



MÜLLER RETURNS TO CHINA

After his controversial resignation in Macau, artistic director Marco Müller will head a festival in Shanxi Province

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FILIPINA ENTREPRENEURS AWARDED



P7 MDT REPORT



ELECTION IS TEST FOR YOUNG NATION

East Timor voted for a new president yesterday in an election that will test Asia's newest and poorest nation

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS



BRITAIN will begin divorce proceedings from the European Union on March 29, starting the clock on two years of intense political and economic negotiations that will fundamentally change both the nation and its European neighbors. The European Commission — the bloc's legislative arm — said it stood ready to help launch the negotiations. **More on p14,15**

THAILAND Police said yesterday that they're looking for more weapons believed to be part of a plot to assassinate the prime minister, after police discovered guns and thousands of bullets allegedly belonging to an anti-establishment leader.

NORTH KOREA Six people died when the roof of a mine in North Korea collapsed in January, the North's state media reported yesterday, in a rare admission of a deadly accident in the secretive country.

AUSTRALIA Private cellphone numbers of most Australian federal lawmakers, their staff and several former prime ministers have been made public after a government department failed to properly remove them from a routine report.



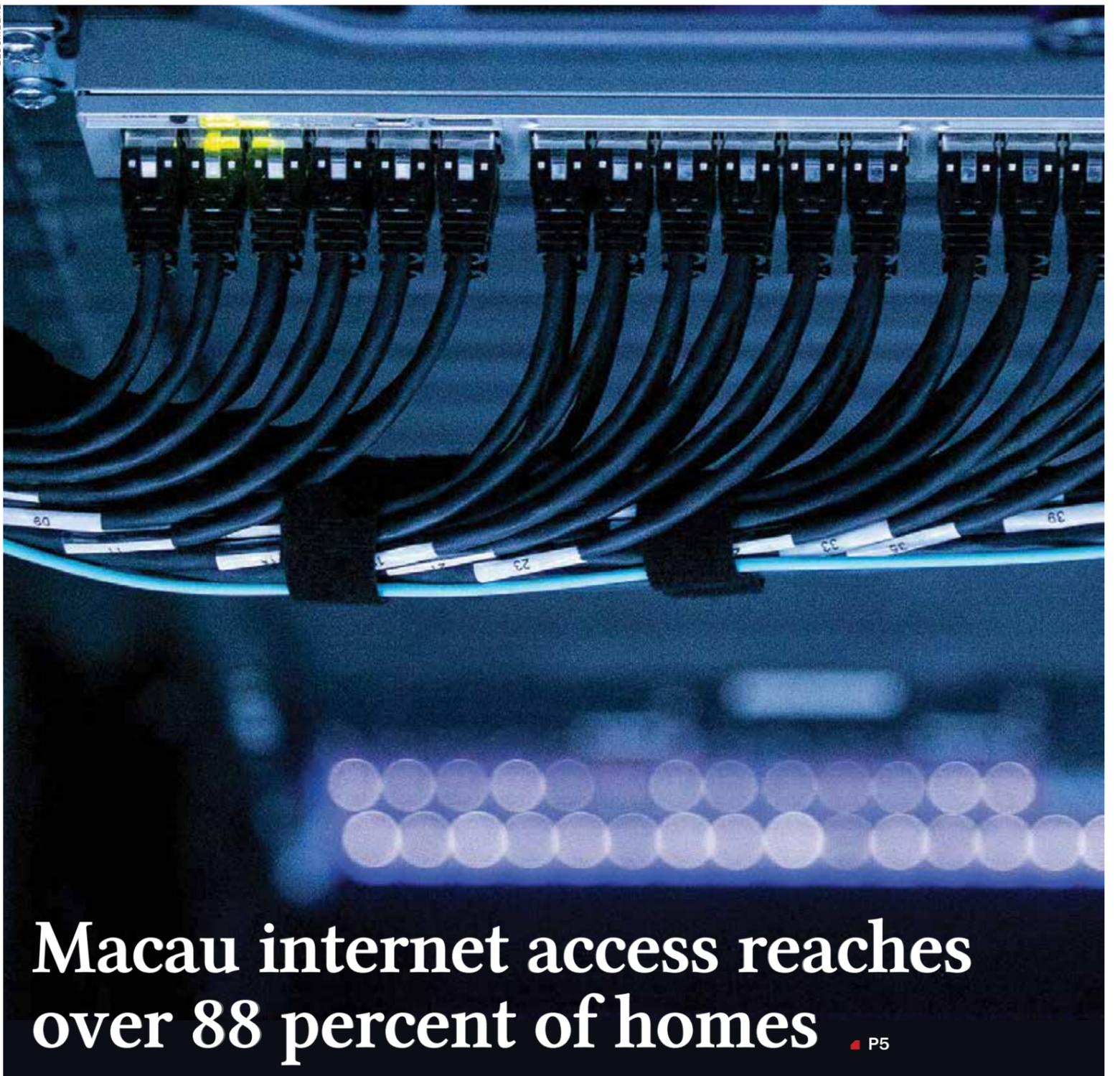
INDIA-PAKISTAN Pakistani and Indian experts yesterday opened round-table talks in Islamabad over water disputes between the two nuclear-armed neighbors, even as tensions over competing claims to Kashmir remain high.

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KIM JONG NAM MURDER

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Macau internet access reaches over 88 percent of homes

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Gabriel McKail



Erwiana speaks with the audience through video-chat

HUMAN RIGHTS

Modern day slavery 'very much alive'

Lynzy Valles

A documentary concerning a horrific story of abuse faced by an Indonesian domestic worker for eight months was screened on Sunday at the University of Macau (UM).

Erwiana Sulistyaningsih's story, which first appeared in the global media spotlight in 2014, was presented to Indonesian migrant workers in a bid encourage the community to stand up for their rights and dignity.

The 26-year-old was named one of the world's 100 most influential people by Time magazine in 2014.

The film "Erwiana: Justice For All" was made by American-Mexican documentary filmmaker Gabriel McKail who is currently based in Hong Kong.

The film has been screened in Jakarta and Hong Kong and made its debut in Macau on Sunday.

McKail, who was present at the event, recalled that he was compelled to produce a documentary film after witnessing instances of domestic workers being mistreated – even in public.

"I just want people to know that these issues still exist in the migrant community," the inde-

pendent producer told the press.

McKail, along with members of Indonesian migrant groups in Hong Kong, visited Erwiana in her hometown in Indonesia to document the process of the case that was made against her employer, while migrant groups cooperated with Indonesian authorities.

They have every right to be afraid because I've been to the immigration department and they don't treat them correctly.

GABRIEL MCKAIL
DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER

Erwiana arrived in Hong Kong in 2013 as a young woman intending to save money for her education.

The film not only highlights

what Erwiana experienced but also tackles issues that domestic helpers, who were featured in the film, face in their everyday lives.

The exploitation includes taking passports from workers, forcing workers to sleep in the kitchen or toilets without mattresses and only feeding employees meager amounts – as little as one to two pieces of bread per meal.

The 90-minute documentary also presents disturbing graphic images of Erwiana's injuries.

Forcing a metal tube or a vacuum cleaner inside her mouth, punching her front teeth, which caused a fracture and splashing cold water on her naked body in front of an electric fan during winter were only a few examples of the maltreatment Erwiana experienced at the hands of her Hong Kong employer.

Meanwhile, McKail, who is also a photo-journalist, described how domestic workers in Hong Kong are still experiencing modern day slavery, despite Erwiana's story making headlines across the region's media outlets.

He stated that fear and lack of information are two of the main factors preventing workers from complaining about their em-

ployers.

"I think that they are afraid of losing their jobs because a lot of them have kids they have to put to school, or they're supporting a family," he explained.

"When they stand up and say something against their employer, their employer can easily terminate them," McKail added.

The independent producer also revealed that not only do employers mistreat domestic workers, but so do immigration authorities.

"They have every right to be afraid because I've been to the immigration department and they don't treat them correctly. [...] It's fear of a lot of things," he said.

The director noted that he is still hearing stories of his Filipino friends who are not getting paid for two to three months, or are being fed little.

"It's like human trafficking, so yes, modern day slavery is very much alive."

McKail noted that he also assists such workers to file cases against abusive employers, yet he revealed that it is discouraged by police authorities.

"I've seen government authorities act in a way that is shocking to me. But it's at the point that it just happens every day," McKail

lamented.

"I've seen it from police officials, from government officials, everything. And when I try to tell this to employers, they'd say that's not true or the media fakes it."

Meanwhile, Brian Hall, associate professor of psychology at UM, stressed that the research group he is currently leading, Population Research Initiative for Domestic Employees (PRIDE), is conducting a comprehensive assessment for migrant workers in Macau.

PRIDE is working with Indonesian, Filipino and Vietnamese populations to understand the critical health issues faced by these communities.

He hoped that the group would potentially find ways to improve population health through the data they are collecting.

PRIDE is currently trying to collect data from some 400 and 2,000 Indonesian and Filipino domestic helpers respectively.

Co-organized by the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union Macau and UM's PRIDE, the film screening event showcased performances from the Indonesian community, updates regarding the region's labor law and a short discussion with Erwiana through Skype.

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COURTS

Ho's trial resumed to hear non-local witnesses

THE trial of former public prosecutor general Ho Chio Meng at the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) resumed yesterday to hear several witnesses.

The trial was expected to be on hold until March 29 in order to give Ho's new legal team – led by Oriana Pun – enough time to familiarize themselves with the case.

Pun agreed with the decision, despite the short notice. “[The trial resumes] in order to hear the witnesses that were already notified and that live outside Macau. The court did this in order to economize on the trouble of asking them to come in another day and to not take the risk that they were not available to come in another date,” she

told TDM.

“We knew from the start that this could happen if the witnesses turn up. We were already prepared for this.”

Three witnesses were heard during yesterday's session. Two had previously been mentioned several times in the process; namely, the head of the Guangdong Province's Public Prosecutions Office Anti-corruption Department, and a member of a cultural association.

The two witnesses had allegedly taken multiple trips and stayed in several hotels, with all expenses being paid by the Public Prosecutions Office (MP).

The witnesses listed by the defense said they had been in the region several times to

meet either with Ho or with the former Chief Executive, Edmund Ho, on the MP's dollar.

In the afternoon, one of the sisters of Ho, Iok Fan, who is currently living in Hong Kong, confirmed she gave money to her father on a monthly basis and on special occasions. She said all her siblings, as well as her own daughter, did the same.

Iok Fan said that prior to her father's hospitalization, she visited the territory about 10 times per year, which increased as her father's health worsened.

Iok Fan said she gave her father HKD3,000 to 4,000 and her daughter would give about MOP2,000 to 3,000, but that they would give more in cases



RENATO MARQUES

where needed.

When questioned about why her father delivered the money to Ho Chio Meng instead of depositing it into his own bank account, she said, “I don't know. It was his choice.”

She said she was unsurprised, adding that their mother had passed away when Ho was still studying in secondary school,

and that their father had entrusted him with some family issues, including their finances.

The witness also said she was unaware of the house Ho had bought in his wife's name that was supposed to be for their father, as well as the house rented by the MP at Cheoc Van, which she claims to have never visited. **RM**

CRIME

Phone swindlers claim new victims

Renato Marques

SEVERAL victims have reported cases of phone fraud in the last few days, a Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson said yesterday in a press conference.

The police warned citizens not to trust such scams, asserting that neither the police nor any public department would call citizens to ask them for money.

The warning follows a case over the weekend involving a female casino worker aged around 40, who reportedly received a phone call from the immigration department.

The caller claimed to be involved in a problem regarding safe conduct for a third party and asked the woman to buy a new mobile phone to avoid surveillance, instructing her to contact some numbers which were allegedly those of mainland authorities.

The woman obeyed the caller and transferred RMB312,900 into a mainland bank account. After transferring the money, she suspected fraud and immediately registered a complaint with the PJ.

In another case, a 41-year-old local resident was accused of simulating a crime. He sent his wife a text message, saying that he had borrowed money from a loan shark for gambling but had lost it all. He said he had been kidnapped and that he would be held hostage in a hotel room until his wife transferred the kidnappers HKD90,000.

His wife did not have enough money on hand and only managed to transfer HKD 8,000. Out of fear that the kidnappers would harm the man, she sought help from the police.

