPS FLIPPERS IN 1ST REHAB SWIM AFTER SURGERY

Bank the green sea turtle flapped her flippers with vigor in her first swim after a life-saving operation to remove a heavy mass of swallowed coins from her stomach.

Veterinarians in Bangkok put the turtle in water Friday for the first time since her surgery four days ago to see how well she could move. The turtle was gently lowered into a large plastic tank and very quickly began swimming as best as she could in the restricted space.

"It's fantastic! She is responding very well," said Dr. Nantarika Chansue, who led the team from Chulalongkorn University's Veterinary Faculty. "Now she is very happy and looks like normal turtle."

The 25-year-old turtle was rescued from a pool in the seaside town of Sri Racha by the Thai navy. The cause of her ill health was revealed by 3D scans that showed she had been eating the coins thrown into her pool by passers-by who believed doing so would bring them luck or longevity.

Over the years, the loose change got stuck in the turtle's digestive tract, cracking her ventral shell and causing a life-threatening infection.

The surgeons needed four hours to remove 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of money, counting 915 coins of various currencies. Some are still inside. Veterinarians hope Bank will pass them naturally.

Her rehabilitation has involved manipulating her limbs to make sure the muscles don't stiffen up after being out of water for a prolonged period, and checking that the surgical scar does not get infected. But there are lingering concerns.

"The wound healing seems to be OK and there is no secondary infection because we are using sterile seawater," said Nantarika, "but we have checked her blood and her nickel concentration is very high so we have to work on that." AP

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:10	Criminal Minds S.8
17:50	Labirint (Repeated)
18:40	Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sports
22:10	Labirint
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Champions League Highlights
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

02 MAR - 08 MAR



KONG: SKULL ISLAND

ROOM 1

(2D): 2:30, 4:45, 9:30pm

(3D): 7:15pm

Director: Jordan Vogt-Roberts

Starring: Tom Hiddleston, Samuel L. Jackson, Brie Larson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 118min

THE FOUNDER

ROOM 2

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

Director: John Lee Hancock

Starring: Michael Keaton, Nick Offerman, John Carroll

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 115min

LA LA LAND

ROOM 2

7:15pm

Director: Damien Chazelle

Starring: Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone

Language: English

Duration: 128min

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

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



1996 MASSACRE IN DUNBLANE SCHOOL GYM

A lone gunman has gone on a shooting spree at a school in Dunblane, Scotland, killing 16 children and their teacher.

The killer sprayed shots at random around the school gym in an attack that lasted just three minutes, but caused carnage in a class of five and six year olds. He then turned the gun on himself.

Twelve other children were taken to hospital in Stirling, where one is reported to have later died of his injuries.

The killer has been named as Thomas Hamilton, 43, a local man, who had once - briefly - been a scout master before being sacked by the Scout Association.

The Queen has sent a message of sympathy to the people of Dunblane. The Prime Minister, John Major, on a visit to Cairo, has spoken of his disbelief at what he called "this sick and evil act".

The attack happened just after 0930 GMT, as the Year One pupils were beginning an exercise class in the gym with their teacher, Gwen Mayor.

One pupil said: "We heard these gunshots from the gym and looked round and thought he must be firing at a target or something then he came out through a fire exit and started firing at our huts and we were all petrified."

William Wilson, chief constable of central Scotland, told a news conference his officers had been called to the school at 0938 GMT: "They found a scene of carnage, with 15 children dead, one teacher dead and one other dead."

Parents and carers began arriving at the school as news of the tragedy quickly spread around the town.

The Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, who represents Dunblane said: "I find it difficult to express the feelings I know will be felt throughout Dunblane.

"This is a close-knit community where everyone knows everyone else and the impact of this horrible tragedy will be felt in every household." The motive for the attack is still unclear.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

A public inquiry into the Dunblane massacre found the killer Thomas Hamilton had been investigated by police following complaints about his behavior around young boys.

Hamilton had licences for six guns leading to criticism of the police for not questioning what he used them for. But the inquiry concluded his actions on that day could not have been predicted.

