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WORLD BRIEFS



A CHINESE dissident who intended to apply for political asylum in Taiwan voluntarily returned to the mainland with his tour group, ending a short-lived saga that had threatened to turn into a diplomatic episode. Political activist Zhang Xiangzhong met with immigration officials and decided his "best solution" was to return to China.

CHINA-EU China and the European Union were set to hold their first high-level talks since President Donald Trump took office, with both sides eager to push a message of free trade and open engagement in contrast to the new U.S. administration's skepticism about such arrangements.
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NORTH KOREA-US From the wind-swept deck of a massive aircraft carrier, Vice President Mike Pence warned North Korea not to test the resolve of the U.S. military, promising it would make an "overwhelming and effective" response to any use of conventional or nuclear weapons.
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INDIA India's top court says several senior leaders of the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party will stand trial for their role in a criminal conspiracy to destroy a 16th century mosque in 1992. More on p12

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COURTS

'High officials' wanted Ho to run for CE

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Beijing: Chinese dissident billionaire wanted by Interpol

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COURTS

Ho says 'high officials' wanted him to run for CE

Julie Zhu

THE trial of former Prosecutor-General Ho Chio Meng resumed at the Court of Final Appeal yesterday. It was the second session since the matter was adjourned after Ho's previous lawyer Leong Weng Pun withdrew from the case in March.

At the beginning of the morning session, Ho responded to an accusation claiming he hired a woman, named Wang Xian Di, without reason.

Ho said that higher officials told him to prepare to run for the Chief Executive post prior to Chui Sai On's appointment. He did not indicate who these officials were.

Ho said that he hired Wang because of her expertise on mainland government structure, and Wang helped him to run for the position of CE. He claimed that Wang did a significant amount of work during that time.

According to Ho, Wang signed an employment contract with the Office of the Prosecutor General that legalized payments from the office to Wang.

Ho said Wang's salary was paid directly to her, and he never received a penny from the payment.

Ho therefore questioned the source of the allegations of fraud committed by him, remarking that such accusations against him were purely speculative.

He pointed out that before the prosecution laid charges against him, it did not question Wang,

with Ho himself only making one statement.

Still, under these conditions, the prosecution sued him, which Ho deemed unfair.

Yesterday, the court called a witness, surnamed Lei, who is the head of the Personnel and Finance Department.

Lei gave evidence that Wang was hired twice by the Office of the Prosecutor General.

When Wang was hired for the second time as a consulate, the office's consultant vacancies were already fully filled.

Lei questioned Lai Kin Ian, another defendant and the previous director of the Office of the Prosecutor General, regarding Wang's employment.

Lei said that Lai Kin Ian told her that Wang was hired under an employment contract and she was responsible to Ho.

After Wang's second employment, Wang's pay check was collected by Lai Kin Ian.

She also said that out of the entire MP staff, only Wang was not required to fill a form regarding annual leave.

In the afternoon session, six witnesses were called to give their testimony.

A former consultant at the office of the MP, and a former head of the Personnel and Finance Department, both said that they had not seen Wang much at the MP's office.

Lai Kin Ian, also told the two that Wang's files should be confidential, which resulted in them not paying attention to Wang's work.

The two witnesses had also

seen Wang at some events that the MP organized, but both were unaware of whether Wang was their colleague or a visitor.

The court also called Ho's former bodyguard Lo Lai Pang, who had already testified before Ho changed his lawyer.

Lo said that he used to drive Wang to mainland China, which he referred to as "business trips." For some time, Lo would drive her to the Mainland alone, and occasionally with other people, including Ho Chio Meng.

When questioned by the prosecutors regarding Hua Fa Xin Cheng (a residential building in Zhuhai), Lo said that he had driven Ho Chio Meng, together with Wang, to the place. However, he did not witness them entering the building together.

The prosecutor Kuok Un Man expressed his doubt over Lo's testimony that his trips to the mainland with Ho Chio Meng were all business-related, given that the abovementioned building was residential.

Lo claimed that he did not know what Ho was doing.

The last witness called to court was a lady, surnamed Yang, who worked with Wang in Air Macau for five years from 1996 to 2001. Both Yang and Wang were flight attendants at that time.

According to Yang, there was one time she went shopping with Wang in Zhuhai. After shopping, Wang invited Yang to have dinner with her.

At dinner, Ho Chio Meng showed up, having been introduced by Wang as her higher official. Wang told Yang that she



Ho Chio Meng

was an MP employee working as a consultant.

Prosecutor Kuok asked Yang, "did Wang introduce Ho as her boyfriend or as higher official?", to which Yang replied that Wang had said "higher official." Kuok's question drew both Ho's and Ho's lawyer's attention, although neither interjected.

Yang also told Kuok that when Wang was living in Zhuhai, she lived in Hua Fa Xin Cheng, which is the aforementioned residence.

When all witnesses had testified, Ho made his statement. "The MP not only hired Wang through an employment contract, but an additional ten people," said Ho, adding that the employments were not announced in the Government Official Gazette.

Ho's second claim stated that MP did not rent parking spaces in the Nam Van area.

"Prosecutors [should] talk a bit more cautiously," said Ho.

The trial continues today.

ACCUSATION REBUFFED

HO CHIO Meng denied that using public vehicles for personal purposes was illegal. He said that the practice is within the administration's legal powers,

and that if this matter can form the basis of criminal charges, there would be many other cases where criminal charges should be filed.

30,000 customers affected by CTM blackout

LOCAL telecom operator CTM called a press conference yesterday to provide more details regarding the partial blackout that occurred Tuesday night. According to CTM, the software problem involving two major internet access servers started at

7:30 p.m.

The service resumed at 11:49 p.m. and affected access to internet to 30,000 customers. The company's CEO, Vandy Poon, said that CTM would assume "full responsibility" for the incident. While thousands of customers complained

on CTM's hotline, many did not get to speak with an operator. In response to journalists' questions, Poon said that the line was made available throughout the entire blackout. "There are customers who couldn't get to our operators in the first instance and they

would have to be put on queue," he said. The root cause of the blackout is still under investigation and Poon believes that the issue is still not completely addressed. CTM technicians will work during low-traffic hours in the early morning to solve it.



Vandy Poon

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Lynzy Valles

Project Just Macau receives three complaints of election unfairness

PROJECT Just Macau, a platform initiated by activist Jason Chao to monitor election fairness in the territory, has reportedly received three complaints concerning claims of pressing employees to sign a nomination form.

The three complaints concern two local schools allegedly pressuring teachers to sign a nomination form, Chao revealed to the press yesterday during the "Webinar on Election Monitoring."

The activist stated that signing the nomination form shows the signee's consent to be a part of a candidature committee. Thus, membership of a candidature committee is a form of political affiliation.

"In Macau, most citizens are unaware of the significance of putting your name on a nomination form," he argued.

The alleged instances of soft coercion reportedly occurred in school settings.

According to Chao, the three complainants reported two incidents: middle-level management asked teachers to sign a form before them and forms with some other names were distributed.

"It must be noted that running schools in Macau is unlike running a private business. The industry is regulated and paid,

either partially or entirely, by the government," the activist said.

The complaints were received via Telegram, a messaging app. Although WeChat is more widely used in Macau, the activist refused to use the app due to the Central Government's censorship, recalling that the New Macau Association's account on WeChat was deleted.

"Workers who are effectively on the government's payroll may be 'asked' by superiors to serve the organizations' political goals and intertwined interests," he explained.

"It is a historical issue that there are no clear lines between political organizations, charities, social service providers, fraternal groups and school operators," Chao continued.

Project Just Macau is calling on the Education and Youth Bureau (DSEJ), the Social Work Bureau (IAS), the Election Affairs Commission (CAEAL) and other relevant authorities to send a clear message to all recipients of public subsidies, reminding them that

it is an unlawful abuse of power to solicit political affiliation from employees who are engaged in employment relationships supported by public funds.

In Macau, most citizens are unaware of the significance of putting your name on a nomination form.

JASON CHAO

Chao will present a statement to various government departments regarding the complaints the group received.

He threatened that if no departments were willing to address the matter, he might disclose the



Jason Chao

contents of the complaints and name the schools involved.

When asked how long he would wait for the authorities' replies, Chao responded, "It's a strategy and I'm not disclosing it for the time being."

As Project Just Macau aims to be a platform for whistleblowers, the activist hoped that there would be regulations to protect whistleblowers from retaliation, citing analogous protection laws for whistleblowers in the United States.

Chao hoped that Macau would

enact a similar system, in which a whistleblower who files complaints to the judicial system will be compensated if allegations are substantiated. "This is a system which I think is quite good to encourage whistleblowing by providing incentives and rewards," he added.

Meanwhile Chao refused to reveal the members of the platform he is leading for the sake of security.

Project Just Macau will disclose "almost everything" at the end of the project including complaints submitted before the election.

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Hangzhou-Lisbon flights launch on July 26

BEIJING Capital Airlines, a regional subsidiary of HNA Group (a TAP Portugal shareholder), is launching the first direct air route between China and Portugal on July 26. The flight will operate three times a week between Hangzhou and Lisbon, with a stopover in Beijing.

The route has been a long-standing objective of both governments and it was previously announced during last year's visit to China and Macau by Portuguese Prime Minister, António Costa.

Beijing Capital Airlines intends to run the flight four times a week, which has yet to be approved by Chinese aviation authorities.

The Beijing-based carrier said in a statement that it will operate the Hangzhou-Beijing-Lisbon service using the Airbus A330-200 aircraft, which seats up to around 400 passengers.

According to Ctrip, a Chinese travel services provider, the flight costs around MOP7,500, including the return trip.

The flight is expected to boost

Chinese tourism in Portugal. According to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, China continues to lead international outbound tourism, followed by the US, Germany, the UK and France as the top five spenders.

In 2016, the number of outbound travelers from China increased 6 percent to 135 million in 2016. The growth strengthens China's position as the top source market in the world since 2012, following a trend of double-digit growth in tourism expenditure every year since 2004.

China-Lusophone countries trade grows 32.6 percent in one month

THE trade in merchandise between China and Portuguese-speaking countries reached USD14.845 billion (around MOP118.5 billion) in the period from January 2017 to February 2017, official data from China Customs authorities revealed.

The figure represented a 32.64 percent increase year-on-year.

According to the data, which was republished in the Forum Macau website, the Portuguese-speaking countries sold goods worth USD10.283 billion (around MOP 106.5 billion) to China in the first two months of 2017. This trade represents an even bigger hike, a 43.74 percent year-on-year, while the value of China's merchandise exports to those countries reached USD4.562 billion (or around MOP36.8 billion) in the same period, growing by 12.97 percent year-on-year.

Brazil continues to be Chi-

na's strongest partner in trade, being accountable for 69.74 percent of the total value of trading. Brazil is followed by Angola with a share of 23.51 percent. Together, they accounted for 93.25 percent of all trading.

Although Brazil has an almost unreachable leading vantage point, Angola registered the larger overall growth in trade with China during the first two months of 2017 (42.40 percent).