In a joint police operation on March 19, a Public Security Police Force (PSP) officer found the man and delivered him to the PJ for further investigation.

When questioned, he revealed that the loan and kidnapping were both false, and that it had all been part of a scam to steal money from his wife so that he could gamble.

The PJ also revealed that they had captured one of the two suspects involved in a high-profile fraud case last November.

The two suspects had allegedly swindled a victim out of HKD30 million to be traded for gaming chips, before vanishing without a trace. They were later identified in CCTV footage from a local hotel.

One of the suspects was caught while entering the territory on March 19. The other suspect remains at large, as does the money.

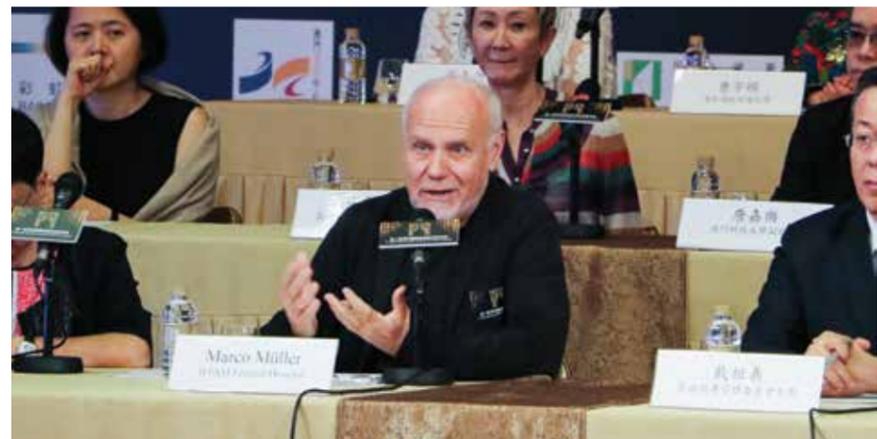
WOMAN STEALS FRIEND'S DIAMOND RING TO FILL 'PIGGY BANK'

A 20-year-old woman from mainland China was accused of stealing a diamond ring from her friend while on a trip to Macau. The incident – which the Judiciary Police reported on March 17 – occurred when the victim, also a woman from the mainland, visited Macau in the company of four friends. After checking into a Cotai hotel, the victim, who was sharing her room with two of her friends, removed her

ring when she went to shower, leaving it by the sink. The next day, she realized the ring was missing and filed a complaint with the police. When the case was investigated, the culprit admitted to stealing her friend's ring and pawning it for HKD50,000, which she then transferred to her savings account in the mainland via a shop in Taipa. She was sent to the Public Prosecutions Office and accused of theft.

FILM

Müller returns to China for 'boutique' festival



Marco Müller

MARCO Müller, the renowned former artistic director of the prestigious Venice Film Festival, the International Film Festival of Rome and the First International Film Festival and Awards – Macau (IFFAM), will serve as artistic director for a film festival in Northern China.

Spearheaded by Chinese director Jia Zhanke and announced at the China Film Directors Center in Beijing last week, the inaugural Pingyao “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” International Film Festival will be held in Shanxi Province be-

tween October 19 and 26.

The festival acknowledges the pivotal work of Ang Lee's 2000 classic “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon”, which won more than 40 awards and became the highest-grossing foreign-language film of all time in the United States, earning USD128 million.

The event's organizers describe the Pingyao festival as the country's first “boutique festival”, with 40 unique films aired in its debut edition.

Pingyao will mark Müller's return to China after he resigned from his role as IFFAM

director in November last year, just weeks before the festival's launch.

The organizing committee of IFFAM explained the resignation as “due to ongoing differences of opinion between him and [fellow organizer] Macau Films & Television Productions and Culture Association.”

In an interview with the Times, Müller described local organizers as “amateurs” and did not deny rumors among Macau's filmmaker community that he had been obstructed by city officials “who know nothing about film.” **DB**



UM professor to head Journal of Asia TEFL

Antony John Kunnan, a professor from the Department of English and associate dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Macau (UM), has been appointed editor-in-chief of the Journal of Asia TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). Professor Kunnan will serve in the position from January 2017 to October 2019. According to the UM, the Journal of Asia TEFL is an open-access online journal. Its previous editors-in-chief include Bernard Spolsky from Tel Aviv University in Israel and Andy Kirkpatrick from Griffith University in Australia.

First Macau Museum children's exhibition

The first exhibition themed around children's experience to open at the Macau Museum will be inaugurated on Friday. The "Story of Cannon-Making – Children Experience Exhibition" showcases several games and, according to the organizers, "aims to inspire and encourage children to learn about the history of Macau, and shape the museum as another important learning place for children." The exhibition will be open to the public from March 25 to August 20, on the 3rd floor of the Macau Museum.



Malaysia's Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar (left) speaks

KIM JONG NAM MURDER

Malaysia hunting for more N. Korean suspects

MALAYSIAN police said that they are hunting for more North Korean suspects over the killing of the half brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

National police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said the new suspects are in addition to the seven North Koreans already being sought in last

month's poisoning of Kim Jong Nam at Kuala Lumpur's airport.

Khalid said the new suspects include an "important person," but he declined to give further details.

"I do not deny that there are more North Koreans involved in the murder of Kim Jong Nam. We will follow the legal channel to

get them," he said. "I do not want to say more than that. If I do, they may run [...] but we believe there is an important person too."

Malaysian authorities say two women smeared Kim's face with the banned VX nerve agent on Feb. 13 at a crowded airport terminal. He died within 20 minutes. The two women,

an Indonesian and a Vietnamese, have been charged with murder.

Four of the seven initial North Korean suspects left Malaysia on the same day of the killing. Police have obtained an Interpol red alert notice for the four men, believed to be back in Pyongyang. Police said the other three men are believed to be hiding in the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

Relations between Malaysia and North Korea have deteriorated sharply since Kim's death, with each expelling the other's ambassador.

North Korea blocked Malaysians from leaving the country until a "fair settlement" of the case is reached. Malaysia then barred North Koreans from exiting its soil. The two countries have also scrapped visa-free travel for each other's citizens.

Although Malaysia has never directly accused North Korea of being behind the attack, many speculate that it 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**

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ARTS

Lisbon holds exhibition by Macau photographer

THE exhibition, "Where the World Heritage Shines – Photography Exhibition of the Historic Centre of Macao," is currently being held at the Macau Scientific and Cultural Centre in Lisbon until May 31.

The ongoing exhibition features some 90 photographs of the world heritage listed Historic Center of Macau by local photographer Chan Hin Io.

In recent years, he has been devoted to capturing Macau's customs as well as the city's landscapes, winning several photography awards.

Among his published works are: "The Neighbourhood of Macau – Documentary Photographs by Chan Hin Io" and "Memories of the Old Crafts and Trades in Macao, Life in Macao 2012".

According to a statement released by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), the photographs present the beauty and vitality of Macau's cultural heritage and show the charm of the small city through various angles.

An opening ceremony was held on March 8 and was officiated by the president of the Macao Scientific and Cultural Centre of Portugal, Luís Filipe Barreto and the representative of the president of IC and director of the Macau Archives, Lau Fong.

Over 80 guests were present at the ceremony, including the head of the Culture Section of the Chinese embassy in Portugal, Yang Chunyan and the former governor of Macau, Garcia Leandro.

Jointly organized by the IC and the Macau Scientific and Cultural Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science of Portugal, the exhibition will also be held at the Vila Flor Palace in Guimarães from June 23 to August 15.

According to the bureau, the exhibition is a manifestation of the friendly cooperation between cultural institutions in Portugal and Macau, and the growing Sino-Portuguese cultural exchange.

88.6pct of households have internet access

THE Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) said in a statement yesterday that a total of 167,600 households accessed the internet in 2016, accounting for about 88.6 percent of total households in Macau and marking an increase of 2.3 percentage points year-on-year.

The number of households with fiber optic broadband connections continued to rise, surging 115 percent year-on-year to 77,900. This has resulted in fewer households using fixed broadband connections, with a 36.2 percent decline to 71,200.

Internet users totaled just under 500,000 in 2016, up by 6.2 percent year-on-year, with the internet penetration rate at 81.6 percent. This represented an increase of 4 percentage points over the previous year.

Meanwhile, the internet penetration rate for the population segment aged 25-34 was 97.1 percent, up by 2.1 percentage points year-on-year; while that of the group aged 55 and above increased to 50.8 percent, up by 5.2 percentage points.



Regarding the frequency of internet usage, 93.2 percent used the internet daily, down by 1.2 percentage points year-on-year.

Most users accessed the internet for communication (91.5 percent) and gathering information (61.3 percent), up by 1.1 and 1.3 percentage points, respectively, year-on-year.

In the same period, those who said they use the internet for online shopping rose substantially by 21.7 percent to 75,800.

The median spending for online shoppers was around MOP1,000 in the fourth quarter of 2016, the same as the corresponding period in the previous year. Median spending on travel services, clothing, footwear and handbags

remained about the same as in the fourth quarter of 2015. Median spending on electronic products dropped by 2.2 percent to MOP1,100.

According to the DSEC statement, the number of mobile phone users rose by 0.3 percent year-on-year to 561,400, with the proportion of internet users accessing the web via their mobile phones (91.9 percent) increasing by 0.6 percent year-on-year.

Due to the greater variety of functions available on mobile phones and other devices, the proportion of households with computer equipment fell to 147,400, a drop of 1.1 percentage point year-on-year to 77.9 percent.



Rui Afonso Lawyers' Office

We, the lawyers and employees of the firm, sadly inform all our clients and friends about the passing of the most esteemed Dr. Rui Afonso, founder of this law firm.

Dr. Rui Afonso died in Lisbon, where he was receiving medical treatment, on March 17.

To the bereaved family we present the most heartfelt condolences for the departure of someone who was very dear to them and who left an indelible mark on their hearts.

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Filipina entrepreneurs awarded in celebration of Women's Day

Lynzy Valles

THE Philippine Consulate General of Macau honored female entrepreneurs in the region on Sunday, in celebration of International Women's Day.

In the Philippines, honoring women is celebrated throughout the month of March.

In collaboration with the Consulate's Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) and Caritas Macau, Sunday's program not only featured success stories of Filipina business owners but offered a variety of activities, such as pampering services, health check-ups and Filipino migrant worker-related services.

Philippine Consul General Lilybeth Deapera hoped that the stories would inspire the Filipino community to aspire to higher goals.

"I hope that by honoring them we are able to focus that they are here, and hopefully they will be an inspiration to the other members of the community, especially to the women," she said.

Two of the seven recipients of the Outstanding Women Entrepreneur Awards started in the region as domestic helpers.

Deapera expressed her hope that the stories shared at the event would encourage Filipino workers in the region to change careers, start a business or explore other paths.

Susan Cenon, an accountant in the region for more than a decade, resigned from her job and launched a stationery



Susan Cenon at her salon

and souvenir business back in 2009.

Sharing her story with the Times, Cenon said that her fixed deposits in three local banks earned a meager interest at first, which was disappointing.

"The bank was earning but I wasn't [...] so I decided to quit my job and took the risk," she said.

Cenon is currently managing her trading firm "Kara Mart Convenience Store" and a salon, "Kara Salon."

The entrepreneur also shared that she had difficulties acquiring work permits for her employees, saying their quota

applications had been rejected twice.

"I can hire Chinese people but the mere fact that their boss will be Filipino, I think they'll be afraid because of the language barrier," she said.

Cenon added that Macau ID holders tend to request higher salaries.

Meanwhile, she is planning to launch another branch of her salon.

"There will always be challenges but proper planning and feasibility studies will make [one] succeed. Before I start up with something, my husband and I always sit, take notes and

plan."

To aspiring Filipina entrepreneurs, Cenon advised, "Don't be afraid and follow your dreams. There is no problem in launching a business but one must know how to handle situations. Purchasing goods in Macau is not that easy."

The entrepreneur encouraged Filipino immigrants to save money whilst working in the territory, so that they can start a business upon returning home.

Hopefully they will be an inspiration to the other members of the community, especially to the women.

LILYBETH DEAPER
PH CONSUL GENERAL

"You will not be here all the time, so you should save money and start something while you have the chance," Cenon advised.

The consulate and POLO have been co-organizing a 'Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship Program' for Filipino migrant workers in Macau.