A massive campaign was launched after Dunblane for tighter gun controls. The Snowdrop Campaign was successful in achieving a change in the law in 1997, making it illegal to buy or possess a handgun.

The Gun Control Network - which included relatives of those killed in the Hungerford disaster - has continued to campaign among other things for a national gun register.

In October 2002, a scheme to set up a central database of gun users was being delayed by technical problems. It is now due to come into operation in summer 2006.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Will you feel like chatting today? You bet you will - and it's a given that the topic of your choice will be love or romance.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Still longing for a few hours of time alone with your sweetheart, without the intrusion of a phone or computer? Well, then, take it.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You're ready for a whole new level of intimacy with your current partner. Don't cut corners. Say it all. Every word.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 The urge to take off for some serious shopping will be tough to resist - and why should you? Shopping is perfectly justified now.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Your lover will no doubt prove it to you from the moment you open your eyes. Since you've been planning an equally wonderful surprise for them, of course, there's no reason to feel guilty about being so spoiled.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 That secret you've been lugging around? You just can't keep quiet about it, not for one more second.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 A friend has recently come to you with a super offer, and you're tempted to take it. Unfortunately, they're not waiting for an answer, and you've got more important things to attend to.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 If anyone is notoriously not fond of attention, it's you. In fact, you tend to avoid anything that even remotely resembles the spotlight.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You were wondering when someone new and interesting might cross your path - especially if you're single. Alas, the universe has seen fit to arrange an encounter for you: a surprising, coincidental encounter.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Calm, cool and calculated - that's you, right? Well, that may be what you're used to being referred to as, but those may not be the adjectives used to describe you today.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 This could be quite the romantic day for you. Oh, and then there's the fact that the heavens have arranged a full buffet of sweet, tender energies to assist you in creating not just perfect ambiance

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 All that hard work you've been doing lately hasn't gone unnoticed in the eyes of the powers that be. You could be due for a raise, promotion or bonus.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION

CHINA

Table listing weather conditions for various Chinese cities like Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.

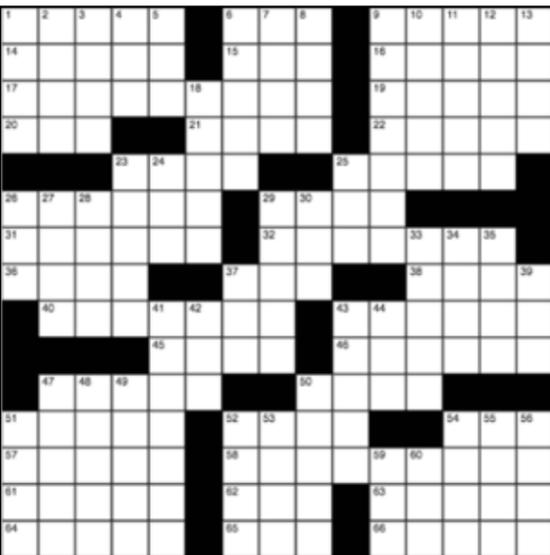
WORLD

Table listing weather conditions for various world cities like Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, etc.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Ornamental coronet; 6- Mex. neighbor; 9- Hilton competitor; 14- Rod used to reinforce concrete; 15- Parked oneself; 16- Spooky; 17- Building design creator; 19- White-and-black bearlike mammal; 20- Parisian possessive; 21- Actively engaged; 22- Attempts; 23- At the apex of; 25- Relaxes; 26- Island Ferry; 29- TV horse; 31- Ostrich or emu; 32- Hearing distance; 36- Put on the market; 37- Thunder Bay's prov.; 38- Cut out; 40- Correspondences; 43- Bathhouse; 45- Brainchild; 46- Early stage; 47- Pop pieces; 50- June 6, 1944; 51- Hue; 52- Wings; 54- Fast flier; 57- White poplar; 58- Gazette; 61- "Endymion" poet; 62- "Wheel of Fortune" buy; 63- Stop on ___; 64- Sea eagles; 65- NFL 6-pointers; 66- I can help it!