Some significant drops have also been recorded, such as the export from China to Portugal has dropped by 35.73 percent on the first two months of the year as well as the imports from Guinea-Bissau which recorded a total stop during January and February of 2017.

Contributing data for these results was mostly taken from the month of January as February alone registered drops in almost all the sectors.

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Activist considers Wai Long unsuitable for public housing

THE Macau government has announced plans to build 8,000 public housing units at the Av. Wai Long. The plan has been deemed by local social activist Amy Sio to be "killing life rashly." The land plot designated for construction is surrounded by waste incineration facilities, landfills and other facilities which deal with dangerous substances. Sio cited an Italian research paper which showed that those living near incinerators have six to seven times higher chance of getting lung cancer. "Stuffing thousands of people into this place [Wai Long] cannot even be deemed irresponsible. It is killing life rashly," said Sio. Incinerators cannot completely isolate poisonous substances, he explained, adding that Macau has not been appropriately separating the refu-

se to be processed, which contributes to the release of more poisonous substances. The Wai Long public housing project will be located less than 500 meters from an incinerator. The building will be 155 meters tall, which is nearly the same height as the incinerator. "Incinerators are actually a very dangerous thing. Its vicinity is completely unsuitable for human habitation," noted Sio. Local commentator Wong Dong expressed concerns that the project lacks a detailed scientific plan, and does not consider Macau's overall sustainable development. Wong believes that the project is a time bomb for Macau's next government. He further believes that this project will have a negative impact on Tai Tam hill's ecological environment.

SECRETARY SAYS

Urban Renewal Committee 'needs time' to achieve results

Renato Marques

THE Urban Renewal Committee gathered yesterday for its third plenary meeting.

After the closed-door meeting, Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, said while briefing the media about the meeting, "We need time. Maybe you find it's taking too much time but the topics are being addressed by specialized groups and only after they reach some conclusion will they bring it to the plenary." He added, "These topics aren't simple and we need everybody's comprehension, and [the groups] require time to reach conclusions."

The Secretary also explained that the working method of the plenary meeting is always the same, with three specialized groups addressing a total of six topics, briefing the plenary with an update of relevant developments in each topic on a monthly basis.

This time, Rosário admitted, "there aren't great developments or conclusions to report," but "that doesn't mean that work wasn't done."

Using the refurbishing of old industrial buildings as an example, the Secretary said, "The topics are in fact



Raimundo do Rosário

very complex. For example, regarding this matter, the percentage of the agreement between the owners to [change] the purpose of the building is difficult to determine and understandably, the previous committee [for urban renewal] failed to come to an agreement."

"First, the committee needs to agree on what should be done. Then, if the conclusion passes through the plenary and changes the law, they [the specialized group] need to provide guidelines for that change."

During the meeting, the leader of

each specialized group updated the plenary on topics relating mostly to temporary housing or the creation of subsidies for the people living in old neighborhoods to allow the buildings' renewal, as well as the renovation and change of purpose of old industrial buildings, namely in the area of Av Almirante Lacerda.

In response to the media's questions about the government project of building public housing on Av Wai Long near the Airport, the secretary said that this topic was not addressed during the meeting.

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Process for AL election candidacy officially open

Renato Marques

THE procedures that will allow candidates to formally submit candidacy lists to run for the Legislative Assembly (AL) election in September have officially commenced, announced president of the Electoral Affairs Commission for the Legislative Assembly Election (CAEAL) Tong Hio Fong. Tong spoke at the opening of the clarification session on electoral procedures and electoral law for the AL, which was held on Tuesday at the Macao Science Center convention center.

Tong remarked, "from this moment and until June 20 all interested individuals need to form their nomination committees for the purpose of contesting directly-elected Legislative Assembly seats."

On presentation of all required procedures, CAEAL member Chou Kam Chon announced that both the candidacy presentation and the political program must be delivered to CAEAL until July 10.

Chou also clarified that voters under 18 years of age are permitted to register to vote, provided they would be 18 on the election day, namely September 17.

The CAEAL also noted several other rules, such as those regarding votes of professional associations.

The assistant commissioner of the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC), Lam Chi Long, clarified which activities and procedures are permitted under the electoral law, and remarked on the essential differences between the current law and the previous law. He noted that under the current law, companies, associations and foundations



Tong Hio Fong (center)

"will now be subject to criminal responsibility."

In addition, according to the CCAC, criminal acts committed abroad "will be treated as if they were committed in the MSAR."

During the Q&A session that followed, lawmaker Pereira Coutinho remarked on some issues which he has said to have proposed to CAEAL in the past, including the votes of the residents who work in shifts (especially from Security Forces and Health Services) and the ability of voters to exercise their rights in any polling station.

In response, Tong commented

that "for the time being it is not possible to allow voters to vote in any polling station," and that for now, voters need to vote at the closest polling station to the address given for the registration.

As for workers performing their jobs in shifts, Tong mentioned that that "shouldn't be a problem as they also need to have some free time that they can use to vote," highlighting that the Commission already contacted the Security Forces to remind them "to organize an adequate timetable to permit the officers to vote."

FAIRNESS APPEAL

ANOTHER TOPIC addressed by Tong relates to the press coverage of the election campaign. "We appeal to the press to be fair. We aren't going to interfere with their [the press] work and with the freedom of press,"

he said. Tong also urged the public to continue to support the Electoral Affairs Commission's work, in order to ensure the 2017 Legislative Assembly election is conducted in a fair and just manner, free of corruption.



The Dotonbori area in Osaka

GAMING

'Osaka Strip' may challenge Macau, Las Vegas

As Japan makes way for investment in resorts, consulting group Global Market Advisors believes that the construction of an "Osaka Strip" involving three or more operators could potentially rival the gaming industry in Macau and Las Vegas.

Steve Gallaway, managing partner of Global Market Advisors, noted that Japan has the potential to become one of the largest gaming markets in the world, generating up to USD24.2 billion at six different locations by 2030.

Gallaway was speaking about a number of scenarios for Investor Relations (IR) in Japan in a white paper titled "Japan Integrated Resorts," as cited in a report by the Asia Gaming Brief.

The analyst also stressed that the "Osaka Strip" is expected to involve three or more gaming operators and will be able to compete with Las Vegas, Macau and Singapore in generating nearly USD11 billion from the district alone.

According to him, the site's development would create "critical mass and [become] a true tourist destination."

However, it remains unclear how the regulatory structure to be enforced in the IR's develop-

ment will constrain operators.

Brendan Bussman, director of government affairs with Global Market Advisors, remarked, "as the National Diet continues to evaluate the best structure for IR in Japan, it needs to consider the strong regulatory atmosphere that should be established."

"The Diet needs to balance that regulatory structure with the desire of an operator to build an iconic facility that is representative of a specific site to maximize gaming and non-gaming revenue," Bussman added.

The first bill legalizing casinos in the country was passed last year.

It is anticipated that the second bill, which contains the legislation governing IR will be passed at the end of 2017.

The next step will be "an internal process to identify the cities and prefectures that have an interest in hosting IRs", which is estimated to be completed by the third quarter of 2018.

According to previous reports, Japan may see the opening of new casinos by 2023. With Japan opening its doors, analysts are divided over how seriously Macau operators and the local government should take these threats.

corporate bits

MGM SPONSORS CONFERENCE ON INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED PEOPLE



MGM once again sponsored the "Conference on Intellectually Disabled People in Asia" as one of its initiatives in raising public awareness on social inclusion.

The conference, held at MGM China resort on Monday, is the beginning of a series of activities planned to further promote social inclusion through art workshops and sporting events

within the month of April.

A number of international speakers were invited to share ideas and insights on social inclusion at the "Conference on Intellectually Disabled People in Asia", which was attended by about 300 audience members from various fields.

Special Olympics athletes and coaches, government officials and representatives from local community associations and other individuals attended the event.

MGM noted in a statement that one of the speakers, UNESCO Institute Program Specialist Dr. Natalia Amelina, gave a presentation on the digital inclusion of intellectually disabled.

AIRASIA ANNOUNCES PROMO FLIGHTS TO MACAU, MALDIVES

AirAsia has deployed its Airbus A330 aircraft to fly directly to both Maldives and Macau from Kuala Lumpur for a month to improve travel options for its passengers.

In a statement issued by AirAsia, the airline company stated that airfares are available until April 23 for flights until May 18.

The 377-seat Airbus A330 features 12 premium flatbeds onboard.

According to AirAsia Commercial head Spencer Lee, the Airbus A330 will provide an increase of 197 seats per flight.

Currently, the airline is offering promotional fares as low as MOP300 for one-way trips



on economy seats, and around MOP1,100 on premium flatbeds from Kuala Lumpur to Maldives.

Meanwhile, the budget carrier is also increasing the frequency of its flights from Kuala Lumpur to destinations such as Kaohsiung, Siem Reap, Da Nang, Hanoi, Pontianak and Semarang to provide further flight options for guests travelling with AirAsia.

ASSOCIATIONS VISIT BNU HENGQIN BRANCH

The Industry and Commerce Association of Macau (INCA) and the Macau Youth Entrepreneur Association (MYEA) visited the BNU Hengqin Branch yesterday. Kevin Ho King Lun, president of INCA and Chairman of the board of MYEA, and Francisco Ho Ka Lon, president of MYEA, along with other committee members were welcomed by Pedro Cardoso, Chief Executive Officer of BNU.

Mr Cardoso highlighted, in his welcome speech, the tailor-made RMB services to assist the needs of Macau's SMEs in expanding to the mainland China market. He added that, supported by the extensive network of its parent company Caixa Geral de Depósitos Group, BNU is also committed to the business development



between Guangdong and Macau, as well as between mainland China and the Portuguese Speaking Countries.

Kevin Ho and Francisco Ho also pointed out that INCA and MYEA both serve the local SMEs and support youth entrepreneurship, with the aim to promote the diversification of Macau's economy. This visit can certainly help the local SMEs and the youth entrepreneurs to join hands with BNU in exploring the business opportunities in Mainland China.

Kevin Buckland, Tom Mackenzie

FOUR years after China's President Xi Jinping started cracking down on corruption and conspicuous consumption, the most extravagant fast cars are making a comeback.

Chinese sales at Ferrari and Aston Martin are approaching their 2013 peaks, following tumbles of as much as 20 percent in 2014, according to data compiled by Bloomberg Intelligence. Maserati, McLaren and Porsche enjoyed their best year ever in 2016. Lamborghini is also on the mend after deliveries plunged by more than half from 2013.

"The outlook is looking pretty good for us here in the China market," Reid Bigland, head of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV's Maserati and Alfa Romeo divisions, said in a Bloomberg Television interview at the Shanghai auto show yesterday. "With us, we just haven't felt it," he said, referring to the impact of the crackdown on consumption.

Xi hasn't ended his drive to curb wasteful spending by officials and eliminate graft. Instead, private consumption is filling the void left by extravagant gifts aimed at currying political favor. The number of Chinese millionaires rose 10 percent last year and is expected to more than double to over 1.7 million by 2026, according to research by Johannesburg-based consultancy New World Wealth. Consumer confidence is the highest since the global financial crisis amid a strengthening Chinese economy.

Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Steve Man says consumers have become inured to Xi's campaign. "Business owners are coming back into the market to snap up these vehicles," he said. "The improvement is very encouraging for China. It could point to a potential improvement in the entire luxury auto market."

A 10 percent "super luxury" tax announced by the Ministry of Finance in December to

Ferrari roars back in China as rich snub Xi's austerity push

"guide reasonable consumption" and cut emissions hasn't damped the lust for cars costing more than 1.3 million yuan (USD189,000).

"Yesterday I received another 60 orders for our Mulanne extended wheelbase, it's our flagship model, it's the most exclusive and expensive model on the stand," Wolfgang Durheimer, Bentley chairman and chief executive officer, said at the Shanghai show. "And obviously the Chinese customers that still like to be driven really go for this model."

Durheimer said he expects to set a new sales record for the Bentayga SUV in China this year.

Maserati, McLaren and Porsche enjoyed their best year ever in 2016

Maserati's sales have surged 119 percent year to date, said Bigland, who is planning to increase the number of outlets for the Maserati and Alfa Romeo brands in China by 50 percent to as many as 75 by the end of the year.

McLaren Automotive is expecting to sell 300 cars this year in China, after almost doubling sales to 235 in 2016, as a culture of motor sports starts to develop, sales chief Jolyon Nash said. Ferrari Greater China maintains a pivotal position in the carmaker's global strategy, Ferrari said in a statement.

"China is the fastest growing luxury market" and driving global luxury trends, said

BLOOMBERG



Andy Palmer, Aston Martin's chief executive officer. The luxury SUV is a market that was "originally driven by the Chinese. That's a perfect example of why China is important."

Aston Martin has a full order book for 2017 for its DB11 coupe, Palmer said, who is "pretty confident" the carmaker will hit its target of selling 270 cars this year - up from 170 in 2016 - and plans to "stretch the team" to win more orders.

It isn't just the super-rich who are splurging. At a

somewhat lower price, demand for BMWs and Audis is growing as well. Total sales in China's premium-car market may surge to 3 million units per year in about a decade from about 2 million now, Audi chief Rupert Stadler said in Shanghai on Wednesday. The Volkswagen AG nameplate leads the premium segment in the country. Honda Motor Co.'s Acura aims to sell 30,000 vehicles this year, while Hyundai Motor Co. is planning to bring its Genesis luxury brand as early as next

year.

Xi, who took charge from Hu Jintao as China's leader late in 2012, has shown no sign of abandoning his anti-corruption drive, a signature campaign that has struck fear across the government and helped him consolidate more power than anyone since Deng Xiaoping, the nation's "paramount leader." About 415,000 officials were punished in 2016, a 23 percent increase from the previous year, according to government statistics. **Bloomberg**

TAXPAYERS contributed more than \$4.6 million for an NFL stadium in Las Vegas in the first month that a new increase on area hotel taxes went into effect— ahead of projections for the state's share of the project.

The preliminary tax collection figures from March for the stadium that the Oakland Raiders want to call home were released this week. The bulk of the money came from resorts and other lodging facilities in and around

Tax increase yields USD4.6m for Vegas stadium in first month

the Las Vegas Strip, where tourists are paying about \$1.50 more per night on their hotel bill for an average-priced room.

"I think it validates the model in terms of what's necessary to service the debt for the stadium," said Steve Sisolak, commission chairman in Clark Coun-

ty, where the stadium is to be located. "It's nice to see money actually collected and start to put some money in the bank for the stadium."

The Nevada Legislature approved the tax hike last year to cover \$750 million of the \$1.9 billion project.

The board overseeing

the proposed 65,000-seat domed stadium expects the tax hike to bring in \$14.8 million by the end of June. That's \$3.7 million a month. Next fiscal year, officials expect to bring in \$49.9 million.

The board is expected to meet publicly to discuss progress on a stadium de-

velopment agreement and a lease agreement.

The NFL approved the Raiders' relocation to Las Vegas last month. The team is already allowing fans to place refundable \$100 deposits to secure personal seat licenses even though a site has not been picked for the

stadium. Officials are considering land near the Las Vegas Strip with a goal of having the stadium ready for the 2020 season.

The Raiders and the NFL are expected to contribute \$500 million to the stadium project. In addition, the team has said it has secured a \$650 million loan to cover the rest of the project's cost.

The team had to secure the loan after casino mogul Sheldon Adelson pulled his multimillion-dollar pledge for the project. **AP**

Vivian Salama & Julie Pace,
Washington

CHINA-US

Trump has embraced autocratic leaders without hesitation

PRESIDENT Donald Trump congratulated Turkey's president for sweeping up more power. Trump hailed Egypt's strongman as a "fantastic guy." When China's president visited the United States, Trump cited a burgeoning friendship and made no public mention of Beijing's dismal human rights record.

Since taking office, Trump has displayed a striking willingness to embrace autocrats as potential partners in his "America First" agenda, even if it means ignoring their heavy-handed tactics and repression at home. It's a posture that Trump also took toward Russian President Vladimir Putin until a dispute over Syria led Trump last week to declare U.S.-Russian ties at an "all-time low."

Trump is hardly the first U.S. president willing to look the other way in dealings with governments that flout democratic values. For decades, Republican and Democratic administrations have cooperated closely with Saudi Arabia and China. President Barack Obama opened new diplomatic channels with Iran and Cuba, despite concerns about their repressive rulers.

But rarely are U.S. presidents as warm and unabashed about their relationships with autocrats.

Trump's comfort level seems to stem in part from his background in business, where the details of a deal mattered more than the negotiating partner and flattery can get results.

When they were forced to deal with imperfect allies, Trump's predecessors, including Obama and President George W. Bush, made a point of using the moment to promote American ideals. They often followed meetings with statements about human rights or gathered separately with advocates or opposition leaders.

This week, as international monitors and European allies voiced concerns about what they said was a slanted political playing field in Turkey's referendum, the White



House said Trump called Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to congratulate him on a victory that grants Erdogan more power.

The message was at odds with Trump's own State Department, which expressed unease about a referendum that allows Erdogan to fulfill his long-held ambition for a presidency with executive powers.

Erdogan's government has imprisoned scores of Turkish journalists. Since a failed coup last year, Turkey has arrested thousands of others accused of possible involvement.

"The president's number one job is to keep Americans safe," Trump spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said yesterday. "And if he needs to work with countries like Turkey and others to do that, that's his priority and what his focus is."

The White House's readout of the Trump-Erdogan call focused its concerns on the Islamic State group and Syria's civil war, which the U.S. and Turkey are coordinating efforts on. Turkey is a U.S. key ally against IS, even if Turkey's

poorly controlled border has been a contributing factor in the group's expansion across Syria and Iraq.

Turkey's foreign minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, said Wednesday that Erdogan and Trump are planning to meet before next month's NATO summit in Brussels. The White House confirmed that it's in discussions with the Turkish government about arranging a meeting between the leaders.

Rachel Rizzo, a NATO and Europe expert at the Center for a New American Security, said the Trump administration sees its Turkey relationship "purely as a national security issue in terms of needing their help fighting ISIS and with the migration crisis in Europe."

"It seems they're willing to look past human rights abuses," she said.

Trump has praised Chinese President Xi Jinping since hosting him at his Palm Beach, Florida, resort; as a candidate, Trump sharply criticized China's economic policies.

He has linked his warmer

approach toward Xi with his effort to secure greater help from Beijing in stopping North Korea's nuclear program. "A trade deal with the U.S. will be far better for them if they solve the North Korean problem!" Trump said on Twitter, recounting what he told Xi.

Trump has locked arms with Egyptian President Abdel-Fatah el-Sissi, a former general who toppled the democratically elected President Mohamed Morsi, a Muslim Brotherhood member.

Obama never outwardly condemned el-Sissi's takeover. But Obama kept Egypt's leader at arm's length, assailing Egypt's human rights record and suspending some U.S. military aid.

Trump has praised Chinese President Xi Jinping since hosting him at his Palm Beach, Florida

After winning November's presidential election, Trump offered el-Sissi a different relationship. When el-Sissi visited Washington this month, Trump told reporters the Egyptian president would be someone "very close to me." A post-meeting statement cited their mutual commitment to fighting terrorism and strengthening Egypt's economy. It made no mention of el-Sissi's crackdown on domestic opponents that has been widely condemned by international rights monitors.

The pattern may have been set by Trump's vociferous support for Putin. As a candidate and in his first weeks as president, Trump said Putin had been a strong leader and expressed a desire to work closer with Moscow, despite the cloud of an FBI investigation into allegations of Russian meddling in the U.S. presidential election.

Even before this month's Syrian chemical weapons attack and retaliatory U.S. cruise missile strike, Trump's administration had been souring on the Kremlin. Last month, it condemned Russia's crackdown on anti-government protesters last month that included 1,000 arrests. "Detaining peaceful protesters, human rights observers and journalists is an affront to core democratic values," a statement said at the time.

But Trump's tack on Turkey appeared to undermine his own State Department, which before the Erdogan phone conversation with Trump spoke of "irregularities" in the Turkish referendum and "an uneven playing field during the difficult campaign period." The White House's statement on Trump's call to Erdogan made no mention of those concerns.

Turkey's strategic location between Europe and the Middle East, and its unique role as the only Muslim-majority NATO member, have long made it an indispensable American partner.

Obama, too, sought a close relationship with Erdogan, viewing him as a possible model for a new generation of Muslim leaders. He traveled to Turkey in his first year in office and spoke frequently with the Turkish leader. But as Erdogan moved to consolidate power in Turkey, his relationship with Obama soured. **AP**

Hundreds protest in Uganda capital against Chinese traders

YEARs of growing animosity at Chinese traders turned into a protest by hundreds in Uganda's capital yesterday against what local businesses called unfair competition, while the mayor warned against the tensions turning into xenophobic attacks.

Hundreds of Ugandan traders protested in Kampala, some carrying placards urging Chinese

traders to leave. Many Ugandans accuse Chinese traders of moving to this East African country as serious investors but then setting up businesses in small trade. Many Ugandan merchants want the Chinese restricted to large business ventures.

Kampala Mayor Erias Lukwago, who supported the protest, said the government must protect local traders to prevent

the protests from escalating into attacks against foreign traders.

"We are likely to have xenophobia here. That's where we are heading, unless they come up with measures to protect indigenous traders," the mayor said.

Inexpensive Chinese goods have long been popular in Africa, and in the last decade Chinese merchants have started elimi-

nating the middleman and setting up retail outlets of their own, much to local merchants' chagrin.

Calls to the Chinese embassy rang unanswered.

Ugandan police spokesman Asan Kasingye called Wednesday's street protest illegal and "should not be accepted by law-abiding people," because it targeted a specific group of foreigners. Chinese merchants operating with



valid papers will be protected, Kasingye said.

Ugandan immigration officials routinely deport groups of Chinese found operating without valid work permits. Many others operate legally across the country.

Perspective foreign investors in Uganda must provide evidence of

\$100,000 in planned investment and obtain the necessary trade licenses, according to official guidelines.