The program, which is currently in its 50th batch, includes leadership skills training and financial literacy seminars.

Deapera said several participants have launched businesses back home, and some have chosen to stay in the Philippines while remotely managing businesses in Macau.

"The most basic [and important] thing is that they were already given the basics of financial literacy. They already have the idea of the proper way of saving and what should be their priorities," she added.

Restaurants record sales growth in January

MORE than half of restaurants surveyed by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) reported a year-on-year growth in revenue in January 2017.

The data released yesterday indicates that 61 percent of interviewed restaurants and similar establishments reported a year-on-year growth in revenue in January; a substantial increase of 27 percentage points from December 2016.

However 28 percent of the interviewed restaurants & similar establishments reported a year-on-year decline in revenue, down by 16 percentage points from December 2016.

For retail, 53 percent of retailers reported a year-on-year increase in sales in January 2017, up by 11 percentage points from December 2016.

All leather goods retailers reported higher year-on-year sales in January 2017.

Restaurant managers said they expected slower business after the Lunar New Year, with 56 percent anticipating revenues to increase year-on-year or remain stable in February.

However, 44 percent of restaurants and similar establishments predicted a year-on-year decline in receipts.

Retailers also expected less business in February, according to DSEC. 17 percent of retailers said they anticipated a year-on-year increase in sales in February, a month-on-month decline of 8 percentage points.

The sample of the Business Climate Survey on Restaurants and Similar Establishments and Retail Trade was selected based on the aggregate value of the establishments' revenue, comprising 167 restaurants and similar establishments, as well as 135 retailers.

corporate bits

THE VENETIAN MACAO RECEIVES THIRD ISO CERTIFICATION



The Venetian Macao has received an ISO 22000:2005 certification for its food safety management system, a first for an integrated resort or hotel in Macau.

The certification covers sto-

rage, cooking, cooling and packaging of chilled food at the property's central kitchen, which serves Sands China Ltd.'s food and beverage operations.

The gaming operator said

in a press release that the certification is the property's third ISO certification to date.

The Venetian Macao also holds an ISO 9001:2008 certification for the quality management system of its convention and exhibition services, and an ISO 20121 certification for its event sustainability management system.

As part of a family of standards overseen by the International Organization for Standardization, ISO 22000:2005 establishes the criteria for a company's food safety management system. These include the organization's ability to control safety hazards to ensure food is safe for human consumption.

The certification is awarded by the London-based British Standards Institution (BSI) Group.

MOBIKE WANTS ITS BICYCLES TO COVER 100 CITIES



China's bike-sharing war will spread beyond the country this year with Mobike planning to more than triple its coverage to more than 100 cities globally before the end of 2017.

Mobike's orange-hued bicycles have become a staple of Chinese sidewalks since it started formal operations last year. It's attracted hundreds of millions of dollars from backers including Tencent

Holdings Ltd., Warburg Pincus LLC, TPG Capital, Temasek Holdings Pte and Foxconn Technology Group. The startup will officially start services today in Singapore, its first non-Chinese location, where rival Ofo has also expanded.

Once the symbol of China's working class, bicycles have become the latest battleground for global capitalists who are pou-

ring money into apps that allow users to rent them in 30-minute increments. The advantage for clients is the ability to leave bikes wherever they'd like. Some of the largest providers in the nascent sector are already looking to expand overseas to gain scale, as the number of domestic players reaches saturation.

"This year our hope is to enter more than 100 cities," said Hu Weiwei, a Mobike co-founder, adding they were currently in about 30 hubs around China. Much of that expansion will be domestic, but she said Mobike will also cover international cities beyond Singapore this year. It didn't have a target for how many, Hu added.

Mobike has created a Singapore-specific model that obeys local safety regulations and will place the bikes at locations away from the city center to prevent congestion, she said.

TAINTED MEAT?

China temporarily suspends beef imports from Brazil

Fabiola Moura, Rachel Gamarski

BRAZIL'S government moved to head off a crisis over allegations that meat exporters had bribed inspectors to approve tainted beef for sale and export by summoning ambassadors to reassure them they have nothing to worry about.

President Michel Temer and his agriculture minister met with top diplomats of the European Union, Sweden, Canada and other countries to say slaughterhouses were being properly audited and that Brazilian meat is safe to eat. Temer said he was headed out for a steak afterward and encouraged others to do the same. Separately, China was said to have temporarily suspended beef imports from Brazil.

"This is an urgent issue since it has repercussions for us internally and abroad," Temer told reporters. "We spoke with embassies so that they could pass the word onto their governments in regards to any concern from the previous days. I invite everyone



to go out to a Brazilian steakhouse now."

Temer then dined with 19 ambassadors at a 119 reais (USD39) per person all-you-can-eat steakhouse, sitting between the Chinese and Angolan diplomats.

Federal authorities said that an investigation unveiled Friday showed about 40 companies, including JBS SA and BRF SA, had been involved in illicit activities such as bribing inspectors to approve the sale and export of spoiled meat and adding chemical substances to mask the poor

quality. While the companies have denied the allegations, including through full-page ads in Brazil's newspapers and spots on TV, their shares have tumbled at a time when both JBS and BRF are trying to access capital markets again.

The European Committee for Health and Food Safety is aware of the investigation and is seeking additional information, according to an emailed statement Sunday. The committee said it hasn't found any irregularities with health certificates

related to meat from Brazil since 2015. China and the U.S. have also requested explanations, O Estado de S. Paulo newspaper reported, without saying how it obtained the information.

China temporarily suspended imports from Brazil, according to people who received notice from the country's quarantine authority. Goods currently at sea or at port will not be able to clear customs, according to one of the people. The China Meat Association is collecting information from individual companies about their purchases from Brazil and any potential losses they may have, Zhao Anli, an official at the group's import and export sub-branch, said yesterday.

Agriculture Minister Blairo Maggi said after the meeting Sunday that the issues unearthed by the investigations are not generalized or widespread in the industry, and that authorities are working to ensure the highest quality hygiene and transparency.

"Brazil's industry is robust and

strong but it isn't infallible," he said. "We're making sure that what's being produced now is getting the proper inspection."

The presidency said in a statement that of more than 4,000 plants in the country only 21 are being probed, and that 33 of a total 11,000 employees in the industry are under investigation.

Federal police served hundreds of court orders related to the investigation on Friday, including more than 30 detention warrants, in what local media said was the largest police operation in the country's history. Roney Nogueira dos Santos, a BRF executive, was arrested at Sao Paulo's international airport on Saturday after arriving from South Africa. BRF said in an emailed statement that he surrendered to the authorities and is available to give all clarifications needed.

China and Hong Kong, which together are the biggest export market for Brazilian meat, were the destination for about a third of the \$5.5 billion of beef shipped from Latin America's largest economy last year, according to the meat exporters group Abiec.

The European Union is the second-largest market, with 13 percent of the exports. China and Hong Kong are also the biggest Brazilian market for chicken, while the European Union ranks third, according to the Brazilian Association of Animal Protein Abpa. **Bloomberg**

AD



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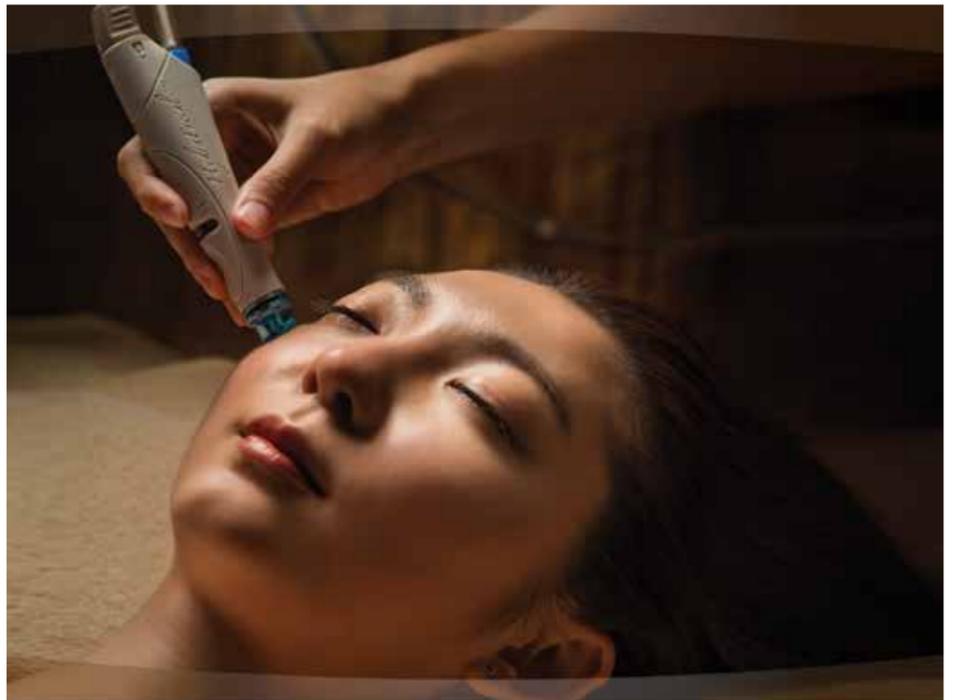
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TRIA 禰麗



Singaporeans become Uber drivers to get around high car prices

David Roman

IN one of the most expensive countries in the world to own a car, Peter Chiu is finding a novel way to pay for one.

The 58-year-old retired policeman rents a car in Singapore, drives three to four hours a day for Uber Technologies Inc. to cover its cost, and has a shiny Honda Vezel the rest of the time for his personal use. Hiring a vehicle to work for Uber is becoming a more common sight in the city-state, where Chiu's SUV costs more than a BMW M3 luxury sports sedan does in New York.

"Buying a car in Singapore is so expensive," said Chiu. "If you want to drive around to cover expenses, that is quite easy. And any extra money you get, that's more income for you."

New technologies are not only disrupting traditional industries in Singapore - a trend that Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said will force the economy to transform - but also changing consumers' behavior as they try to cope with rising costs and unemployment at a six-year high.

"Uber is another avenue for employment," said Brian Tan, an economist with Nomura Holdings Inc. in Singapore. "It makes



the labor market more efficient, because it provides you with an alternative career. You don't need a special license for that."

A Honda Vezel like Chiu's typically sells for more than SGD100,000 (USD71,000) in Singapore, almost four times the price in the U.S. On top of taxes, car owners in the city state are forced to buy permits - called Certificates of Entitlement - which are limited in supply and auctioned

by the government to help curb road congestion and pollution. At the most recent offering this week, the permit cost SGD50,789 for the smallest vehicles.

Chiu drives six days a week for Uber, just enough to cover the SGD500 weekly cost of his vehicle, which he rents from Lion City Rentals, a local subsidiary of the car-hailing company. He doesn't mind the part-time work or the traffic in a country that's smaller

than Rhode Island in the U.S.

Between 2014 - the year after Uber began operating in Singapore - and 2015, the number of rental cars in the country soared more than 50 percent to 29,369, surpassing the number of taxis on the road, according to official data. Even so, the total vehicle population decreased by 1.5 percent.

Buying a car in Singapore is so expensive. If you want to drive around to cover expenses, that is quite easy.

PETER CHIU
58-YEAR-OLD RETIRED POLICEMAN

Simon, a 45-year-old former property agent who preferred to give his first name only, rents a Toyota Corolla and drives for Uber four hours a day at most. A slump in home sales since the government began imposing

measures to rein in prices has pushed many in the industry to seek other sources of income, including ferrying commuters around the island for Uber.

Simon said his main job now is making "alternative investments" and the Uber gig allows him to have a car of his own to use on weekends, when he makes trips about 20 kilometers across the border to Malaysia with his wife and two kids. The journey has an added cost-saving advantage: he buys gas for his car in Malaysia, where it's cheaper.

Uber is using auto rentals and financing to attract and retain drivers around the world, as are rivals such as GrabTaxi Holdings Pte in Singapore and Lyft Inc. in the U.S. While for many drivers, earning an income may be the main reason they turn to the ride-hailing companies, in Singapore, having the car may be just as important.

"It makes a lot of sense to rent a car," said Tang Kin Yee, 53, whose main job is in commercial photography and advertising. Business was slow last year and he started driving for Uber to supplement his income. He now rents a Honda Vezel and is thinking about driving for Uber full time. **Bloomberg**

Supunnabul Suwannakij,
Dan Murtaugh

THE Asian energy companies sitting on the largest hoard of cash outside China are ready to put it to use.