DOWN: 1- Streetcar; 2- Able was ___; 3- Basics; 4- It's a bit of cheer; 5- Jackie's second; 6- Deplete; 7- Pouches; 8- ABA member; 9- Groups of seven; 10- A long time; 11- Army leader?; 12- They get high twice a day; 13- Afternoon affairs; 18- Steakhouse order; 23- Leaning; 24- Asian occasion; 25- Auction ending?; 26- SAT takers; 27- Chinese weight; 28- Salt tree; 29- Brainy org.; 30- Double-crosser; 33- Pastime; 34- Actor Sharif; 35- Minute; 37- Mine find; 39- Chinese "way"; 41- Large, striped female feline; 42- Begley and Wynn; 43- Surrenders, as territory; 44- Doctors' org.; 47- Temperate; 48- Upstate New York city; 49- Nick of "Lorenzo's Oil"; 50- Coolidge's vice president; 51- Birthday treat; 52- Med school subj.; 53- Grant temporary use of; 54- Rotisserie part; 55- Truck stop sight; 56- Not kosher; 59- Metal container used for frying; 60- "Much About Nothing", play by Shakespeare;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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Ref: 16095501

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716 sq ft / HKD 6,150sq ft
HKD 4.4034M
Overlooking the Ruins
Ref: 17035511

Hellene Gardens, Lot IV, Unit B
Carnation Court, Coloane
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HKD 9.2M
Incredible Sea Views
Ref: 17025509

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Ref: 17020639

Kingsville, Taipa (1 Unit)
Taipa
3 Bedroom Apartment
Parking Upon Request
HKD 16,800 / 1,200 sq ft
Ref: 17010631

Houston Court Coloane Village
2 Bedroom Apartment
Furnished and Renovated
HKD 11,800 / 740 sq ft
Ref: 15110549

Edf. Nam Long - J Unit
Taipa
2 Bedroom Apartment
Rare & Unique Apartment
HKD 12,800 / 750 sq ft
Ref: 17010634



Bergsma wins speed skating World Cup



Heather Bergsma of the United States won the overall speed skating World Cup title yesterday after a convincing victory in a 1,500-meter race. As well as the overall win, Bergsma won by over half a second to snatch the 1,500 discipline title from standings leader Marrit Leenstra and add it to the 1,000 title she won on Saturday.

Play about Marathon bombing to premiere

"Finish Line," a documentary play about the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, will make its world premiere this week in Boston. The Boston Theater Company production draws from interviews with survivors, runners, first responders and others. Actors use verbatim transcripts to convey each person's story. "Finish Line" is being presented by the Boch Center at the Shubert Theatre starting Wednesday and running through March 26. The play doesn't re-create the attack or portray those responsible, but focuses on people who were affected by the violence and came out stronger. Twin bombings near the marathon's finish line killed three people and injured more than 260.

TENNIS

Murray stunned by Canada's Pospisil at Indian Wells

ANDY Murray was stunned in his opening match at the BNP Paribas Open by a man ranked 128 places below him, losing 6-4, 7-6 (4) to Canadian qualifier Vasek Pospisil on Saturday night.

It was, without a doubt, the biggest singles victory of his career for Pospisil, who spun around and flung away his racket after smacking a forehand winner to convert his fourth match point. Pospisil's best accomplishment in tennis to date was winning a Wimbledon doubles title with Jack Sock of the U.S. in 2014.

There really was little reason to believe beforehand that Murray would have so much trouble Saturday. He is, after all, ranked No. 1, owns three Grand Slam singles titles and two Olympic singles golds, has about USD55 million more in career earnings than Pospisil and a 45-0 edge in singles trophies.

Plus, Murray had won all four previous head-to-head matchups.

But Pospisil attacked second serves with great success this

time and broke Murray four times — three in the opening set alone — while also keeping him off-balance with strong net play.

The tone was established early on in the second-round match. Murray, who had a bye in the first round, broke Pospisil twice in the opening set, but gave that edge back each time, winning only 1 of 9 second-serve points in that set.