In 2011, riots in Kampala largely targeted foreign merchants, echoing the 1972 expulsion of the country's Indian middle class by dictator Idi Amin. **AP**

DIPLOMACY

China, EU keen to push message of free trade, engagement

Louise Watt, Beijing

TOP diplomats from China and the European Union pledged closer cooperation yesterday at a time of global uncertainty, highlighting their common interests in peace and security and pushing a message of free trade and open engagement in contrast to fears that the U.S. is turning inward under President Donald Trump.

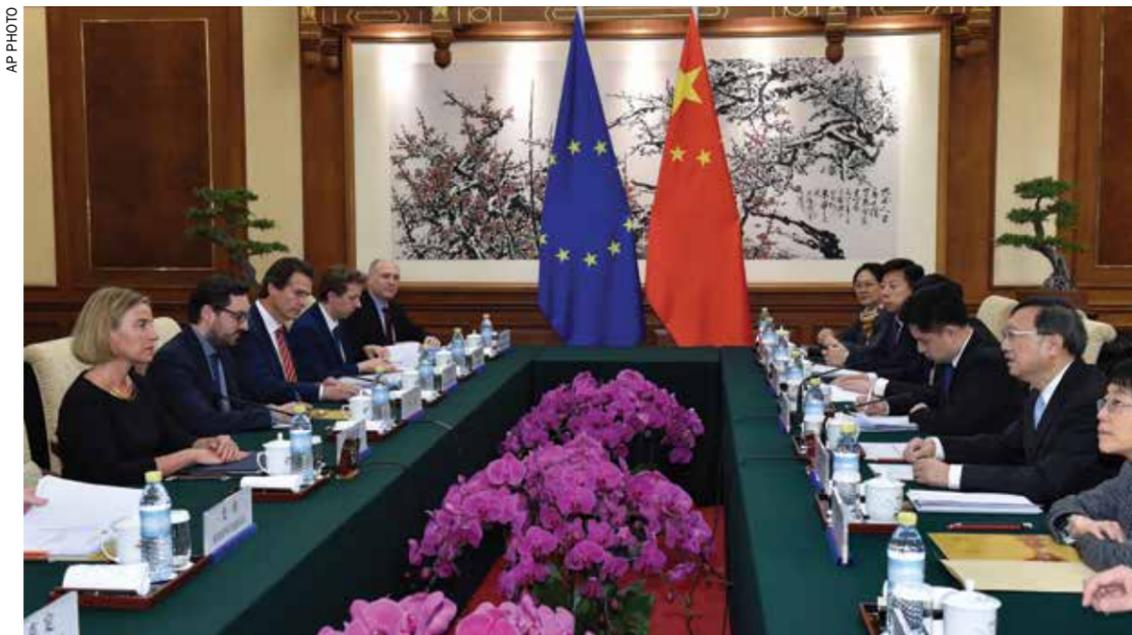
The statements came as China and the EU held their first high-level talks since Trump took office in January. EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini co-chaired the Seventh EU-China Strategic Dialogue with State Councilor Yang Jiechi, China's highest-ranking diplomat.

"At present, the international situation is complex with many new developments, challenges and problems," Yang told Mogherini at the outset.

"Against this backdrop, for China and the EU to deepen cooperation and coordinate positions not only concerns the common interests of the two sides, but also is of great significance for the development of international political and economic relations," he added.

Mogherini said China and the European Union had "a big responsibility" during "times of uncertainty."

"We are looking forward to intensifying our cooperation on a posi-



EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, left, and China's State Councilor Yang Jiechi, second right, attend a meeting at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse

ve agenda, what the EU and China can do together for the benefit not only of our citizens, but also of the world," Mogherini said.

Cooperation on regional and security issues and climate change were among the agenda items for the one-day talks, which come ahead of an EU-China summit scheduled for Brussels in June.

On Tuesday, Mogherini met with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, who said the international community was looking at how China and the EU would work together to tackle challenges including the world

economic recovery, global conflicts and terrorism, and Britain's pending withdrawal from the EU.

Li said he was optimistic about the outcome of the talks based on "a stable China-EU relationship, with the consistency of our two sides toward multilateralism and free trade, and with our joint commitment to improving the international governance structure."

Unlike Trump, who was elected promising to tear up trade deals, impose new tariffs and bring jobs back to America, Chinese President Xi Jinping has cast his coun-

try as a champion of free trade and stability, and spoken out against protectionism.

Mogherini said that such speeches by Xi "have raised high expectations that China and the European Union can work together on multilateralism, on rules-based global order" and trade.

"Not only our people, but probably the multilateral system, need Europe and China to work together on some of the major global issues we are facing, from climate change to migration or counterterrorism, and also the many crises we have

around us such as the tensions on the Korean Peninsula," Mogherini told Li at the start of their meeting at the Chinese leadership compound Zhongnanhai in central Beijing.

Beijing and Brussels have disagreements on trade, however, including complaints by European and other foreign companies that they blocked from acquiring Chinese assets while China's companies are buying major global brands. They also say they are barred from or sharply restricted in telecoms, information technology, finance and other promising industries in violation of Beijing's free-trading pledges.

■ Mogherini said China and the EU had 'a big responsibility' during 'times of uncertainty'

Beijing, meanwhile, wants the EU to grant it market economy status, which would make it harder for the EU to impose punitive tariffs on Chinese imports that it deems to be unfairly cheap.

Other points of dispute between Beijing and Brussels include China's increasingly restrictive environment for civil society and internet censorship.

Mogherini's first meeting yesterday, with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, was canceled. A foreign ministry official said the EU delegation had informed them that Mogherini was feeling unwell.

Mogherini will give a speech at Beijing's prestigious Tsinghua University today, and then travel to India and Russia. **AP**

Beijing says Interpol notice issued for billionaire Guo Wengui

CHINA'S foreign ministry said yesterday that Interpol has issued a "red notice" seeking the arrest of Guo Wengui, a Chinese billionaire who has threatened to expose corruption at the highest levels of the ruling Communist Party.

Guo is a Forbes rich-lister who shot to international prominence last month when it was revealed the 50-year-old was a member of US President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

Foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang gave no details about Guo's alleged crimes when announcing the Interpol notice, the Associated Press reports.

Yesterday, scmp.com, quoting unidentified sources, said that Guo was suspected of bribing disgraced former state security vice-minister Ma Jian with 60 million yuan.

The real estate tycoon disappeared from public view in 2014 but resurfaced in recent months, claiming in two interviews with overseas Chinese media and a stream of Twitter posts that he held damning information about party elites.

His case has been closely followed by Chinese political watchers, who say his leaks could be potentially damaging as internal factions jostle for power in the months leading up to the 19th Party Congress this

fall, when a new generation of party leaders will be chosen.

Guo, who is believed to be in London, has indeed been linked to Ma Jian, who was charged with corruption in February.

In a brief message to The Associated Press, Guo dismissed the Interpol notice as an empty threat from the Chinese leadership.

"It's all lies, all threats," Guo said. "It shows they are scared of me leaking explosive information."

He added: "Don't worry, this is a good thing."

Guo was not listed on Interpol's website and agency officials declined comment, saying that Interpol does not comment on specific ca-

ses without the agreement of the member country involved as a matter of policy.

Guo Wengui also known under the names Guo Haoyun and Miles Kwok, is a Chinese businessman, who controls Beijing Zenith Holdings, and other assets.

■ Guo [is] a member of US President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida



At the peak of his career, he was 73rd among the richest in China, followen.com reported in February.

Guo, long prominent in real estate development and investment circles, came to fame in 2015 after a lengthy investigative report by Caixin media, controlled by Hu Shuli, was released, detailing Guo's political connections, business dealings, and hard-ball

tactics against former rivals. The piece became one of the most read investigative articles in the history of modern Chinese journalism.

He was born in Shen County, Shandong province, the seventh of eight children. He began his business career in Zhengzhou, before moving to Beijing to secure various construction deals during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. **MDT/Agencies**

PHILIPPINES

Passengers scream as bus plunges in ravine, killing 31

Teresa Cerojano, Manila

PASSENGERS were screaming in horror as the bus driver repeatedly hit the brakes, shouting they weren't working, before the vehicle plunged into a ravine in the northern Philippines, killing at least 31 people in one of the country's deadliest recent crashes, officials said yesterday.

The 46 passengers injured in Tuesday's crash were retrieved by rescuers who struggled with ropes to descend down the 24-meter deep ravine to reach the wreckage in Nueva Ecija province's Carranglan town, said Senior Supt. Antonio Yarra, the provincial police chief.

He said at least 77 people were on board the vehicle based on the number of dead and injured, but rescuers returned to the crash site yesterday morning to look in the grassy area for other possible victims.

A survivor who jumped out the door before the bus plunged said "the driver was shouting, saying the brakes were not working and he has lost control of the bus," Yarra said in a telephone interview.

Many of the passengers were hospitalized with serious injuries and parents were separated from their children in the confusion, officials said.

"One child here sat beside her mother. The mother was dead," said Dr. Napoleon Obana of the Veterans Regional Hospital, where some of the victims were taken.



TV footage showed a line of rescuers and villagers, some holding onto a rope to climb up on a grassy slope with a victim on a stretcher. A throng of villagers waited in a clearing above them to help pull the victim to safety.

Passenger Ralph Raymond Grajo said he saw the driver repeatedly stepping on the malfunctioning brakes as the

wayward bus was speeding along a downhill road. The driver attempted to steer the bus to the right, but roadside houses made him veer back in the direction of the ravine as horrified passengers watched, Grajo said.

"All the passengers were screaming and somebody in front me told everybody 'Don't panic,' but many were already gripped by

panic," Grajo told DZMM radio network.

Grajo apparently fell out of the bus as it rolled down the ravine and regained consciousness away from the wreckage with injuries to his feet and arms. He said he was among the first to be rescued and brought to a hospital.

Yarra said the driver was among the dead, and that four

survivors were in critical condition.

The spot along the road is accident-prone. Tuesday's crash was the sixth in the area in recent years, a local village official told DZMM.

The impact from the plunge ripped the bus, which could no longer be distinguished at the bottom of the ravine, said Nueva Ecija's police chief Antonio Yarra. He said investigators could not yet talk to the stunned and injured survivors.

Passengers were screaming and somebody told everybody 'Don't panic,' but many were already gripped by panic.

SURVIVOR

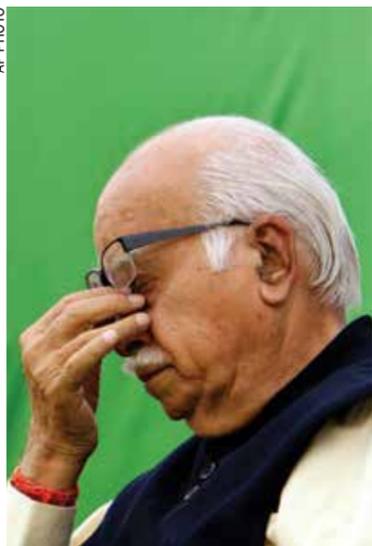
Carranglan police chief Robert de Guzman said the bus from northern Isabela province was on its way to Ilocos Sur, a tobacco- and rice-growing region also in the mountainous northern Philippines, when it crashed shortly before noon in Nueva Ecija, about 200 kilometers (124 miles) north of Manila.