Thailand's PTT Exploration & Production Pcl and its parent company have nearly USD11 billion combined in cash and marketable securities, such as bonds and other short-term investments. The explorer is ready to spend from its portion on projects and exploration acreage to rescue declining oil and gas reserves, according to Chief Executive Officer Somporn Vongvuthipornchai.

PTT E&P is eyeing early-life producing assets or projects that are already sanctioned and ready for development, Somporn said in an interview in Bangkok. It's also looking to work with its parent, PTT Pcl, to invest in liquefied natural gas plants, which would help feed the country's growing demand.

"We'll have to rely on

Armed with USD11b, Thai oil giants hunt for investments

mergers and acquisitions to maintain our growth," said Somporn. "We're looking at opportunities in the few hundred million to \$1 billion range."

There was no such hunger when Somporn took the reins of the upstream company in October 2015. Oil prices had already fallen from the \$100 a barrel range into the \$60s, and he watched as over his first six months they cratered below \$30 to hit the lowest in more than a decade.

He kept the company focused on weathering the downturn by cutting costs and investments. Meanwhile, proved reserves have fallen from the equivalent of 1.1 billion barrels of oil in 2009 to 695 million last year. That will last just five years at its current production rate.

"They have a relatively short reserves life and it's pretty clear they're going to have to acquire to grow as a company," said Neil Beveridge, an analyst with Sanford C. Bernstein in Hong Kong, who has a neutral rating on the company. "Domestic oil and gas production is going to decline over the coming years, so that puts more emphasis on companies like PTT E&P to go overseas and build supply."

Oil's crash made deals difficult to close last year because it was hard to agree on long-term values. While the market will remain volatile, Somporn said there is enough of a consensus now for buyers and sellers to find common ground. PTT E&P is using a \$50 oil price forecast this year for its investment decisions.



"It's a good time to grow while we have this cash with us," he said. The E&P company has \$4 billion in cash and marketable securities, which parent PTT accounts in its \$10.9 billion. Only China's big three oil firms, led by PetroChina Co.'s \$18 billion pile, have more than that among listed energy companies in Asia, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Most of the company's wells are in Thailand and Myanmar, where Somporn is looking first for new supply. Divestitures by oil majors seeking to maintain dividends in a lower revenue environment provide opportunities to find assets, he said. LNG is another avenue

for growth. Parent-company PTT is looking to expand gas imports to meet growing domestic demand fueled by economic expansion, while domestic production is declining and pipeline imports from Myanmar may be redirected to China.

"There is an opportunity for us to participate more on the LNG value chain," Wuttikorn Stithit, PTT's executive vice president for natural gas supply and trading, said in a separate interview. "It's kind of a natural hedge, because when the price of LNG is high, from the projects we would have some value."

PTT last week announced a higher-than-expected 2016 dividend of 16 baht (46 U.S. cents) per share, signaling an increased focus on capital allocation, according to Mayank Maheshwari, an analyst at Morgan Stanley in Singapore. The company's balance sheet can sustain 20 percent higher dividends in the medium term, Maheshwari said in a note. **Bloomberg**

Joe McDonald & Gillian Wong, Beijing

Trading partners alarmed by food import controls

CHINA'S trading partners are bringing the top U.N. food standards official to Beijing in a last-ditch attempt to persuade regulators to scale back plans to require intensive inspections of food imports — including such low-risk items as wine and chocolate — that Washington and Europe say could disrupt billions of dollars in commerce.

The rule could inflame tensions with the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, who has promised to raise tariffs on imports from China, and the European Union.

Under the rule, due to take effect as early as October, each consignment of food would require a certificate from a foreign inspector confirming it meets Chinese quality standards. Other countries require such inspections only for meat, dairy and other perishable items.

That alarms suppliers that see China as a growing market for American fruit juice and snack foods, French wine, German chocolate, Italian pasta and Australian orange juice. They complain Beijing already uses safety rules in ways that hamper access for beef and other goods in violation of its market-opening commitments.

"It could bring down food imports quite dramatically," said the German ambassador to Beijing, Michael Clauss. "It often seems it is more about protecting Chinese producers than about food safety."

The requirement would add "unnecessary regulatory complexity" at a time when Beijing has promised to reduce regulation, Jake Parker, vice president of China operations for the U.S.-China Business Council, said in an email.

Chinese regulators say closer scrutiny is needed as food imports increase. They say they are willing to consider suggestions



about alternatives, but foreign officials say they have yet to make any changes.

China contends the inspections requirement is supported by the Codex Alimentarius, the "Food Code" of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization, according to a person familiar with the discussions. The Codex sets quality standards but other nations say it recommends certificates only for risky products.

The president of the Codex council, Awilo Ochieng Pernet, a Swiss lawyer, will attend an April 6 seminar with Chinese officials in Beijing to explain its standards, according to that person, who asked not to be identified further. Participants plan to propose alternatives such as giving Beijing access to electronic

records to track sources of shipments.

Ambassadors from the United States and another government expressed concern in a letter in January to Wang Yang, a deputy premier who oversees farming and commerce.

Officials of the United States, the EU, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, Chile and other governments sent a similar letter to the Chinese product quality agency, the General Administration for Quality Inspection, Supervision and Quarantine, known as AQSIQ.

EU officials believe requiring health certificates for all products "is not scientifically justified," the EU mission in Beijing said in a statement.

The rules would be a burden on foreign suppliers and "a waste of

the precious control resources" that should focus on risky products, it said.

The rules follow an avalanche of scandals over Chinese suppliers caught selling tainted milk and other shoddy or counterfeit food products.

Western officials say the proposed food rules appear meant to shift responsibility away from AQSIQ, which Chinese consumers often blame for safety failures.

In a written statement, AQSIQ told The Associated Press it is talking with more than 30 exporting countries and regions including the European Union, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The agency said it welcomes suggestions of "alternative solutions."

The measures are aimed at "promoting the international co-

governance of food safety," the agency said. It said that would improve regulators' ability to trace imported food and block counterfeits.

"We have to assess the food management of areas abroad that export food to China to ensure the food safety of our country," the minister in charge of AQSIQ, Zhi Shuping, said at a March 14 news conference.

It seems [the rule] is more about protecting Chinese producers than about food safety.

MICHAEL CLAUSS
GERMAN AMBASSADOR

Zhi did not refer directly to the inspection requirement but said his agency's activities are "in line with international practice."

Beijing already is at odds with the U.S. and Europe over low-priced exports of steel and aluminum they say are hurting foreign competitors.

In the Trump administration's first trade complaint, a group for American aluminum producers asked March 9 for higher import duties on Chinese-made aluminum foil to counter what it said were improper subsidies.

Clauss, the German ambassador, said the rules should be submitted for WTO review — a step that AQSIQ said in its written statement it will take.

"We don't see that they really are trying to compromise on this so far," said Clauss. "To our knowledge, this doesn't exist anywhere else in the world." AP

Lobster-crazy China sets record for US crustacean imports

THE expanding market for lobsters in China is continuing to grow, with the country setting a new record for the value of its imports of the crustaceans from the United States.

American lobster was almost unheard of in most of China until 2010, when the value of imports grew 250 percent to about USD7.4 million. Last year, China imported more than \$108 million in lobsters from America, surpassing the previous high of about \$90.2 million in 2014.

"We've opened new markets in Asia, which is booming," said Dave Cousens, president of the Maine Lobstermen's As-

sociation. "Everything is clicking now."

Chinese importers took in more than 14 million pounds of U.S. lobsters last year, which was also a record. The previous high was about 13.1 million pounds the previous year.

Interest in American lobster has grown in other countries in Asia as well, such as South Korea, which grew from less than \$5 million in 2010 to nearly \$28 million last year. Vietnam's imports grew from \$142,940 to more than \$31 million in that time.

One of the factors spurring the growth of lobsters in China appears to be

the growth of the country's middle class, said Stephanie Nadeau, owner of The Lobster Company, in Arundel, Maine, which is a key player in the export business. American lobsters tend to be less expensive in China than other live seafood, such as spiny lobsters and geoduck clams, she said.

"It's kind of an affordable luxury," Nadeau said. "One of my customers said our lobsters are one of the cheapest things in the live tanks."

The uptick came in a record year for lobster catch in Maine, where most of America's lobster catch comes ashore. Fishermen

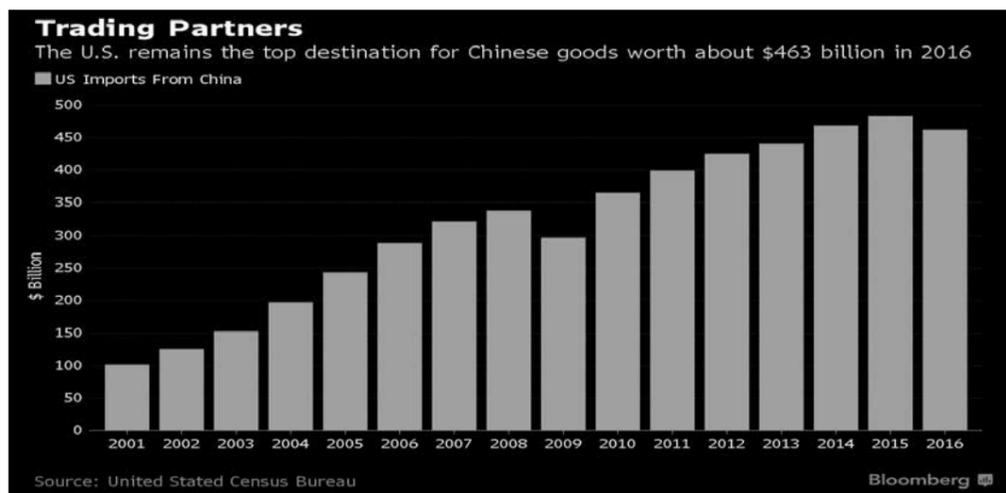
caught more than 130 million pounds of lobster in Maine last year, an all-time record and more than double the 2007 total. Atlantic Canada also has a large lobster fishery and sends the same species of lobster to China.

"The Asian market is a key component," said Patrick Keliher, the commissioner of the Maine Department of Marine Resources.

Lobster sales to China do not appear to be slowing down in the new year. America exported more than 1.7 million pounds and \$14 million in lobsters to the country in the first month of the year. AP



Trump's tariff could kill thousands of small businesses in China



HIGHER labor costs and stricter regulations keep nudging Eric Li's glass factory in southeast China toward insolvency, even though his lampshades are on the shelves at Home Depot. President Donald Trump's threatened tariff on his goods may be the final shove.

Three of the four furnaces at Huizhou Baizhan Glass Ltd.'s dusty plant sit dormant, and the workforce making lampshades and vases for export to the U.S. has been slashed to 150 from about 1,000 just a decade ago. Profit margins are shrinking, and Li said the company started by his Taiwanese father in 1991 is hanging by a thread.

"If there's a tariff, it's game over for us," said Li, 42. "We don't have the ability to take on extra costs."

Thousands of small- and medium-sized factories in China face the same predicament, with some owners considering shutting down or selling out if Trump slaps a levy on Chinese products that he said could reach 45 percent. These makers of clothes, toys and household goods fuel the USD462.8 billion annual flow of exports to the U.S. but aren't cash-rich, making it harder for them to take the tariff punch or pivot their operations toward Southeast Asia.

"Smaller companies tend to be focused and not diversified like big players are," said Karel Eloit, a senior partner at McKinsey & Co. in Shanghai. "They would be the most exposed and dependent on whatever happens with U.S. import duties."

Trump has accused China of unfair trade practices and currency manipulation, and he pledged as a candidate to address both issues if elected. U.S. Commerce Secretary

Wilbur Ross said in a Bloomberg Television interview on March 1 that measures will be announced "as soon as we have a proper case prepared."

The administration's rhetoric has softened since, with one of Trump's top economic advisers, Steve Schwarzman, saying the president will likely temper his criticisms of China.

A tax at the top end of Trump's campaign proposal may trigger an 87 percent decline in Chinese exports to American consumers, Kevin Lai, the Hong Kong-based chief economist for Asia at Daiwa Capital Markets, estimated during the campaign.