Pospisil broke again to open the third, then held for 2-0 and had two break points to go up 3-0 after Murray double-faulted for the sixth time. But Murray held there, then broke back, and was steadier until the tiebreaker.

Yet another double-fault gave Pospisil a 3-1 lead, and he stretched that to 6-2, before relenting just a bit on the way to the upset.

Other seeded men losing Saturday: No. 7 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, No. 19 Ivo Karlovic and No. 30 Feliciano Lopez.

Murray failed to mount the sort of comeback that Venus Williams fashioned earlier Saturday, when she cast aside

three match points to get past another former No. 1-ranked player, Jelena Jankovic, 1-6, 7-6 (5), 6-1.

Williams moved into the third round at Indian Wells for the first time since 2001, the year she and her father were jeered after she withdrew from her semifinal against younger sister Serena because of an injury. Williams boycotted the hard-court tournament until returning last year.

Against Jankovic, the 36-year-old Williams — a seven-time Grand Slam champion and the Australian Open runner-up against her sister in January — had white tape wrapping her right elbow and left thigh. And the American, who is seeded 12th, lost the opening set quickly, dropping 16 of 18 points on her own serve, before falling behind 4-1 in the second.

Even after Williams began turning things around from there, she was a point from losing on three occasions, each while she served trailing 6-5 in the second set. On the first, at 15-40, she



Vasek Pospisil celebrates after defeating Andy Murray

ended an 11-stroke exchange with a backhand volley winner. On the next, at 30-40, Jankovic pushed a return of serve long. And on the third, later in that game, Jankovic again missed a return, again sending it long, and put her hands on her hips.

She would only win one game the rest of the way.

Also Saturday, Madison Keys played — and won — her first match of 2017 after time off because of a wrist operation, beating Mariana Duque-Marinno 6-1, 7-5. Keys, a 22-year-old American ranked No. 9, had arthroscopic surgery on her left wrist shortly after the season-ending WTA Finals in October. **AP**

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RUGBY

England mauls Scotland to retain 6 Nations, tie wins record

Steve Douglas

THERE'S just no satisfying England coach Eddie Jones. His team had just reaffirmed its dominance of northern-hemisphere rugby by retaining the Six Nations in spectacular style, tying New Zealand's tier-one record of 18 straight wins in the process, when Jones laid down another challenge to England's players.

"We want to achieve greatness," Jones said, matter-of-factly. "They are in the dressing room now, they are talking about it. They want to do it."

For Jones, the 61-21 thrashing of Scotland at Twickenham on Saturday was merely another steppingstone on England's four-year journey to the top of the world game.

The next task is to beat Ireland in Dublin next Saturday to secure a second straight Grand Slam, a feat only five other teams have achieved.

Then, it's about knocking the world champion All Blacks off their perch.

"We aren't beating our chests, saying we are the No. 1 team in the world," Jones said. "We want to be the No. 1 team in the world and we're not, so we have to get better."

England's record under Jones is now played 17, won 17 after dismantling sorry Scotland in an unexpected mismatch in the 136th Calcutta Cup.

Jonathan Joseph scored three of the hosts' seven tries as the English recorded their highest points total against their oldest international rival and equaled



England's Danny Care scores his side's final try during the match between England and Scotland

the biggest margin of victory in this fixture, from 2001.

"We are trying to move away from the tag of plucky losers, but that wasn't even that," Scotland captain John Barclay said. "We were useless."

The Scots were talked up massively in the buildup after impressive wins over Ireland and Scotland but they failed to handle the occasion and the increased weight of expectation. They remain without a win at Twickenham since 1983, and couldn't get out of southwest London quick enough after their hopes of landing a first Triple Crown in 27 years and a first championship since 1999 were ruthlessly torn apart.

England's players, on the other hand, took a moment to enjoy their success.

Captain Dylan Hartley walked

around the field as darkness fell over Twickenham, holding the Six Nations trophy in one hand and waving to jubilant England fans with the other. Teammates in front of him chatted and laughed.

"We'll have a couple of quiet drinks tonight," Jones said, "and then tomorrow night we'll get together and onto Ireland."