Poorly maintained passenger buses, inadequate road safety features and weak enforcement of local transport laws have been blamed for many vehicular accidents in the Philippines.

In February, a sightseeing bus carrying college students on a camping trip lost its brakes on a steep downhill road and smashed into a concrete electrical post in Tanay town in Rizal province east of Manila, killing 15 people. **AP**

INDIA

Ruling party leaders face trial in 1992 mosque attack



Bharatiya Janata Party leader L.K. Advani

INDIA'S top court yesterday ordered four senior leaders of the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party to stand trial over a 1992 attack on an ancient mosque that sparked Hindu-Muslim violence that killed thousands.

A lower court had earlier dropped conspiracy charges against the four in a case that has languished in India's sluggish legal system for almost 25 years.

Hindu groups say the 16th century Babri Mosque was built after a temple dedicated to the Hindu god

King Ram was destroyed by Muslim invaders. Hindu fundamentalists with pickaxes and crowbars razed the structure to the ground in December 1992.

The attack on the mosque in Ayodhya, 550 kilometers east of New Delhi, sparked the largest explosion of Hindu-Muslim violence in the country in decades, leaving 2,000 people dead. Thousands more died in later violence caused by disputes over the site.

Hindu hard-liners, including BJP members, say they want to build a new

temple to Ram on the site.

The four party leaders are accused of making inflammatory speeches that incited thousands of their followers who had camped out in Ayodhya ahead of the attack on the mosque.

The four — L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharti and Kalyan Singh — have said that the mosque's demolition was a spontaneous eruption by angry Hindu activists. Advani, now 89, has served as India's home minister and deputy prime minister. He also served as president of the BJP. Joshi

and Bharti are both federal lawmakers, and Bharti is also member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet.

Singh is currently the governor of an Indian province, and the constitution protects him from criminal trial. Therefore his trial will start after his term ends.

At the time of the mosque's 1992 destruction, Singh was the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh state, where Ayodhya is located.

The Supreme Court order follows demands from

the Central Bureau of Investigation, India's main investigating agency, that the conspiracy charges against the senior party leaders be reinstated.

The court said that the trial will held in Lucknow, the Uttar Pradesh state capital.

A separate case is already underway involving about 20 people accused of the actual demolition of the mosque.

The Supreme Court has said that both trials should be combined and a final verdict reached within two years. **AP**

INDONESIA

Early results show defeat for Jakarta's Christian governor

UNOFFICIAL results showed the minority Christian governor of the Indonesian capital was resoundingly defeated yesterday by his Muslim challenger who swept up votes by appealing to a growing conservatism in the world's most populous Muslim nation.

So called "quick counts" by 10 research companies show former Cabinet minister Anies Baswedan winning between 55 and 60 percent of votes with more than 80 percent of ballots counted.

Incumbent Gov. Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama is on trial for blasphemy and hundreds of thousands protested against him in Jakarta, deriding his Chinese ancestry and calling for him to be imprisoned or killed.

Baswedan, highly educated and with a moderate Muslim background, capitalized on the backlash against Ahok by courting the support of conservative clerics and figures on the radical fringe who opposed electing a non-Muslim.

The polarizing campaign gave



People watch the vote counting during the runoff gubernatorial election in Jakarta

hard-line Islamic groups a national stage and has undermined Indonesia's reputation for practicing a moderate form of Islam.

Ahok's defeat is a setback for his political patron, President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, who today hosts Vice President Mike Pence on the Indonesian leg of an Asian tour. Ahok's rival Baswedan was supported by the political and

business elite that Jokowi unexpectedly bested in the 2014 presidential election and who will be seeking to unseat him in 2019.

Ahok congratulated Baswedan on his apparent victory and urged Indonesians to forget the acrimony of the campaign. Baswedan told reporters that he is committed to maintaining the diversity of Jakarta and will emphasize social

justice.

Ahok, who was Jakarta's first ethnic Chinese governor and first Christian in half a century, has been popular with middle-class Jakartans for his efforts to stamp out corruption and make the overflowing polluted capital more livable.

But his brash manner and evictions of slum communities

alienated many in the city of 10 million.

Opponents seized their moment last year when a video surfaced of Ahok telling voters they were being deceived if they believed a specific verse in the Quran prohibited Muslims from electing a non-Muslim as leader. Hard-line groups drew huge crowds to protests in Jakarta, shaking Jokowi's centrist government.

Today, prosecutors will make their sentencing demand in Ahok's trial. Blasphemy is a criminal offense in Indonesia and punishable by up to five years in prison.

Opinion polls released earlier in the week seriously miscalculated the outcome of Wednesday's vote, showing Baswedan and Ahok neck-and-neck.

In the west Jakarta neighborhood of Kebon Jeruk, Annisa Karolina, a 29-year-old restaurant cashier, said voting for a non-Muslim would be a sin, but she also believes Jakarta will be better run without Ahok.

A couple standing near her at the polling booth nodded in agreement. "Yes, we need a new governor, a well-mannered Muslim governor who isn't pro-tycoons and businessmen, but who is also helping the poor," one of them, Faturrachman, said.

More than 7 million people were eligible to vote and thousands of police and military personnel were deployed to secure the 13,000-plus polling places. **AP**

JAPAN

Pence to Kim: 'The sword stands ready'

Ken Thomas & Robert Burns, Yokosuka

FROM the wind-swept deck of a massive aircraft carrier, Vice President Mike Pence yesterday warned North Korea not to test the resolve of the U.S. military, promising it would make an "overwhelming and effective" response to any use of conventional or nuclear weapons.

Pence, dressed in a green military jacket, said aboard the hulking USS Ronald Reagan that President Donald Trump's administration would continue to "work diligently" with allies like Japan, China and other global powers to apply economic and diplomatic pressure on Pyongyang. But he told the sailors, "as all of you know, readiness is the key."

"The United States of America will always seek peace but under President Trump, the shield stands guard and the sword stands ready," Pence told

2,500 sailors wearing blue fatigues and Naval baseball caps on a sunny, windy morning aboard the carrier at the U.S. Yokosuka naval base in Tokyo Bay.

"Those who would challenge our resolve or readiness should know, we will defeat any attack and meet any use of conventional or nuclear weapons with an overwhelming and effective American response," Pence said.

The vice president said the U.S. would honor its alliance with Pacific Rim nations and protect freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, the sea lanes vital to global shipping where China has been staking claim to disputed territory.

From two continents, Pence and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis warned that North Korea's latest failed missile launch was a reckless act of provocation and assured allies in Asia that the U.S. was ready to work to achieve a peace-

ful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Mattis denounced North Korea's attempted missile launch as he began a Middle East tour, telling reporters traveling with him to Saudi Arabia, "the leader of North Korea again recklessly tried to provoke something by launching a missile," he said. The term "reckless" is one the North Koreans have used to describe ongoing large-scale U.S. and South Korean military exercises, which the North calls a dress rehearsal for an invasion.

Mattis did not identify the type of missile but said it was not of intercontinental range, meaning it could not reach U.S. territory. He did not comment on what might have caused the missile to fail.

Another official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss an intelligence matter, said the missile was a Scud variant that the U.S. calls a KN-17.

Mattis credited China with trying to help get

the North Korea situation "under control" with the goal of denuclearizing the peninsula.

Pence's speech on the aircraft carrier followed meetings Tuesday in Tokyo with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, where he noted that "all options are on the table."

Abe said that it was a "matter of paramount importance for us to seek diplomatic efforts as well peaceable settlements of the issue."

"But at the same time," the prime minister said, "dialogue for the sake of dialogue is valueless and it is necessary for us to exercise pressure North Korea so that it comes forward and engages in this serious dialogue."

The Trump administration has signaled a forceful U.S. stance on North Korea's recent actions, dispatching Pence to the Demilitarized Zone dividing North and South Korea on Monday in a show of American resolve. But it



Vice President Mike Pence, front, on the flight deck of navy nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, at the US Navy's Yokosuka base in Yokosuka

remains unclear what might come next.

Behind the heated rhetoric, Trump's strategy in the region looks somewhat similar to predecessor Barack Obama's — albeit with the added unpredictability of a new president who has shown he's willing to use force.

Pence said Trump was hopeful China would use its influence in the region to pressure the North to abandon its weapons program. But the vice president expressed impatience with the unwillingness of North Korea to move toward ridding itself of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

In Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey La-

rov told reporters he hopes "there will be no unilateral actions like those we saw recently in Syria and that the U.S. will follow the line that President Trump repeatedly voiced during the election campaign."

China made a plea for a return to negotiations. Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said tensions need to be eased on the Korean Peninsula to bring the escalating dispute to a peaceful resolution. Lu said Beijing wants to resume the multi-party negotiations that ended in stalemate in 2009 and suggested that U.S. plans to deploy a missile defense system in South Korea were damaging its relations with China. **AP**

USA | ORGANIZED CRIME

Trump, top officials take aim at brutal MS-13 street gang

Sadie Gurman, Washington

THE Trump administration vowed yesterday [Macau time] to crack down on MS-13, a notoriously brutal Central American street gang blamed for a recent series of killings in suburban New York, and accused Obama-era border policies of allowing its ranks to flourish.

The gang is known for hacking and stabbing victims with machetes, drug dealing, prostitution and other rackets. Their recruits are middle- and high-school students predominantly in immigrant communities and those who try to leave their risk violent retribution, according to officials.

"These organizations enrich themselves by pedaling poison in our communities, trafficking children for sexual exploitation and inflicting horrific violence in the communities where they operate," Attorney General Jeff Sessions said in remarks before meeting with top federal law enforcement officials on ways to dismantle ultraviolent transnational gangs.

His warnings were echoed in a separate address by Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly and came just hours after President Donald Trump tweeted that "The weak illegal immigration policies of the Obama Admin. allowed bad MS 13 gangs to form in cities across U.S. We are removing them fast!"

MS-13 — or the Mara Salvatrucha — traces its origins to Los Angeles, where thousands fleeing El Salvador's bloody civil war in the 1980s



Attorney General Jeff Sessions shakes hands with FBI Director James Comey before a meeting of the Organized Crime Council and Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces Executive Committee

arrived, to protect the immigrants from Mexican and African-American gangs. As Central American communities have grown, so has the gang, which is now estimated at 30,000 members operating in semi-autonomous cliques mostly in Central and North America. More than 10,000 MS-13 are in the U.S., according to federal law enforcement officials. However, the FBI doesn't break down its national crime statistics by gang affiliation, and the bureau doesn't collect MS-13-specific data, a spokeswoman said.

The Justice Department suspects major gang leaders are using cell-phones from Salvadoran prisons to instruct members who have crossed into the U.S. illegally to kill rivals and extort legal and illegal businesses owned by immigrants. Authorities suspect members of the gang are behind last week's slayings in central Long Island of four young people, which are among 11 killings that have rattled the working-class immigrants of Central Islip, New York, since September.