China could retaliate with its own tariffs on American products such as Boeing airplanes, iPhones and soybeans. U.S. businesses in China also could face tax or antitrust probes.

"There's too much at stake for both countries to engage in a trade war," said Eddy Li, president of the 3,000-member Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong. "Although we are concerned about such a scenario, we also feel optimistic."

Any Trump tariff likely could be absorbed by multi-billion-dollar makers of iPhones and Nikes such as Hon Hai Precision Industry Co. and Yue Yuen Industrial Holdings Ltd., respectively.

Yet it could swamp smaller enterprises already struggling to withstand China's rising wages, social-insurance mandates and tighter environmental-protection laws. Private companies, most of which are small and medium-sized companies, generated about 45 percent of the nation's exports in January-February, according to Chinese customs data.

During the past decade, the cost of manufacturing in China increased to about 85

percent of that in the U.S., said Steve Maurer, managing director for consulting firm AlixPartners in Shanghai.

As a result, Chinese goods are becoming more expensive. Producer prices in February surged 7.8 percent, the fastest pace since 2008 and lifting the outlook for global deflation.

Lung Cheong Group, which Hasbro Inc. confirmed is a supplier for the toy manufacturer, already moved almost all production lines to Indonesia to escape China's higher costs, Chairman Lun Leung said. Seventy percent of the group's revenue comes from U.S.-based customers.

"Even a 10 percent tariff increase will make it difficult for Chinese factories to cover their costs," Leung said. "If they stay, they just plan to sell their factories at a good price and end their businesses."

At Baizhan Glass, salaries tripled to 7,000 yuan (\$1,014) a month, and the profit margin per lampshade has halved to as low as 10 percent from nine years ago, said Eric Li, who started working in the family business in 2001.

Li sells his products to Westinghouse Lighting Corp., and they go to Home Depot Inc., he said. A representative for Home Depot said Westinghouse is a current supplier for the home improvement chain. Lowe's Baizhan Glass has annual revenue of about 20 million yuan.

"They can't expect to pass the tariff on to us," he said.

Trump abandoned the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which would have lowered tariffs on exports from Taiwan and Southeast Asia, and is looking to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, meaning a likely increase in tariffs on products made in Mexico. **Bloomberg**



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (left) chats with Premier Li Keqiang as they arrive for a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday

Israel's Netanyahu seeks to boost commercial ties with Beijing

ISRAEL wants to boost cooperation with China in technology, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told China's premier yesterday, as he led a large business delegation on a visit to Beijing to promote commercial ties with the Asian giant.

Netanyahu said in opening remarks at a meeting with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang that Israel and China could explore "many ways of technological cooperation."

Earlier yesterday, Netanyahu told a meeting of more than 600 Israeli and Chinese businesspeople that Israel is well-positioned to help China upgrade its products, services and utilities with better technology.

"I think that there is an extraordinary capacity for China to assume its rightful place, as it's doing, on the world stage," Netanyahu said.

"We are your perfect junior partner for that effort," he

said, adding that the governments would sign a series of agreements. "I believe this is a marriage made in heaven."

Netanyahu also met with the heads of large Chinese corporations including the conglomerate Dalian Wanda Group, e-commerce giant Alibaba Group, computer maker Lenovo Group and Baidu Inc., an internet search company.

"I told them that in today's world there are several concentrations of technology, not many; the U.S., Israel, and Israel is open for business with China," Netanyahu was quoted as saying in a government statement.

During his visit, Netanyahu also is to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping, who will host an official banquet. Netanyahu said the countries would discuss a free trade agreement.

Netanyahu also told Li that he looked forward to discussing the region's security si-

tuation with China. "There is a great deal of convulsion in the world, including in our part of the world and I would like to have the opportunity to exchange views with you and see how we can cooperate together" for stability and peace, he said.

Along with playing a more active diplomatic role in the Middle East, Beijing has also been expanding its security presence in the region, including the building of ties with Iran and Saudi Arabia through joint military drills and port visits. China has also backed the government of President Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian conflict.

While deepening its ties with Israel, Beijing continues to maintain support for the Palestinian cause and their bid for statehood, reportedly providing the Palestinian National Authority with financial and technical help and training for Palestinian officials. **AP**



Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu (right) reviews an honor guard with his counterpart Tomomi Inada upon arrival at Defense Ministry in Tokyo yesterday

Japan and Russia hold talks on security, territorial dispute

Elaine Kurtenbach, Tokyo

THE foreign and defense ministers from Japan and Russia met in Tokyo yesterday, with both sides expressing hope that discussions on joint development of islands claimed by both countries might help them move closer to resolving the territorial dispute preventing them from forging a peace treaty.

The talks are the first “two-plus-two” meeting since Russia’s annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

The one-day meeting is largely focusing on regional security, especially how best to deal with North Korea’s launches of missiles and its nuclear program.

Russia’s Foreign Ministry said before the talks that its envoys would raise the issue of a plan by the U.S. and its ally South Korea to deploy

■ **The talks are the first ‘two-plus-two’ meeting since Russia’s annexation of Crimea**

a state-of-the-art missile defense system known as THAAD, which has antagonized China and Russia.

Joint efforts in fighting terrorism and drug trafficking were also on the agenda.

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida was meeting with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, while Japanese Defense Minister Tomomi Inada sat down for talks with Russian Defense Mi-

nister Sergei Shoigu. The four ministers will also hold joint talks on international and bilateral issues.

Japan and Russia last held “two-plus-two” talks in November 2013. Meetings were shelved after that due to the crisis in Ukraine, as Japan joined sanctions against Moscow.

The Tokyo talks are not expected to lead to a breakthrough on conflicting claims to islands north of Hokkaido — Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and the Habomai islets — that came under Russian control after Japan’s defeat in World War II.

But the countries see more room for agreement on joint development of fisheries, tourism and other areas that might help bridge the gap.

Kishida said he intended to work in a “speedy manner” to move closer toward reaching a peace treaty, especially making progress on joint economic development.

Lavrov agreed, saying at the outset of the talks that “I believe this joint development will become an important step to create an appropriate environment for resolving a peace treaty.”

Earlier, a Japanese foreign ministry official said Tokyo would raise concerns over Russia’s installment of surface-to-ship missiles on Etorofu and other military activity elsewhere on the disputed islands, and seek an explanation from Moscow. It does not plan to push harder than that, said the official, who briefed reporters on the condition he not be named.

Japanese officials also said the talks would include work on planning a visit by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Moscow later this year. Logistics of visits by Japanese former residents of the disputed islands will also be addressed, they said. **AP**

AUSTRALIA

Crocodile attacks Aussie teen who jumped into river on dare

AN Australian teen who was attacked by a crocodile after jumping into a crocodile-infested river on a dare was recovering from serious wounds to his arm, officials said yesterday, as authorities recovered the body of another man who also may have been attacked by a crocodile in nearby waters.

Lee de Paauw, an 18-year-old from Queensland state, was at a hostel in the northern Queensland town of Innisfail around 2:30 a.m. on Sunday when he started bragging that he could swim in the river, a known habitat for aggressive saltwater crocodi-



les, said Sophie Paterson, a British backpacker who was at the hostel.

She and several others egged him on, though none of them thought he’d actually get in the water,

Paterson said.

But get in the water he did. Seconds later, a crocodile latched onto him.

“It all happened very fast. Pretty much as soon as he jumped in, there was

splashing and screaming,” Paterson told Queensland’s Courier-Mail newspaper. “There was blood everywhere and he just wouldn’t stop screaming.”

De Paauw managed to

pull himself out of the water. Queensland paramedic Neil Noble said the teen suffered extensive injuries to his arm, and was lucky to escape from the crocodile before the animal drowned him.

Meanwhile, Queensland authorities yesterday recovered a body believed to be that of a man who vanished on Saturday while spearfishing alone in waters just north of Innisfail. The 35-year-old man’s boat was found anchored off Palmer Point, about 50 kilometers north of Innisfail, on Saturday evening, with his spear gun floating in the water nearby.

An air and sea search was launched and officials spotted a body in the water yesterday morning, Queensland police said in a statement. An initial investigation suggests the man may have been taken by a crocodile, police said.

Wildlife officers were

hunting for the animal, believed to be around 4 meters long.

■ **Wildlife officers were hunting for the animal, believed to be around 4 meters long**

Crocodiles have been a protected species in Australia since the 1970s, which has led to an explosion in their population across the country’s tropical north. Because saltwater crocodiles can live up to 70 years and grow throughout their lives — reaching up to 7 meters in length — the proportion of large crocodiles is also rising. **AP**

EAST TIMOR

Vote for president test for young nation



Fretilin Party leader Francisco "Lu-Olo" Guterres (center) shows his inked finger after giving his vote during the presidential election at a polling station in Dili, yesterday

EAST Timor voted for a new president yesterday in an election that will test Asia's newest and poorest nation.

Francisco "Lu Olo" Guterres, a former guerrilla leader from the leftist Fretilin party, was up against seven other candidates. He and the Democratic Party's Antonio da Conceicao, the minister of education and social affairs, were the front-runners.

While East Timor's president has a mostly ceremonial role, the prime minister heads the government.

Guterres, 62, lost to current President Taur Matan Ruak in the 2012 presidential election. But in this election, he had strong support from former Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, a resistance leader who remains influential in politics.

"I am confident that I will win in this election in one round," he told reporters in the capital, Dili, after casting his vote. "But I'll accept whatever the result."

Ruak was not up for re-election and is expected to make a run for prime minister in July's parliamentary elections.

"We have voted based on our own choice," Ruak said. "I am grateful to all people for a peaceful election. This

will result in greatness for our people and the nation."

East Timor voted overwhelmingly in 1999 to end 24 years of brutal Indonesian occupation that left more than 170,000 people dead.

In this election, 'Lu Olo' Guterres had strong support from former PM Xanana Gusmao

Its transition to democracy has been rocky, with its leaders battling massive poverty, unemployment and corruption as the nation continues to recover from the bloody break for independence more than a decade ago.

More than 740,000 of the country's 1.1 million people were expected to vote. While an early quick count will give a reliable indication of the election outcome within hours of the polls closing at 3 p.m., official results are not expected until tomorrow. **AP**

AD



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DIRE STRAITS

Gibraltar faces Brexit chaos against its will

Aritz Parra, Gibraltar

ALL Antonio Molina has to do to cross the border into Gibraltar for work is wave an identity card, barely slowing his motorbike's pace.

The Spanish delivery man's job depends on the border being open, a fact that's under threat as Britain leaves the European Union, dragging the overseas territory with it. Molina's livelihood, like that of some 300,000 people who work in the region, is on the line.

"There is much fear because we don't know what's going to happen," says the 46-year-old father of two, a Spanish citizen and resident who is applying for his first passport ever in case border controls become stricter. "We live in limbo; you hear one thing today and a different thing tomorrow."

Britain has controlled the rocky speck of land for three centuries against Spain's wishes. But being in the EU has meant the border has been open to the unlimited flow of workers, goods and money. That could end if Britain leaves the EU without retaining access to the bloc's single market. And Spain could use the situation to press for greater control of the territory.

Gibraltar, which is barely twice the size of Central Park and home to 32,000 people, has thrived economically under Britain's rule and open trade with Spain. Its low corporate taxes, business-friendly regulation and links to the EU market since 1973 have attracted investment. Tourists can often be seen taking selfies with the Barbary ma-

caques, the only free-roaming monkeys in Europe, that live on the promontory known as The Rock. They can pay with pounds or euros.