The English have been slow starters in this campaign. Not here. The game was virtually over by halftime, which England went into leading 30-7.

Scotland's nightmare first half comprised of hooker Fraser Brown getting sin-binned inside two minutes for a tip-tackle on Elliot Daly, strike runner Stuart Hogg going off for a Head Injury Assessment on 18 minutes and never returning, replacement center Mark Ben-

nett going off on a stretcher, and pitiful wide defense that Joseph skewered with some superb running angles.

Back in the team after being dropped to the bench against Italy last time out, Joseph sped through opposite center Alex Dunbar's weak tackle 40 meters out with his first touch of the ball and cruised unchallenged over the line in the 3rd.

Owen Farrell converted, kicked two penalties either side of Scotland flyhalf Finn Russell missing touch with a penalty, and played a part in a backline move that saw Joseph break the line, slalom past covering defender Tim Visser and dot under the crossbar.

Behind 20-0 after 25 minutes, it was already getting embarrassing for the Scots. But on their first real attacking oppor-

tunity, they went for a lineout instead of kicking for goal and prop Gordon Reid barreled over from close range for a try.

It was brief respite because Farrell booted another penalty and Joseph ran another sensational angle off Farrell's pop-pass and laid on Anthony Watson — Daly's replacement — to sprint over just before halftime.

The second half was damage limitation for Scotland but Joseph couldn't be stopped, completing his hat trick in the 43rd by running onto scrumhalf Ben Youngs' pass in a move off a scrum.

“We want to be the No. 1 team in the world and we're not, so we have to get better.”

EDDIE JONES
ENGLAND COACH

"Credit to the boys," Joseph said, "I just ran the lines outside that they created. The holes were there for me."

Scotland center Huw Jones' try double, in the 50th and 69th minutes, were blips as England passed the half-century mark with fit-again No. 8 Billy Vunipola rolling over from a maul in the 58th, and Danny Care sniping over in the 72nd and again in stoppage time.

Farrell's final conversion took him to 26 points and ensured a 40-point margin of victory.

England has an unassailable eight-point lead over second-place Ireland after four rounds.

"We are one year into a four-year project," Jones said. "We've done reasonably well in the first year but we want to get better." AP

BADMINTON

Chong Wei wins 4th All England title and says he'll be back

TOP-RANKED Lee Chong Wei won his fourth All England Open crown yesterday and changed his mind about it being his 13th and last visit to badminton's oldest championship.

After swatting aside first-time finalist Shi Yuqi of China 21-12, 21-10, Chong Wei said he will return to defend the title of his favorite tournament.

"Every year I come here I feel like I am playing at home," the

Malaysian said.

Before the event, he said this would be his last All England, then almost didn't make it. He tore a cruciate ligament in his left knee on Feb. 4 when he slipped on court mats in training, and wasn't cleared until nine days before the tournament. He still played in pain and with the knee heavily strapped and yet, despite all the pre-tournament drama, sliced through his draw — dropping just one game.

No. 10-ranked Shi knocked out Chong Wei's great nemesis, Lin Dan, in the semifinals. He won his maiden Superseries final in Paris in October. But he'd been well beaten in his two previous matches with Chong Wei and never looked like hurting the Malaysian in this final.

Chong Wei outmaneuvered Shi, made him scramble, and smashed winners to his left and right. He was behind only once, by a point

early. He won five straight points for 18-10 and an air of inevitability enveloped the final.

Late in the second, Shi earned a net kill to trail 18-10 but rolled right over his right ankle and needed strapping. Two unforced errors gave Chong Wei match point, and the latter took it with a smash winner to Shi's forehand.

His fourth All England title tied him with countrymen Wong Peng Soon and Eddy Choong, who won theirs in the

1950s when the All England was the unofficial world championship.