Sessions has called for more ag-

gressive prosecution of crimes such as illegal border crossing and smuggling others into the U.S. as a way to deter violence.

"We cannot allow this to continue. We will secure our border, expand immigration enforcement, and choke-off supply lines. If you are a gang member: We will find you," said Sessions, who also alleged that so-called sanctuary cities, which limit local cooperation with immigration authorities, undermine law enforcement efforts to stop such gangs.

■ The gang is known for hacking and stabbing victims with machetes, drug dealing, prostitution and other rackets

The president later tweeted that "Sessions is doing a fantastic job: announced today new steps to dismantle violent gangs like MS-13. I promised to get tough and we are!"

Kelly, during a separate speech at George Washington University, said transnational criminal groups, such as the drug cartels and MS-13, are engaged in kidnapping, torture and human trafficking and pose one of the great

test threats to the U.S. "They are utterly without laws, conscience or respect for human life," he said.

During the Obama administration, the government focused on immigrants in the country illegally who posed a threat to national security or public safety and recent border crossers. More than 2.5 million people were deported under Obama's policies, many of them characterized as suspected or confirmed gang members.

The Obama administration made unprecedented efforts to fight MS-13, targeting the gang's finances by declaring it an international criminal group subject to sanctions by the Treasury Department. The goal of that 2012 maneuver was to stymie the gang's ability to funnel money back to leaders in El Salvador or launder criminal proceeds through otherwise legitimate businesses.

Federal prosecutors have targeted MS-13 before, pursuing racketeering cases throughout the 2000s in places such as San Francisco, Maryland, northern Virginia; Charlotte, North Carolina; and elsewhere. The Justice Department said it made progress in 2009 and 2010. The FBI last week added an MS-13 member to its Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list for his suspected role in the 2011 killing of a man with a baseball bat and a screwdriver.

But James Trusty, who headed the department's organized crime and gang section before he left in January, said the group appeared to be experiencing a recent revival in some of those same places.

Stricter vetting at the border is necessary to stop MS-13 members from coming into the U.S., Trusty said, noting some are coached to tell immigration officials they're escaping violence in their home country in order to stay.

"My own view is there has to be some correlation between lax immigration policies and replenishment of the gangs in places where they already existed," he said. **AP**

Washington says Iran complying with nuclear deal

THE Trump administration has notified Congress that Iran is complying with the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal negotiated by former President Barack Obama, and says the U.S. has extended the sanctions relief given to the Islamic republic in exchange for curbs on its atomic program.

However, in a letter sent yesterday [Macau time] to House Speaker Paul Ryan, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the administration has undertaken a full review of the agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"Iran remains a leading state sponsor of terror, through many platforms and methods," Tillerson wrote. He said the National Security Council-led interagency review of the agreement will evaluate whether it "is vital to the national security interests of the United States."

The certification of Iran's compliance, which must be sent to Congress every 90 days, is the first issued by the Trump administration. The deadline for this certification was midnight.

As a candidate in the 2016 presidential election, Trump was an outspoken critic of the deal

but had offered conflicting opinions on whether he would try to scrap it, modify it or keep it in place with more strenuous enforcement. This determination suggested that while Trump agreed with findings by the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, that Iran is keeping to its end of the bargain, he is looking for another way to ratchet up pressure on Tehran.

Despite the sanctions relief, Iran remains on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism for its support of anti-Israel groups and is still subject to non-nu-

clear sanctions, including for human rights abuses and for its backing of Syrian President Bashar Assad's government.

The nuclear deal was sealed in Vienna in July 2015 after 18 months of negotiations led by former Secretary of State John Kerry and diplomats from the other four permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — Britain, China, France and Russia — and Germany. Under its terms, Iran agreed to curb its nuclear program, long suspected of being aimed at developing atomic weapons, in return for billions of dollars in sanctions relief.



US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

Opponents of the deal, including Israel, objected, saying it only delayed Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and did not allow for the kind of inspections of its atomic sites that would guaran-

tee it was not cheating. Obama, Kerry and others who negotiated the deal strenuously defended its terms and said the agreement made Israel, the Middle East and the world a safer place. **AP**

Jill Lawless & Danica Kirka, London

UK

Commons to approve today snap election called by May

BRITISH Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday defended her decision to call an early election for next month, saying it would strengthen the government's hand in negotiations to leave the European Union.

May dismissed criticism of her move to send voters back to polling booths for the third time in two years, after a May 2015 national election and a June 2016 referendum on EU membership.

She said that "Brexit isn't just about the letter that says we want to leave. It's about ... getting the right deal from Europe."

Britain's next national election is currently scheduled for 2020, a year after the scheduled completion of two years of EU exit talks.

May told The Sun newspaper that if Britain were still negotiating with the bloc in the run-up to a national election, "the Europeans might have seen that as a time of weakness when they could push us."

An early ballot will give the prime minister — or her replacement — more time to implement Brexit before another election.

May also told the BBC that her political opponents were intent on "frustrating the Brexit process"

— even after Parliament authorized divorce talks with the EU.

May's Conservatives currently hold 330 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons. Opinion polls give them a big lead over the Labour opposition, and May is gambling that an election will deliver her a personal mandate from voters and produce a bigger Conservative majority in Parliament.

“[Brexit is] about getting the right deal from Europe.”

THERESA MAY

The House of Commons will vote today [Macau time] on whether to support May's call for a snap election on June 8.

Under British electoral law,



May needs the backing of two-thirds of lawmakers. She will likely get it, since Labour has welcomed the early election.

If the election is approved Wednesday, Parliament will be dissolved on May 2, sparking almost six weeks of campaigning.

May ruled out participating

in televised debates with other leaders. TV debates don't have a long history in British politics, but were a feature of the last two elections, in 2010 and 2015.

"We won't be doing television debates," May said, adding that politicians should spend election campaigns "out and about" mee-

ting voters.

Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron said that broadcasters should hold debates anyway, with an empty chair in May's place.

"The prime minister's attempt to dodge scrutiny shows how she holds the public in contempt," he said. AP

SATURDAY SUPERSTACK

STILL THE BIGGEST POKER NIGHT OF THE WEEK

PokerStars LIVE Macau hosts the Saturday SuperStack with a HK\$100,000 guaranteed prize pool. With a buy-in of HK\$3,000, you start with a huge 15K starting chip stack.

Don't miss out on the biggest tournament of the week. Every Saturday from 15th to 22nd April.

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what's ON



MACAO ARTIST SOCIETY YOUTH COMMITTEE MEMBER'S EXHIBITION 2017

TIME: 11am-10pm
 UNTIL: June 25, 2107
 VENUE: Lakeside Gallery – S1 Room, Anim' Arte Nam Van
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6866

FLOWING HUES - PAINTING EXHIBITION BY PAN JIN LING AND PAN JIN XIA

TIME: 9am-7pm (Open on public holidays)
 UNTIL: May 7, 2017
 VENUE: Chun Chou Tong Pavilion, Lou Lim Ioc Garden, No. 10, Est. de Adolfo Loureiro
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

CITY, IMPRESSION: EXHIBITION OF OLD MACAO PHOTOS

TIME: 9am-9pm (Open on public holidays)
 UNTIL: May 21, 2017
 VENUE: Temporary Exhibition Gallery of IACM, No. 163, Av. Almeida Ribeiro
 ADMISSION: Free
 Enquiries: (853) 8988 4000

99999 - PHOTOGRAPHY BY IEONG MAN PAN

TIME: 2pm-7pm (Closed on Sundays and public holidays)
 UNTIL: April 29, 2017
 VENUE: Creative Macau, G Floor, Macao Cultural Centre, Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2875 3282

MONKEY KING

TIME: 8pm daily (no performances on Thursdays)
 VENUE: Sands Cotai Theatre
 ADMISSION: MOP420, MOP520, MOP780, MOP1080, MOP1580
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 8818

AD LIB- RECENT WORKS BY KONSTANTIN BESSMERTNY

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admission after 6:30 pm, closed on Mondays)
 UNTIL: May 28, 2017
 VENUE: Macau Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
 ADMISSION: MOP5 (free on Sundays and public holidays)
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

Offbeat

GOOD COP! OKLAHOMA POLICE CHIEF ISSUES HIMSELF A SPEEDING TICKET

The police chief of a small northeast Oklahoma community says he issued himself a citation for speeding, but only after being caught on video.
 Sperry Police Chief Justin Burch posted an apology on the department's Facebook page Saturday, saying he was "wrong in traveling at 75 and 80 mph." Sperry is about 10 miles north of Tulsa.
 Burch admits he's not sure he would have issued the ticket if not for the video, and that he had a "reason for being in a hurry." Nonetheless, he admits he must "be held accountable."
 Burch says he wrote himself the more than \$300 ticket and that he'll pay it in full.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
16:50	Documentary Serie
17:40	Revenge S1
18:20	Now Generation (Repeated)
19:10	Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:30	Documentary
22:10	Now Generation
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Champions League Highlights
00:35	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:10	RTPi Live

Cinema



CINETEATRO

20 APR



THE BOSS BABY

ROOM 1
 (2D) 2:30, 4:30, 7:30pm
 (3D) 9:30pm
 Director: Tom McGrath
 Starring: Alec Baldwin, Steve Buscemi, Jimmy Kimmel
 Language: Cantonese (English)
 Duration: 97min



SHOCK WAVE

ROOM 2
 2:30, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30pm
 Director: Herman Yau
 Starring: Andy Lau, Jiang Wu, Philip Keung, Ron Ng
 Language: Cantonese (Chinese)
 Duration: 119min

FAST & FURIOUS 8

ROOM 2
 (2D) 2:15, 4:45, 9:45pm
 (3D) 7:15pm
 Director: F. Gary Gray
 Starring: Vin Diesel, Jason Statham, Dwayne Johnson
 Language: English (Chinese)
 Duration: 136min

MACAU TOWER

13 APR - 26 APR



FAST & FURIOUS 8

2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30pm
 Director: F. Gary Gray
 Starring: Vin Diesel, Jason Statham, Dwayne Johnson
 Language: English (Chinese)
 Duration: 136min

this day in history



1953 UN AND KOREA BEGIN PRISONER EXCHANGE

The Allies and Korea have exchanged sick and wounded prisoners of war at Panmunjon, just a mile away from continued fighting at the north-south border.
 One hundred United Nations prisoners were freed today under Operation "Little Switch". They included 12 Britons, 30 Americans, 50 South Koreans, four Turks, one Canadian, one South African, one Greek and one Filipino.
 Dressed in blue padded Chinese-style uniforms and Russian-style caps, they were taken to a reception centre at nearby Munsan for a warm welcome.
 There, the Red Cross distributed cigarettes and toiletries. The 12 Britons looked thin but happy to be freed. They shook hands with several generals including General Clark, the UN commander.
 Seven of them agreed to talk to the waiting press. It emerged the Chinese had given them new uniforms and fed them well a few days before their liberation.
 Last night they were treated to a special farewell banquet at Kaesong, on the north-south border.
 Corporal William Greenaway of the Gloucestershire Regiment, captured two years ago, said: "I feel like I'm entering a new world. It feels very good indeed to be back."
 On the whole the British and Americans had few complaints about their treatment, although conditions in the prison camps were described as "pretty grim".
 But the South Koreans said they were treated like cattle, given "terrible" food and forced to attend indoctrination sessions.
 Also today, 400 North Koreans and 100 Chinese prisoners arrived at Munsan and were transferred by ambulance to be sent back to North Korea at Panmunjon.
 Further prisoner exchanges will take place over the next few days.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Soviet Union and the US had split Korea along the 38th parallel after Japan's defeat in World War II.
 Following a series of border skirmishes, the Communist North invaded the South in June 1950 and a United Nations force under General MacArthur drove the invaders back to the Chinese border.
 China entered the war and together with the North Koreans occupied Seoul in 1951.
 The UN forces counterattacked and by 1953, after an armistice, retook all territory south of the 38th parallel.
 The Korean War ended with the signing of the armistice on 27 July to restore the 38th parallel as a border.
 In August, prisoners of war were exchanged in Operation Big Switch - 77,000 Communists for 12,700 UN men, of whom 3,597 were Americans. But a peace deal has never been reached. American troops remain stationed in the demilitarized zone and around the 38th parallel separating North and South Korea.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Instead of pretending they don't exist, you should foster your opportunistic tendencies without any guilt today.