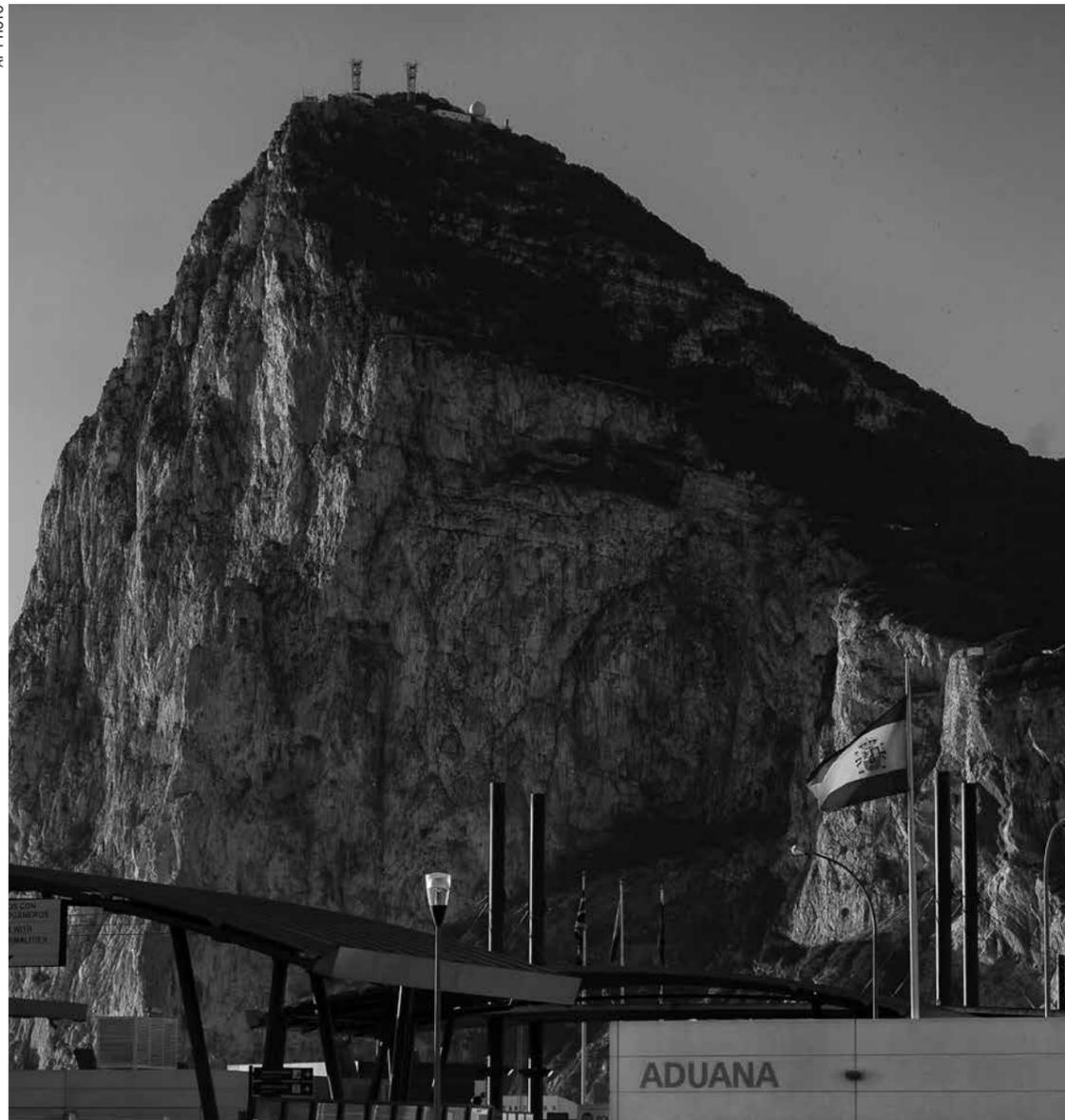
With the prospect of losing easy access to Spain and the wider EU market, Gibraltar's government says the territory is rebranding itself as a gateway for the U.K. and new markets in northern Africa just across the strait.

We live in limbo; you hear one thing today and a different thing tomorrow.

"It's unfortunate. We don't want to turn our backs to Europe, but those are the cards that we have been dealt and we have to play this hand the best as possible," Fabian Picardo, the chief minister of Gibraltar, told The Associated Press.

It doesn't matter that 96 percent of Gibraltarians voted to remain in the EU in last year's referendum. Since then, pleas for a special deal that would allow Gibraltar to retain access to the EU single market and keep borders open have been blocked by Spain, which wants joint sovereignty of the territory.

Madrid's proposal is to share foreign and defense matters with London, which keeps a strategic military presence in Gibraltar, in return for ample autonomy, investments and special tax conditions. Gi-



Border between Spain and the British overseas territory of Gibraltar with The Rock as a background

braltarians would be allowed to have a Spanish passport without having to renounce their British one.

Acknowledging such an agreement with Britain is unlikely, Spain is taking a tough line. Gibraltar has been the setting for diplomatic tensions between the two countries, including over fishing quotas, the handling of drug smuggling from North Africa and security matters, such as the killing of three IRA members by British forces in 1988.

Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis recently said that Madrid's position remains that Britain's control of Gibraltar "violates the territorial integrity of our country."

In its divorce talks with the EU, Britain's focus on controlling borders and limiting migration means it is unlikely to retain access to the bloc's single market, as the EU has said the country cannot have it both ways. That has left many in Gibraltar wondering whether their fate will be considered in Britain's negotiations with the EU.

Picardo argues it is possible to limit migration somewhat

while keeping borders open to workers and tourists to Gibraltar. It's an arrangement he believes could also work for Britain's land border with Ireland, for example.

Nobody expects Gibraltar's border to be fully closed. But disruptions and queues — which already happen at times of diplomatic tensions between Britain and Spain — are a nightmare for workers and employers.

Molina's boss, Redwood International general manager Danny Gabay, says his logistics business is already affected by increased border checks at customs. "Gibraltar is paying a price due to political situations, and obviously our businesses are in the front line," he says.

Gabay's office is in an airport terminal building that stops abruptly over the frontier fence, a powerful symbol of the lack of cooperation at the official level. The Spanish side never built a terminal on its side because Madrid considers the airstrip built on illegally occupied land.

That leaves the airport serving flights linking only with

destinations in Britain. And Spain has threatened to block the airport from getting EU air travel permits once Brexit happens.

European mediation has been key to solving past British-Spanish disputes over Gibraltar. But now, workers here feel like they'll be an afterthought in Britain's two-year negotiations with the EU.

Jesus Verdu, an international public law professor at the University of Cadiz, believes Gibraltar overall is well positioned to navigate uncharted waters. The biggest losers if Spain takes a hard line, he says, will be workers like Molina and others in the region around Gibraltar, where unemployment remains high and 25 percent of economic output is linked to jobs in Gibraltar or spending by Gibraltarians.

"There are so many things at stake that are essential both for the U.K. and for the EU that the issue of Gibraltar is being diluted and pushed right to the margins, and that is obviously a source of great concern for our region," Verdu says. **AP**



BREXIT

Britain to formally trigger process to leave EU on March 29

Danica Kirka & Jill Lawless, London

BRITAIN'S government will begin the process of leaving the European Union on March 29, starting the clock on the two years in which to complete the most important negotiation for a generation.

Britain's ambassador to the 28-nation EU, Tim Barrow, informed the European Council President Donald Tusk of the timing yesterday, the Department for Exiting the European Union said.

The notification of triggering Article 50 of a key EU treaty will come in the form of a letter delivered to Tusk — though it was unclear whether it would come through an actual letter or an electronic missive.

"We are on the threshold of the most important negotiation for this country for a generation," Brexit secretary David Davis said. "The government is clear in its aims: a deal that works for every nation and region of the UK and

AP PHOTO



Prime Minister Theresa May (right) and First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones attend a bilateral meeting in Swansea, Wales

indeed for all of Europe - a new, positive partnership between the U.K. and our friends and allies in the European Union."

The 10 Downing Street office of Prime Minister Theresa May said

that she will make a statement in the House of Commons on the day Article 50 is triggered. The announcement came after May pushed through legislation to start the negotiations to start withdrawal — a

process set in motion by voters in a June 23 referendum.

The European Commission said it stood ready to help launch the negotiations.

"Everything is ready on this side,"

commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas said.

The letter May sends next week will plunge Britain into a period of intense uncertainty. The country doesn't know what its future relationship with the bloc will look like — whether businesses will freely be able to trade, students can study abroad or pensioners will be allowed to retire with ease in other EU states. Those things have become part of life since the U.K. joined what was then called the European Economic Community in 1973.

It's not even certain the United Kingdom will survive the exit intact. Scotland's nationalist first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, is seeking a referendum on independence within two years. Scottish voters backed remaining in the EU, and Sturgeons said Scotland mustn't be "taken down a path that we do not want to go down without a choice."

The trigger for all this tumult is the innocuous-sounding Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, a never-before-used mechanism for withdrawing from the bloc. It stipulates that the two sides now have until March 2019 to agree on a divorce settlement and — if possible — establish a new relationship between Britain, the world's No. 5 economy, and the EU, a vast single market containing 500 million people. **AP**

AD

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Banyan Tree Macau
Thursday 30th March
Banyan Room 2, 1/F**

6.30pm to 8.30pm
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BBAM Members – MOP/HKD 200 - Non-Members – MOP/HKD 300
Event co-sponsored by

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what's ON



THREE PHANTOMS

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

UNTIL: March 26, 2017

VENUE: The Parisian Theatre, The Parisian Macao Hotel

ADMISSION: MOP180, MOP280, MOP480

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 8818

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

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

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

UNTIL: July 2, 2017

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

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

TRANSCIENCE: DAREDEVILS AND TOWERING WEBS

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

UNTIL: March 31, 2017

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

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2857 6118

MACAU GIANT PANDA PAVILION

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

VENUE: Seac Pai Van Park, Coloane

ADMISSION: MOP10

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

TAK SENG ON PAWNSHOP

TIME: 10:30am-7pm daily (Closed on the first Monday of every month)

VENUE: No. 396 Avenida Almeida Ribeiro

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

Offbeat

YOU'RE NABBED! FRENCH GENDARMES FIND THIEF STUCK IN WINDOW

Arrests can't come any easier than this.

French gendarmes called to a robbery found the suspected thief stuck in a hole he'd made with a hammer in a shop window.

The national gendarmerie on Sunday published a photo appearing to show the man half-in and half-out of the hole.

"Drunk, he robbed a shop but got stuck ... in the window before being arrested," the gendarmerie tweeted, with the hashtag "ThugLife."

The 46-year-old man was arrested Thursday morning in the Pyrenees town of Mauleon-Licharre in southwest France, a duty officer for the regional gendarmerie told The Associated Press.

Firefighters were called to free the man, who was then taken into custody, said the officer, who wouldn't be quoted by name, citing official policy.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
15:30	Nos League: Porto - Vitória de Setubal (Repeated)
17:10	Criminal Minds S.9
17:50	Fifties Club (Repeated)
18:40	TDM Sport (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:40	Once Upon A Time S2
22:10	Fifties Club - End
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

16 MAR - 21 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



SILENCE

ROOM 2

2:30, 5:30, 9:30pm

Director: Martin Scorsese

Starring: Andrew Garfield, Adam Driver, Liam Neeson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 118min

THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS

ROOM 3

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

Director: Colm McCarthy

Starring: Gemma Arterton, Glenn Close, Sennia Nanua

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 111min

LA LA LAND

ROOM 3

7:15pm

Director: Damien Chazelle

Starring: Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone

Language: English

Duration: 128min

MACAU TOWER

15 MAR - 29 MAR



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

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

Director: Bill Condon

Starring: Emma Watson, Dan Stevens, Luke Evans

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 129min

this day in history



Michael Heseltine

1991 HESELTINE UNVEILS NEW PROPERTY TAX

Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine has scrapped the controversial poll tax and replaced it with a property tax.

The new council tax will involve a single bill for each household based on two elements - the number of adults living there and the value of the property.

The government's announcement is already being hailed as a major u-turn - coming only a year after the tax was introduced.

It follows massive public opposition, which culminated in a riot in central London in March last year, when 100,000 took part in a rally against the levy.

The unpopularity of the tax is said to have contributed to the downfall of Margaret Thatcher last November. One of John Major's first tasks as her successor was to appoint Michael Heseltine with a view to dismantling the poll tax and introducing a new charge.

Under the terms of the council tax, houses will be allocated to one of seven bands, but it is yet to be decided whether the charge will relate to capital or rental value.

In a 22-minute statement to the House Of Commons, Mr Heseltine said: "In spite of the comprehensive system of income-related rebates, and the reduction scheme we devised, the public have not been persuaded that the community charge is fair.

"The new tax should reflect people's ability to pay, be easy to collect and be seen to be fair."

Under the community charge, everybody made a fixed payment to their local authority, regardless of their means. It will be gradually phased out and replaced by April 1993.

Labour MPs believe the Tories have been forced into a humiliating climbdown.