Chong Wei didn't retire after the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, where he won a third straight silver medal, to fulfil his dream of a world championship with his Olympic chance gone. He'd suggested the worlds in Glasgow in August would be his swansong, but at 34 and on a less-than-perfect knee, he remains a formidable opponent who will play on next year. AP



Lee Chong Wei lifts his trophy during the medal ceremony for winning the mens singles final against China's Shi Yuqi

opinion

World Views
 Shelly Banjo, Bloomberg

WHAT RESTAURANTS CAN TAKE AWAY FROM CHINESE TAKEOUT

It's never smart to keep hungry people waiting for their food. They turn "hangry."

No one has mastered this idea better than Chinese takeout restaurants, which have put a premium on speed ever since they emerged in the 1800s. That's when a wave of Chinese immigrants came to the U.S. and opened up cheap and cheerful restaurants catering to miners and railroad workers. They became an American staple, catering to busy customers who wanted to grab their Chicken Sesame and skedaddle.

It's a lesson fast-food joints and casual dining restaurants would be wise to digest. Especially now that they are counting more than ever on sales from takeout and delivery.

These chain restaurants have had a rough time lately, as price wars, labor-cost hikes, and cheaper grocery items bite into sales. Takeout and delivery have been rare bright spots for this industry, driving sales for everyone from Starbucks Corp. and Jack in the Box Inc. to Buffalo Wild Wings Inc. and The Cheesecake Factory Inc. Earlier this month, McDonald's Corp. announced it would roll out mobile ordering and delivery across all its U.S. locations.

U.S. consumers ordered USD31 worth of food, on average, with each delivery order in the fourth quarter, according to a 1010data analysis of third-party food-delivery services.

But as many of these traditional restaurant chains weren't built with delivery or takeout orders in mind, there are bound to be hiccups.

At a UBS retail conference last week, Starbucks said the rapid rise of mobile orders contributed to lower-than-expected fourth-quarter sales at the coffee giant. Some stores got so jammed up with orders and customers that it deterred potential walk-ins. Starbucks is trying to figure out how to get the drinks flowing faster to move customers along. On a trial basis in some locations, it's sending mobile-ordering customers to one part of a store and walk-ins to another.

Likewise, as Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. struggles to rebound from its food-safety crisis, it has revamped its online ordering, pickup, and delivery options. But that's slowing down the process of getting customers through stores, elongating wait times for people who come in to order a burrito.

It doesn't have to be this way. Instead of trying to serve two different kinds of customers in one store location, restaurants should consider opening or converting less-profitable locations to food-delivery centers entirely devoted to takeout and delivery orders.

These would look like centralized kitchens and could be placed in lower-rent locations, with fewer employees doing nothing but preparing meals for takeout or delivery. No hostesses, servers or busboys are necessary. Food-safety issues might be even easier to contain with fewer people handling meals.

This would also help prevent third-party delivery services such as Uber Eats, Doordash and Deliveroo from interrupting the traffic flow at dine-in locations.

The trend has taken off in the U.K., where the growth in home delivery and takeaway has lately outpaced growth in dine-in restaurants, according to Euromonitor. For example, when deliveries became such a big part of business at London rotisserie Clockjack, it opened a separate outpost catering just to delivery customers.

In the U.S., Green Summit Group has launched a series of virtual eateries, or "ghost restaurants," that operate food delivery services out of central commissaries in cities such as New York and Chicago.

Green Summit's Peter Schatzberg told Fast Company in January that "a restaurant like Chipotle or Pret A Manger has to dedicate 75 percent of their space to seating, while 90 percent of their customers just grab and go."

These early, delivery-only restaurants have run into some challenges -- getting noticed, for one thing. Many pay big fees to Seamless to reach customers who can't just discover them and stroll in for a bite.

But big, well-known chains such as Chili's and Chipotle wouldn't have that problem. Their customers would just be glad to get their grub fast, no matter where it came from - even if it doesn't come with a fortune cookie.

THE BUZZ OF MACAU'S LAND LAW

Legislative Assembly (AL) president Ho Iat Seng, who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, said that the NPC Standing Committee told Macau's NPC representatives that Macau's latest Land Law does not violate the Basic Law.

According to TDM, the AL will finish reviewing the meeting records related to the region's Land Law approval by the end of this

month. The records will enable the AL to confirm whether the government made any specific promises when reviewing the law.