Taurus April 20-May 20

People from different backgrounds or cultures will play an important role in your life today.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21

Is there something you've been meaning to talk to someone about? Today is the right time to sit down with that person and let it out.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22

There's a disconnection in your social group right now. Either everyone else wants to whoop it up and you don't feel like going out, or you're in a mood to paint the town red and you can't find anyone to go with you.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Few people fully appreciate the power of suggestion - do you? Today, if you need to sell a product, an idea or yourself, use a heavy dose of bright enthusiasm to make your point (and make the sale).

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Your critical eye has 20/20 vision right now, but it isn't the only tool you can use to see what's really going on.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22

Despite all the advice you've been given, focusing on your limits today is not going to help you get past them.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Self-discipline is not an easy thing to achieve, especially now, when so many different ideas and opportunities are tempting you.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21

When you are faced with a challenge today, your original mind and unique sense of self-expression will put you at center stage - and don't be surprised if your performance earns you several curtain calls.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Keep talking all day long - the more you can connect people to what you're doing, the better.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Chances are, you're still looking rosy - but the act of touching base will keep you in the pink.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20

Keep in mind that your friends in high places are primarily your friends.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle

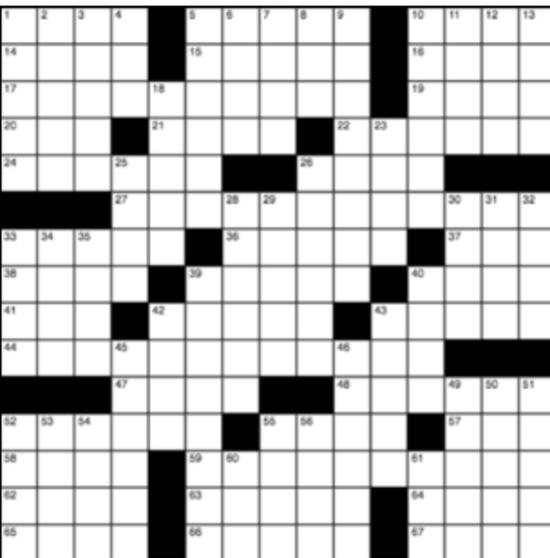
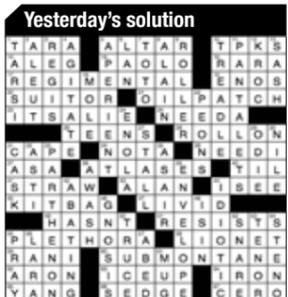
WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION for various cities in China and the World.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Escaping fluid; 5- Fatty part of milk; 10- WWII battle site; 14- Indigo source; 15- Large artery; 16- Pluto's tail; 17- Pertaining to commerce; 19- Monetary unit of France; 20- Just manage, with "out"; 21- Toll rds.; 22- "Gunsmoke" star; 24- Midday nap; 26- ... saw Elba; 27- Capital of Utah; 33- Prices paid; 36- Stand used by painters; 37- Conductance unit; 38- Panama and bowler; 39- Togetherness; 40- Hurler Hershtiser; 41- Figure skater Midori; 42- Coeur d'... ID; 43- Eight Days ...; 44- Distinguish; 47- Raw materials; 48- Abrupt; 52- Madman at the tea party; 55- Get an ... effort; 57- Arctic explorer John; 58- Gymnast Korbut; 59- Increase in speed; 62- Give off; 63- Lugged; 64- Parroted; 65- Ump's call; 66- Author Zola; 67- Actress Suvari;

DOWN: 1- Shoe ties; 2- Japanese mushroom; 3- Anouk of "La Dolce Vita"; 4- Dutch carrier; 5- Wrist bone; 6- Music genre; 7- Goddess of discord; 8- ... loss for words; 9- Bunkum; 10- Attractive route; 11- Faithful; 12- Metallica drummer Ulrich; 13- Western Indians; 18- Kett and James; 23- Stagger; 25- Retired fliers; 26- Christian festival; 28- Beliefs; 29- "Mule Train" singer; 30- Nagy of Hungary; 31- Biblical pronoun; 32- Yellow of an egg; 33- Fashionable; 34- Vow; 35- Greek portico; 39- Become ulcerous; 40- Was indebted to; 42- Bern's river; 43- Sky blue; 45- Revolve; 46- Tristan's love; 49- Hang; 50- Devoured; 51- ... lift?; 52- Weed whackers; 53- ... mater; 54- End-of-workweek shout; 55- Broadway beginning; 56- Believe; 60- Dot follower; 61- Male sheep who may play football for St Louis;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
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Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
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Tourism 28 333 000
Airport 59 888 88



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JML property logo and contact information for JML Property.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Ex-NFL star Aaron Hernandez dead after hanging self in cell

FORMER NFL star Aaron Hernandez, who was serving a life sentence for a murder conviction and just days ago was acquitted of a double murder, died after hanging himself in his prison cell yesterday, Massachusetts prisons officials said.

Hernandez, 27, was found by guards in his cell at the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center in Shirley just after 3 a.m., Department of Correction spokesman Christopher Fallon said in a statement.

The former New England Patriots tight end was pronounced dead at UMass Memorial-HealthAlliance Hospital in Leominster about an hour later.

Hernandez was in a single cell in a general population housing unit in the maximum security state prison. He hanged himself using a



Former New England Patriots tight end Aaron Hernandez turns to look in the direction of the jury as he reacts to his double murder acquittal at Suffolk Superior Court in Boston last week

bed sheet that he attached to a cell window, Fallon said.

Hernandez tried to block the cell door from the inside by jamming the door with

various items, Fallon said.

Hernandez was moved to tears on Friday after he was acquitted of the 2012 fatal shootings of Daniel de Abreu and Safiro Furtado

in Boston. Just before his acquittal, Hernandez was seen blowing kisses to the little girl he fathered with fiancée Shayanna Jenkins. Cameras captured the tender exchange.

But, Hernandez was still serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole for his conviction in the 2013 shooting of Odin Lloyd, who was dating his fiancée's sister.

Hernandez's lawyers did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Hernandez's death comes the same day the Patriots were making their visit to the White House to mark their Super Bowl win. Team spokesman Stacey James said the Patriots were aware of the reports of Hernandez's death.

Massachusetts State Police remain investigating the death. **AP**

UK

Police say 560 potential victims in football sex-abuse case

UK Police say the number of potential victims in British soccer's sprawling child sex-abuse scandal has climbed to 560, with 252 suspects identified.

The National Police Chiefs' Council said that 96 percent of the victims are male, and the age range of the victims is from 4 to 20.

Some 311 football clubs, across amateur and professional soccer, have been referenced when potential victims supplied information.

The updated figures, which date to March 31, come five months after former professionals started to reveal historic abuse.

There have been 1,432 referrals to the national police investigation from a charity's dedicated soccer hotline and forces around the country.

The NPCC said 25 referrals relate to sports outside football, including rugby, gymnastics, martial arts, tennis, wrestling, golf, sailing, athletics, cricket, and swimming. **AP**

AD



Networking Evening at Macpro Art Gallery

An international contemporary art setting with a view

Thursday 27th April

Av. da Praia Grande No. 429
Centro Comercial Praia Grande, 2/F, Macao



6.30pm to 8.30pm

A selection of canapés will be served accompanied by wine, beers and soft drinks.

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FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Ronaldo hat trick puts Real into semis

Tales Azzoni, Madrid

CRISTIANO Ronaldo scored a hat trick to help Real Madrid beat 10-man Bayern Munich 4-2 after extra time on Tuesday and send the defending champions through to the semifinals of the Champions League.

Marco Asensio also scored late for Madrid, which advanced 6-3 on aggregate after a 2-1 first leg win in Germany.

Ronaldo's goals, two of which were scored in extra time, enabled the Portuguese star to become the first player to reach 100 Champions League goals.

"In the big moments, Ronaldo always comes through," Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "He scored five times in these two games, what else can I say?"

Bayern played a man down from the 84th minute after Arturo Vidal picked up his second yellow card of the night for a foul on Asensio.

"We deserved more," said Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti, who complained about the refereeing. "The calls made by the referee hurt us a lot. The second yellow for Arturo should not have been a card, and Ronaldo had two goals when he was offside."

Ronaldo appeared to be in front of the defenders, and just offside, for his first goal in extra time.

Vidal appeared to mainly get the ball in his challenge on Asensio, although he could have received a second yellow earlier for a foul on Casemiro.

After Robert Lewandowski had scored a 53rd minute penalty for Bayern, an own-goal by Madrid defender Sergio Ramos in the 78th had given the German side a 2-1 lead in regulation time, and sent the game into extra time.

The victory at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium put Madrid into the semifinals for the seventh straight season and kept alive its hopes of becoming the first team to retain the Champions League title since the competition's new format was created in 1992.

Madrid defeated city rival Atletico Madrid in the final both in 2014 and 2016.

Atletico also made it to the semifinals by eliminating Leicester 2-1 on aggregate after a 1-1 draw in Tuesday's other quarterfinal, second-leg match.

Bayern, the 2013 Champions League winner, had made it at least to the semifinals for the last five seasons.

The opening 45 minutes were balanced between the two si-

des, but Bayern was dominant after halftime as it pressed forward, trying to overturn the first-leg deficit.

"The team was courageous," Bayern defender Philipp Lahm said. "It hurts to go out in extra time, but we were a man down for over an hour across the tie. I think the team deserved to go through."

Bayern also played with 10 men in the second half of the game in Germany.

Lewandowski, who had missed the first leg because of a right shoulder injury, calmly scored from the spot with a right-foot shot, sending Keylor Navas the wrong way.