Shadow Environment Secretary Bryan Gould said: "We have just heard the most complete capitulation, the most startling U-turn and most shameless abandonment of consistency and principle in modern political history."

Alan Beith, the Liberal Democrats' Treasury spokesman, supported his comments and said the Government was leaping "out of the frying pan into the fire" by combining the principles of the two most unpopular taxes - rates and poll tax.

Meanwhile, many Tory MPs are concerned that the new tax will create losses for many people, offsetting any electoral gains for those hit hardest by the old poll tax.

Southern Conservative MPs also claim that the property element will mean big losses for their constituents.

But Mr Heseltine argued that regional variations in property prices would not be allowed to produce disproportionate bills.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont has tried to ease the current burden created by the poll tax by raising VAT in the budget this week in order to reduce bills by an average of £140 per head.

The move has caused chaos for local councils who must now recall many bills that have already been sent out.

Further details of the property tax will be unveiled after Easter.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The council tax was introduced in 1993. The charge was payable by all adults and was made up of the property value and the number of adults living in it.

But in 2003 anger at the big increases in council tax bills led to mass protests - mainly by pensioners, many of who refused to pay the average 12.9% increases.

All three main political parties have pledged to either reform or replace the council tax to make it fairer to all.

The Labour Government wants to retain the property-based tax but reform it, possibly by introducing a greater number of council tax bands.

In 2005, with the prospect of a general election looming, the Conservatives promised to reduce council tax bills for pensioners.

The Liberal Democrats want to scrap the tax and replace it with a form of local income tax.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You show up ready to play. Whether that means your company softball team jersey is pressed and ready to go or that you're sporting your most serious ready-for-business suit.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You're like a shark in the deep waters of the working world. You are slick. You are sleek. You are good looking, but those good looks belie razor-sharp, highly effective tools for getting what you want.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 In your private life, you can chat for hours about this and that and who did what to whom and why, when you're in the mood. But in all things business, you are nothing if not direct.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You can get a lot done if you feel like it. The real question is, do you feel like it? Chances are you do. But if you don't, maybe you should spend these super-productive hours on your self.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 No matter how tricky the problem, you'll be able to pour it and drain it and reconstitute it into a problem-solving situation. But you may be mighty tired at the end of the day, so be sure to take some time to refuel.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Sometimes one of the hardest things of all is seeing things as they really are. Working through the various illusions is the first step toward accepting things as they are. It could also be the most difficult.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 When it comes to work, you take a real nuts-and-bolts approach. First you ask, are all the nuts in place? Then you ask, how about those bolts? Then you check and see if any of them are loose.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 When you feel inspired, the whole world had better take notice. If they don't now, they will later. Especially when it comes to work and business, you are a force to be reckoned with.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your work is a source of real energy for you. At least it should be - you're somebody who needs to love work. And if you don't, it's a good day to start making changes. Are you in the right career but the wrong job?

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You are like an effective pool shark when it comes to your work. You cruise the pool hall. You check out the competition. You rub that little chalk thing on the tip of your cue stick.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You're not one for sloppiness. Sure, you're a relaxed, easygoing person, but that doesn't mean you suffer fools gladly or suffer foolishness gladly, especially when it comes to your work.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Your response when something is hard for you is to go right to the center of things. You know that hanging out on the edges and hoping whatever it is will go away doesn't work.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

MIN MAX CONDITION

CHINA

Beijing 6 15 overcast/cloudy
Harbin -4 7 clear
Tianjin 5 14 overcast/clear
Urumqi -7 -4 flurry
Xi'an 7 16 cloudy/overcast
Lhasa -3 8 flurry/cloudy
Chengdu 12 16 overcast/drizzle
Chongqing 14 17 overcast/shower
Kunming 8 19 shower
Nanjing 6 15 overcast/cloudy
Shanghai 9 15 overcast/cloudy
Wuhan 5 16 cloudy/drizzle
Hangzhou 9 14 overcast/cloudy
Taipei 17 22 drizzle
Guangzhou 19 25 shower
Hong Kong 20 25 cloudy

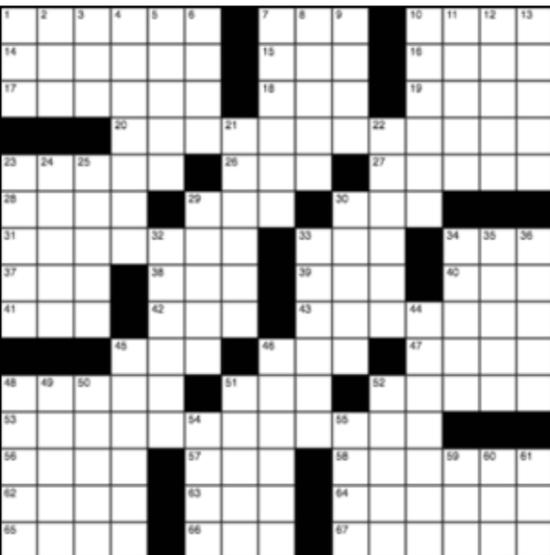
WORLD

Moscow 0 7 moderate rain/drizzle
Frankfurt 3 15 drizzle
Paris 3 12 drizzle
London 4 12 drizzle
New York 1 4 clear/drizzle

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Lady of Spain; 7- Where the truck driver rides; 10- Mob boss; 14- Tooth covering; 15- Pie-mode link; 16- Burnoose wearer; 17- Observation; 18- Choice; Abbr.; 19- Emit coherent light; 20- State of being tranquil; 23- Sums owing; 26- Not in; 27- Some locks; 28- Suffix with concession; 29- Keats work; 30- Decade divs.; 31- Blind alley; 33- Hawaiian food; 34- Pro ___; 37- Racket; 38- Bruce ___ was a famous kung-fu movie star; 39- Commercial; 40- Man-mouse connector; 41- 10th letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 42- Cushion; 43- Strategic withdrawal; 45- Block; 46- Close friend; 47- Once, once; 48- Killer whales; 51- Brit. lexicon; 52- Rocky debris; 53- Cornucopia; 56- Jai ___; 57- Snaky swimmer; 58- Pastille to sweeten the breath; 62- Whistle blowers; 63- Exist; 64- Edmonton team; 65- Bk. before Job; 66- Tit for ___; 67- Scoffs;

DOWN: 1- Get the picture; 2- Nav. officer; 3- Doze; 4- Left out; 5- Brings up; 6- ___ breve; 7- Armored headpiece; 8- Aboriginal Alaskan; 9- Indonesian holiday resort; 10- Operatic soprano; 11- Thin as ___; 12- Stickum; 13- Follows orders; 21- Inclined head; 22- Ancient musician; 23- Father; 24- Refrain in a children's song; 25- Stigma; 29- Late bedtime; 30- Alpine song; 32- Sun Bowl site; 33- Procession; 34- ___ is human; 35- Clear the boards; 36- Dull surface; 44- Adapt for new use; 45- Pertaining to Denmark; 46- Air rifle projectile; 48- Chicago hub; 49- Actor's parts; 50- Skill; 51- Wagner work; 52- Stigma; 54- Noteworthy achievement; 55- Sgts., e.g.; 59- ___ Haw; 60- Bobby of hockey; 61- Battleship letters;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
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Renovated in 2015 Ref: 16095500
St Pauls Ruins Central Macau 716 sq ft / HKD 6,150sq ft HKD 4.4034M
Overlooking the Ruins Ref: 17035511
Cattleya Court, Ocean Gardens Taipa 1,503 sq ft / HKD 7,451 sq ft HKD 11.2M
Ocean Gardens complex Ref: 16095497
Camellia Court, Hellene Gardens, Coloane 3 Bedroom Apartment Furnished with Car Park HKD 13,800 / 1,663 sq ft Ref: 17020639
Jou Fai Kuok, St Pauls Ruin's Macau 1 Bedroom Apartment In Heritage Area of Macau HKD 9,500 / 627 sq ft Ref: 16090610
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



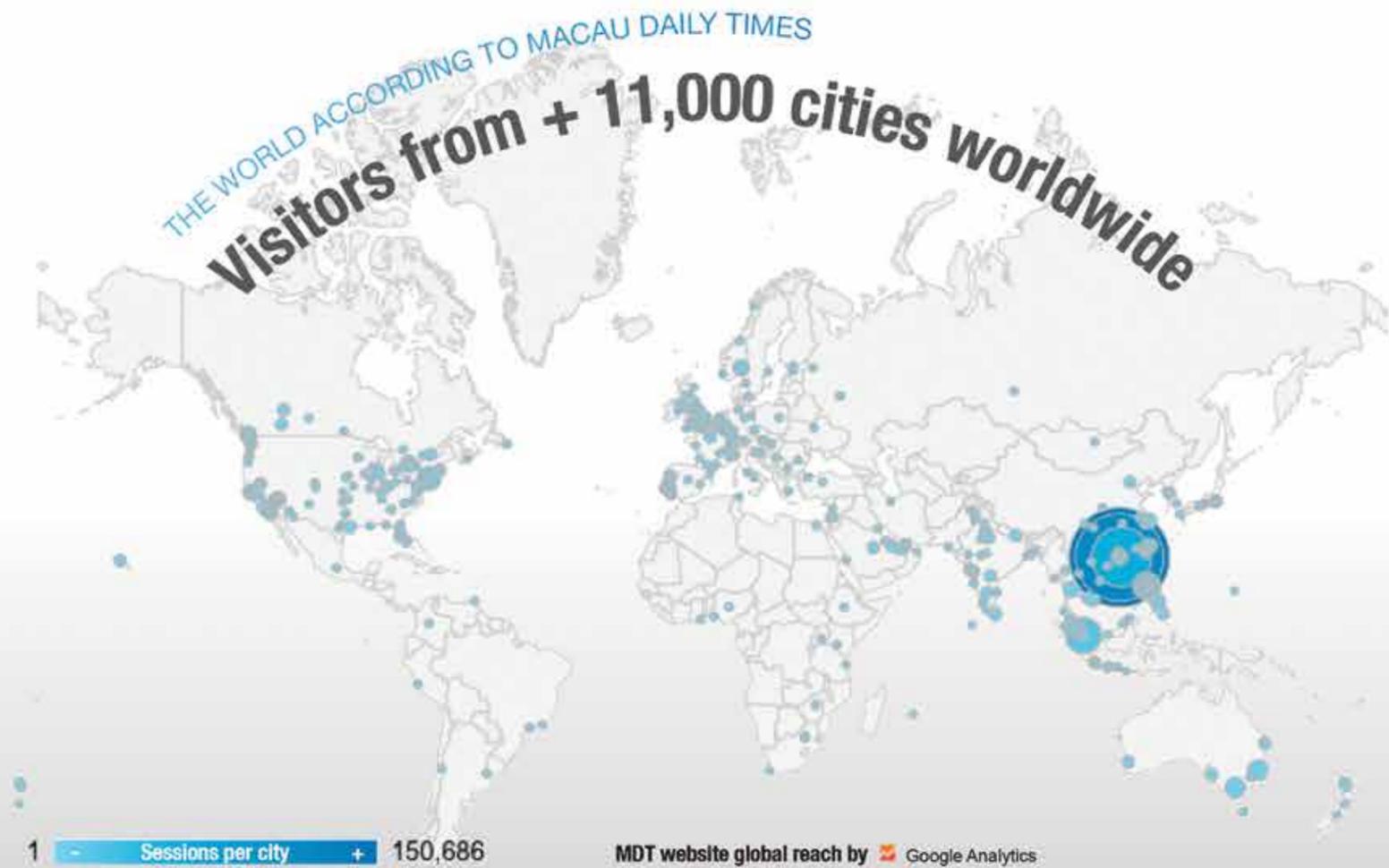
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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

Steve Douglas, Manchester

FOOTBALL

Man United, Spurs power on without top strikers in EPL

WITH their top strikers absent, there were concerns that Manchester United and Tottenham could stumble in their push for Champions League qualification from the English Premier League.

No need to worry.

United defied the absence of the suspended Zlatan Ibrahimovic — and fatigue because of its hectic fixture schedule — to beat relegation-threatened Middlesbrough 3-1 away in a match that ended with player bust-ups on and off the field.

Tottenham has lost top scorer Harry Kane for up to five weeks because of injury and the team's attacking midfielders stepped up to fill the void, with Christian Eriksen and Dele Alli scoring in a 2-1 win over Southampton. It was Spurs' 10th straight victory at home in the league.