Ho noted that the AL will review previous legal instructions from the government, as well as analyze whether the first version of the law served a clear legislative purpose at the time.

The AL will then compare both versions before issuing a report announcing subsequent actions.



PROPERTY

Toronto may be next with foreign homebuyers tax

Kim Chipman

TORONTO may be next on the list of global cities with a tax on home purchases by foreigners as government officials search for ways to cool scorching price gains.

Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa surprised many last week, saying he was reconsidering imposing a tax to curb price increases that have accelerated in Canada's biggest city, reversing a stance last year to leave the market to its own devices.

"A year ago I was saying, 'Let market forces prevail,'" Sousa told reporters in Toronto. Now he's concerned about people facing "bidding wars everywhere you go." Sousa said he is considering a number of options for next steps, and a foreign tax is just one.

Governments from the U.K. to Australia and Hong Kong have imposed levies and restrictions on foreign buyers in recent years in an effort to tamp down home values that are shooting beyond the reach of many local residents. The Canadian province of British Columbia added a 15 percent levy to home purchases by foreign nationals in Vancouver, and the city in January began taxing empty homes.

Sales in Vancouver have since plummeted, with some of the foreign buyers probably



shifting east to Toronto. The average cost of a home in Toronto and its suburbs jumped 28 percent in February from a year earlier to CAD875,983 (USD648,588), the sixth straight month of above-20 percent growth. That's more than the 18 percent gain in Manhattan, which pushed the median price to \$1.25 million in the 12 months through January.

A year ago I was saying, 'Let market forces prevail'

CHARLES SOUSA
 ONTARIO FINANCE MINISTER

Sousa's comments are likely to set off fierce debate in Toronto, with the real estate industry arguing Friday that a tax would do nothing to improve the underlying problem in the market -- the lowest supply of homes in the city in more than 15 years, according to the Toronto Real

Estate Board.

"Imposing a tax on foreign buyers will not have the desired effect of cooling the housing market and could create adverse effects," Larry Cerqua, president of TREB, said in a statement. "It will do little to correct the real issue impacting housing affordability, which is the lack of available housing supply."

The real estate board said a survey it conducted last year showed only about 5 percent of purchases brokered by its members were on behalf of a foreign buyer and 80 percent of buyers purchased a home as a residence, a place for another family member to live in, or as an investment to rent out, which helps increase rental supply.

Shaun Hildebrand, senior vice president at Toronto-based real estate research firm Urbanation, said research shows foreign buyers represent only about 5 percent of new condo sales as well. Wealthy immigrants represent a "much more substantial component of the market," and many rent out their purchases. **Bloomberg**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Xinhua/Li Peng



A flower labyrinth during the preview of the Hong Kong Flower Show at Victoria Park. The flower show is being held until March 19.

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High Density Residential Area	40-60 Moderate	☹️
Ambient	45-65 Moderate	☹️

WORLD BRIEFS



NEPAL has asked India to investigate the fatal shooting of a Nepali man by Indian border guards. The 25-year-old man was shot by border guards last week during a dispute between people on both sides of the border over the construction of a culvert in the area.

LIBYA Hundreds if not thousands of armed men are converging on Libya's main oil shipping terminals, which the rival powers in the country's east and west are fighting to control in a battle being watched by global oil markets.



TURKEY-NETHERLANDS Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Ankara would retaliate for the ousting of the Turkish family affairs minister from the Netherlands in an unprecedented midnight standoff outside the country's Rotterdam consulate between a high-level government official and police in full gear. **More on p14**

SERBIA-RUSSIA Serbia's defense minister says that the country is expecting Russian President Vladimir Putin's approval for the delivery of fighter jets, which could worsen tensions with neighboring states.

BRAZIL Rio de Janeiro state plans to vaccinate its entire population against yellow fever as a precaution amid Brazil's largest outbreak of the disease in years. The state said Saturday it expects to reach a 90 percent vaccination rate this year. It will need 12 million vaccine doses to do that.