The penalty was awarded after a foul by Casemiro on Arjen Robben.

Not long before the penalty, Marcelo had prevented Bayern from scoring by making a goal line clearance after a shot by Robben had beaten Navas.

Ronaldo scored his first goal of the night with a header in the 76th minute after a well-placed cross by Casemiro from the right flank.

In the big moments, Ronaldo always comes through.

ZIDANE

Two minutes later, though, Ramos found his own net when his deflection sent the ball trickling across the goal line. The Spanish defender was making his 100th Champions League appearance.

Ronaldo put Madrid back in control when he chested down a pass by Ramos and fired a left-foot shot that went underneath Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer in the 105th minute.

He added another from close range after a run by Marcelo down the left flank in the 110th, and Asensio sealed the victory after getting past a series of defenders and firing home from inside the area in the 112th.

Bayern was trying to become only the third team to reverse a first-leg home loss in Champions League history, along with Inter Milan in 2011 and Ajax in 1996.

"I think we played well overall and we can leave with our heads held high," Bayern defender Jerome Boateng said.

Security guards and Bayern fans got into a confrontation at the stands at halftime but the altercation ended quickly. **AP**



Portugal and Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo, center, celebrates after scoring against Bayern, becoming the first player to reach 100 Champions League goals

Madrid clubs back on top in European soccer



Atletico Madrid players celebrate at the expense of sensation Leicester City

MADRID clubs are making a habit of succeeding in European soccer.

For the third time in four seasons, both Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid have made it to Champions League semifinals.

Real Madrid reached the last four for the seventh straight time yesterday by eliminating Bayern Munich 6-3 on aggregate after a hat trick from Cristiano Ronaldo in a 4-2 win at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. Atletico Madrid advanced to the semis for the third time in four years by getting past Leicester 2-1 on aggregate following a 1-1 second-leg draw in England.

Barcelona could be the other Spanish club to join the party if it overturns a 3-0 first-leg loss against Italian champion Juventus at the Camp Nou. Spanish clubs have won the European competition the last three seasons.

Madrid and Atletico made it all the way to the final in 2014 and 2016, with Madrid coming out on top both times. The rivals also met in the quarterfinals in 2014-15, when Madrid again succeeded but was knocked out in the next round by Juventus.

A draw tomorrow will determine whether there will be another matchup between the Madrid clubs right away in the semifinals or if there will

be another possibility for a derby in the final in Cardiff.

The other semifinalist will be either Monaco or Borussia Dortmund. Monaco won the first leg 3-2.

"Let's see what happens on Friday," Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "We are Real Madrid and if we want to win something we have to play against everyone. We are going to have to fight hard again over two games in the semifinals and the goal is to get to Cardiff."

Madrid is going for a record 12th title in Europe's top club competition.

"It's too early to think about that, but hopefully that's what we will achieve in the end," said Ronaldo.

"Real Madrid was the better team," he said. "It's not easy to score six goals against a team like Bayern Munich. We deserved to go through."

Atletico will be trying to win its first European Cup title and put an end to an uncomfortable streak of runner-up finishes. In addition to the recent losses to Madrid, it also finished second in the 1974 final against Bayern.

"It's thrilling to make it to the semifinals again," Atletico coach Diego Simeone said. "There is only one way to win the Champions, which is to keep insisting, insisting and insisting again."

Atletico lost the 2014 final after conceding an injury time equalizer that extended the match into extra time. Last year, it lost in a penalty shootout.

Atletico has become a steady contender in European football since the arrival of Simeone five years ago, but the coach still dismisses the notion that the team is on the same level as the continent's powerhouses.

"The big teams are Bayern, Barcelona, Real Madrid, especially in the financial aspect," he said. "We are not a big team like that, but we are very competitive, that's for sure. The first day I got here, my only goal was to turn Atletico into a competitive team that could contend in all competitions that it played."

The 2014 Spanish champion, Atletico is third in this year's Spanish league, 10 points behind leader Madrid, which is trying to win the competition for the first time since 2012.

opinion

Made in Macao
 Jenny Lao-Phillips



DRUNKEN HERITAGE

A brief survey of tourists in Macao showed that the attraction of our little town is not merely derived from casinos. In fact, the majority of tourists surveyed stated that they came to experience Macao's cultural heritage. Okay, that's unfair, I surveyed people around Leal Senado Square, and discovered that no one would openly admit that they came to Macao for the gambling. But it is true that quite a few acquaintances from Hong Kong and the mainland claimed to enjoy visiting Macao during the holidays for the special atmosphere surrounding the heritage buildings, from the Ruins of St. Paul to St. Dominic's Church to the Cathedral, all the way up to St. Joseph Seminary. However, those who visit Macao for its Historic Centre have been coming less often as the historic atmosphere has been diminished by the crowds and tourists.

Increasingly, cultural tourists are coming for a different kind of heritage in town – the intangible cultural heritage. One of these is the "Feast of Drunken Dragon of the Fish Industry". This tradition, originally from Guangdong Province, was brought to Macao several years ago and is now practiced by members of the Macao Fish Industry. It is a festival celebrated on the 8th day of the 4th lunar month every year, which falls on May 3 this year. This tradition is intended to celebrate the Buddha's birthday and allow people to pray for "Feng Tiao Yu Shun 風調雨順" (meaning timely wind and rain).

The festival begins on the evening of the 7th day of the 4th lunar month with a dinner where members of the fish industry, historically neighbors on the same seaside, enjoy the "Dragon Head Boat Longevity Rice" together. This rice is believed to bring luck and prosperity along with longevity to those who consume it. The highlight of the festival is the Drunken Dragon Dance performed on the 8th day. Members of the fish industry perform the traditional dragon dance with only the head and tail of the dragon, while drinking strong alcohol – hence, the drunken dragon.

So where did this tradition begin? Legend has it that hundreds of years ago there were a serious plague in the Xiangshan District of Guangdong Province. To save the suffering people, the villagers prayed to the Buddha for help and attempted to carry a large statue of the Buddha into the village. While they were crossing the river, a huge snake appeared from the waters and attacked the villagers. They killed the snake, whose blood stained the entire river. After drinking the bloodied river water, the villagers were healed from their sickness. Believing that the snake was actually a dragon descended from heaven, the villagers performed the dragon dance to commemorate the event.

Most people would agree that what is interesting about this tradition is not the Dragon Dance itself, but that it is to be performed while drunk. I do not understand why the dragon must be drunk, but it does make the dance more interesting. The coordination of the dancers holding different parts to move like the dragon dancing has never been very interesting to me. Unless the dragon parts are very heavy to increase the difficulty of the dance, I don't see much skill being needed to make the Dragon Dance an exciting performance.

However, it used to amaze me the way the dancers pretended to be drunk and walked like they were almost falling, until I discovered they were actually drunk. Then the dance became a challenge, for it is not easy for dancers to coordinate among themselves after drinking so much. That is probably why the public drinking and spraying of strong Chinese rice wine have successfully attracted tourists to watch this tradition over the years. So this May, it may not be a bad idea to go downtown and enjoy some drunken heritage.

THE BUZZ EMIRATES TRIMS US FLIGHTS AFTER TRUMP ADMINISTRATION CURBS

The Middle East's biggest airline says it is reducing flights to the United States because of a drop in demand caused by tougher U.S. security measures and attempts by the Trump administration to ban travelers from a number of Muslim-majority nations. Emirates said that the reductions will affect five of its 12 U.S. destinations, starting next month. It cal-

led the move "a commercial decision in response to weakened travel demand" in the three months since President Donald Trump took office. Twice daily Emirates flights to Boston, Los Angeles and Seattle will be reduced to once a day. Daily flights to Ft. Lauderdale and Orlando will be pared down to five per week.

PHILIPPINES

Duterte offers bounty for extremists in foiled island attack



Boats which the military said were used by Abu Sayyaf militants to enter the Ibananga River in Bohol province, central Philippines

PHILIPPINE President Rodrigo Duterte offered a bounty yesterday for the capture of Muslim extremists behind a foiled attack on a central resort island, and said he ordered the navy to bomb militants who travel by boat in search of kidnap victims.

The tough-talking leader told reporters during a visit to central Bohol province that he was considering to arm civilians there so they can help the government fight terrorists and drug suspects, adding he prefers outlaws dead than alive.

"I encourage civilians also to kill because these are wanted dead or alive with a reward, but I prefer them dead because if they're alive I would have to feed them ... and that's very expensive,"

Duterte said.

His visit came a week after troops, backed by airstrikes, battled Abu Sayyaf fighters, leaving four militants, three soldiers, a policeman and two villagers dead. Troops are hunting several extremists who escaped.

The 1 million peso (USD20,000) reward is for information that would allow the military or police to capture the fleeing militants, Duterte said. He said that informants' identities would be kept confidential.

Military officials said the extremists traveled far from their jungle bases in southern Sulu province to carry out kidnappings for ransom and bombings for the first time in Bohol, a popular tourism destination for its white-sand beaches, waterfalls,

caves and wildlife.

Asked what could be the specific target of the militants, Duterte said they might be plotting to disrupt a two-day meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which started in Bohol's resort island of Panglao yesterday and "create a disaster for all of us."

Duterte inspected several areas in Bohol and gave assurances the province is secure, saying, "We have more than enough officers to fight for one year, if need be, so you are safe."

The president warned the militants the government would now try to track them, including by satellite, to prevent them from venturing far from their southern island and create trouble elsewhere. **AP**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Xinhua/Chen Yehua



Tourists walk on a glass pavement in Tianmenshan scenic area in Zhangjiajie, central China's Hunan Province. Zhangjiajie is a famous tourist destination.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	10-30 Good
High Density Residential Area	25-45 Good
Ambient	30-50 Good

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS



NEW ZEALAND is introducing tougher requirements for skilled overseas workers as it tries to control immigration numbers that have reached an all-time high. Immigration Minister Michael Woodhouse (pictured) said that the government was unapologetic that industries relying on overseas workers are finding it harder to recruit people from abroad.

AUSTRALIA-IRAQ Australian troops provided help after the Islamic State group attacked Iraqi government troops with some type of gas in western Mosul, Australia's prime minister Turnbull said yesterday. Joint Operation Command in Iraq told AP that six soldiers suffered breathing problems from the attack on Sunday and were treated in a nearby field clinic.



UK British Prime Minister Theresa May takes her case for a June 8 election to Parliament. Today the House of Commons will vote May's surprise proposal for an early election. *More on p15*

USA The Trump administration vowed to crack down on MS-13, a notoriously brutal Central American street gang blamed for a recent series of killings in suburban New York, and accused Obama-era border policies of allowing its ranks to flourish. *More on p14*

US-IRAN Washington says Iran is complying with the 2015 nuclear deal negotiated by Obama, and stresses the U.S. has extended the sanctions relief given to the Islamic republic in exchange for curbs on its atomic program. *More on p14*

TURKEY's electoral board rejected petitions by opposition parties to annul the outcome of a recent referendum on expanding presidential powers because of voting irregularities. The request was rejected in a 10-1 vote. Two other opposition parties' requests were also rejected.