With Manchester City and Liverpool drawing 1-1 in an end-to-end game of numerous chances at Etihad Stadium, the race to finish in the top four behind likely champion Chelsea is too close to call.

Tottenham is in second place, 10 points behind Chelsea and two points ahead of City. Liverpool is a point further back in fourth and four clear of fifth-placed United, which has two games in hand.

United has finished each of the last 19 weeks in sixth place in the Premier League, but finally climbed a spot with its win at the Riverside Stadium. Arsenal, which lost 3-1 at West Bromwich Albion, has slipped to sixth place.

**MIDDLESBROUGH 1
MANCHESTER UNITED 3**

There were two noteworthy goals from United — Jesse Lingard's spectacular 25-meter strike and Antonio Valencia's injury-time walk-in after a slip from Middlesbrough goalkeeper Victor Valdes — but they were overshadowed by bust-ups on



A fan celebrates with Manchester United after Jesse Lingard scored his side's second goal

and off the field around the final whistle.

In stoppage time, just before Valencia settled the result, tempers flared when Middlesbrough's Rudy Gestede and United's Eric Bailly grappled with each other. Players from both teams piled in. The pushing and shoving continued in the tunnel after the match, with Bailly and teammate Ashley Young looking

particularly aggrieved.

Marouane Fellaini opened the scoring for United, which won despite Jose Mourinho fielding a weakened team missing Ibrahimovic, Paul Pogba and Henrikh Mkhitaryan and playing after competing in the Europa League on Thursday night.

After weeks of chasing, the top four is suddenly in sight for United, although Mourinho said he

would prefer to secure Champions League qualification by winning the Europa League.

"The Europa League gives us the same, gives us Champions League football, but gives us a trophy, gives us prestige, gives us a European Super Cup," Mourinho said.

**TOTTENHAM 2
SOUTHAMPTON 1**

Son Heung-min started up front in place of Kane but it was Eriksen and Alli who delivered.

Eriksen drove home the opening goal from the edge of the area in the 14th minute and Alli converted a penalty in the 33rd after he tumbled under Steven Davis' challenge following a series of poor clearances by Southampton.

James Ward-Prowse celebrated his call-up to the England squad with a 52nd-minute reply for Southampton.

**MANCHESTER CITY 1
LIVERPOOL 1**

City coach Pep Guardiola said it was "one of the happiest days of my career as a manager" after seeing his team fight back to salvage a point against a direct rival for the top four.

Guardiola said his players had been "so, so sad" in training this week after City's elimination from the Champions League by Monaco on Wednesday. A defeat to Liverpool four days later would have been particularly damaging to morale.

City needed a 69th-minute equalizer from Sergio Aguero to prevent Liverpool from collecting a sixth win this season over a rival from the top six.

James Milner, a former City player, put Liverpool ahead from the penalty spot in the 51st and both teams spurned great chances in a riveting final 20 minutes as they went on all-out attack. AP

Porto draws, misses chance to overtake Benfica in Portugal

FC Porto missed a chance to take the lead of the Portuguese league after drawing 1-1 at home with Setubal yesterday [Macau time].

Porto was chasing a 10th straight league victory that would have moved it above Benfica at the top — one round before the two rivals meet following the international break.

Benfica was held 0-0 at Pacos Ferreira on the previous day.

After Jesus Corona put Porto ahead in first-half injury time, Setubal equalized through Joao Carvalho early in the second half. Defending champion Benfica is one point above second-placed Porto with eight rounds to go.

"We still control our fate," said Porto coach Nuno Espirito Santo. "It's important that we recover from this setback."

Nepal to strap some Everest climbers with GPS device

SOME climbers attempting to scale Mount Everest during the upcoming spring climbing season will be strapped with a GPS device to locate them in case they are in trouble and to prevent false claims of reaching the summit, officials said yesterday.

Hundreds of climbers are expected to attempt to climb the world's highest peak in April and May, but only a few will be fitted with the devices as an experiment.

The chief of Nepal's tourism department, Durga Dutta Dhakal, said the

devices, costing about USD300 apiece, would help locate climbers who are in trouble on the mountain so rescuers can be sent.

The devices will also track the movement of the climbers while they are on Everest. The data will be checked after they get back from the mountain to determine whether they reached the summit and should be issued a climber's certificate.

Last year, an Indian couple claimed they scaled the peak and received a certificate from moun-

taineering authorities, but it was later determined that they had altered their photo on the summit. It was a huge embarrassment for Nepalese mountaineering authorities.

Climbers only need a photo showing them on the 8,850-meter-high summit and a report from a government-assigned liaison official. The officials, however, rarely stay on the mountain to monitor the climbers.

Climbers are also covered with heavy clothing, climbing gear and oxygen

masks, making it difficult for them to be clearly recognized in photographs.

The 2017 spring climbing season is expected to be busy on Everest. Hundreds of climbers were able to scale the peak last year following two years of disasters on the mountain.

The 2015 season was scrapped after 19 climbers were killed and 61 injured by an avalanche at the base camp triggered by a massive earthquake. In 2014, an avalanche at the Khumbu Icefall killed 16 Sherpa guides. AP



opinion

Our Desk
Lynzy Valles



FOR THE WELL-BEING OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

The appalling, horrendous story of abuse that Erwiana faced in Hong Kong as a domestic helper raises awareness of how modern slavery is still present today.

I will not be tackling issues about how these domestic helpers are in need of rights protection, or their long working hours. I am aware that the tone in my recent columns has been in favor of the rights of such workers.

I think what I realized during the film screening of Erwiana's story is that it isn't enough for several migrant groups and/or researchers to help stop the abuse of these employees, or to raise awareness of such issues.

Cheers to the employers who treat their workers as part of their family; kudos to the local and non-local employers who treat domestic work as work, and not some kind of slavery.

It would be unfair not to speak about the shameful fact that modern slavery still exists – reported or not – both in Macau and Hong Kong.

Domestic workers face several migration-related stressors that are highly likely to affect their health, so concrete and accurate data should be studied in order to understand how their health is also affected when encountering legal and institutional constraints.

The oppressive living and working conditions of some domestic employees pose threats to their mental well-being, so I consider the efforts of the University of Macau's Population Research Initiative for Domestic Employees (PRIDE) extremely beneficial in assisting and promoting the well-being of the domestic worker community in Macau.

As the population research initiative for domestic employees aims to recruit more than 3,000 domestic helpers, this comprehensive study could yield accurate data which could be used to aid the community in the future.

With the group's measurement of physical and mental health to gather data about types of possible stressors, the study would hopefully have the potential to produce concrete data, which could be submitted to the government in a bid to promote the protection of domestic workers.

The data also covers whether workers experience uncomfortable living due to cramped housing, remittance strain, abusive practices and more.

As previously reported by the Times, PRIDE's preliminary data shows many domestic helpers work more than their stipulated hours per week.

I know the data has a long way to go in terms of concluding how the current practices affect workers' physical and mental health, but at least there is an effort to improve the well-being of these vulnerable groups.

In a region that accommodates some 25,587 domestic workers, it's appropriate for the city to be able to provide such statistics on factors that negatively and positively affect domestic workers' welfare.

The region has heard countless stories of how these vulnerable migrants are mistreated, but seldom hears of how it affects their health.

It would be unfair for these migrant workers to contribute in the region and return home with physical and mental health issues.

With such research, the study could provide recommendations for better protection of the region's domestic employees.

This research should not be underestimated, as it would significantly contribute not only to the welfare of the region's immigrants but also advance the region's labor law, which could potentially lead to better rights protection.

THE PINK DIAMOND WORTH MILLIONS SHOWN IN LONDON AHEAD OF AUCTION

Sotheby's is displaying the startling "pink star" diamond in London before it's auctioned in Hong Kong next month.

The company says the gem should fetch more than USD60 million when put on the block April 4, which

would represent a record for a pink diamond sold at auction.

It said the 59.60-carat gem is the largest flawless fancy pink diamond ever graded by the Gemological Institute of America. It was mined in Africa in 1999.



Station	Air quality	Icon
Roadside	40-60 Moderate	☹️
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Moderate	☹️
Ambient	50-70 Moderate	☹️

SOURCE: DSMG

Who's happy, who's not: Norway tops list, US falls

Seth Borenstein

If you want to go to your happy place, you need more than cash. A winter coat helps – and a sense of community.

A new report shows Norway is the happiest country on Earth, Americans are getting sadder, and it takes more than just money to be happy.

Norway vaulted to the top slot in the World Happiness Report despite the plummeting price of oil, a key part of its economy. Income in the United States has gone up over the past decade, but happiness is declining.

The United States was 14th in the latest ranking, down from No. 13 last year, and over the years Americans steadily have been rating themselves less happy.

"It's the human things that matter. If the riches make it harder to have frequent and trustworthy relationship between people, is it worth it?" asked John Helliwell, the lead author of the report and an economist at the University of British Columbia in Canada (ranked No. 7). "The material can stand in the way of the human."



Studying happiness may seem frivolous, but serious academics have long been calling for more testing about people's emotional well-being, especially in the United States. In 2013, the National Academy of Sciences issued a report recommending that federal statistics and surveys, which normally deal with income, spending, health and housing, include a few extra questions on happiness because it would lead to better policy that affects people's lives.

sense of community and understanding in the common good," Wiking said.

Still, you have to have some money to be happy, which is why most of the bottom countries are in desperate poverty. But at a certain point extra money doesn't buy extra happiness, Helliwell and others said.

Central African Republic fell to last on the happiness list, and is joined at the bottom by Burundi, Tanzania, Syria and Rwanda.

The report ranks 155 countries. The economists have been ranking countries since 2012, but the data used goes back farther so the economists can judge trends.

The rankings are based on gross domestic product per person, healthy life expectancy with four factors from global surveys. In those surveys, people give scores from 1 to 10 on how much social support they feel they have if something goes wrong, their freedom to make their own life choices, their sense of how corrupt their society is and how generous they are.

While most countries were either getting happier or at least treading water, America's happiness score dropped 5 percent over the past decade. Venezuela and the Central African Republic slipped the most over the past decade. Nicaragua and Latvia increased the most.

Happiness – and doing what you love – is more important than politicians think, said study author Helliwell. He rated his personal happiness a 9 on a 1-to-10 scale. AP

HAPPIEST COUNTRIES

1.	Norway	7.53
2.	Denmark	7.52
3.	Iceland	7.5
4.	Switzerland	7.49
5.	Finland	7.46
6.	Netherlands	7.37
7.	Canada	7.31
8.	New Zealand	7.31
9.	Australia	7.28
10.	Sweden	7.28
33.	Taiwan	6.42
71.	Hong Kong	5.47
79.	China	5.27

SADDEST COUNTRIES

146.	Yemen	3.59
147.	South Sudan	3.59
148.	Liberia	3.53
149.	Guinea	3.51
150.	Togo	3.49
151.	Rwanda	3.47
152.	Syria	3.46
153.	Tanzania	3.35
154.	Burundi	2.91
155.	Central African Republic	2.69

WORLD BRIEFS

US-RUSSIA FBI Director James Comey confirmed yesterday that the bureau is investigating possible links and coordination between Russia and associates of President Donald Trump as part of a broader probe of Russian interference in last year's presidential election. The extraordinary revelation came at the outset of Comey's opening statement in a congressional hearing examining Russian meddling and possible connections between Moscow and Trump's campaign.



ISRAEL A senior Israeli air force official said a joint U.S.-Israeli missile interceptor will be operational soon, completing the country's multi-layer defense system. He said yesterday that David's Sling, meant to counter medium-range missiles possessed by Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, will be operational in early April.

US-ROMANIA U.S. Marines and Romanian troops are taking part in joint exercises on the Black Sea coast to simulate the defense of coastline and urban areas. In one maneuver yesterday, they launched a Stinger missile at a surface-to-air firing range.



EU-TURKEY The European Union is praising its migrant agreement with Turkey, one year after the deal officially entered force. A European Commission spokesman said yesterday that "the EU-Turkey statement was a game changer which allowed us to break the cruel business model of smugglers exploiting human misery and putting people's lives in danger."

MEXICO An attacker has shot a journalist to death in the Mexican state of Veracruz, adding to the toll in a region plagued by drug gang violence and allegations of government corruption.