



ATM FACIAL RECOGNITION ENFORCED

P2



NEW PRIVACY WATCHDOG

Yang Chongwei was sworn in as new coordinator of the Office for Personal Data Protection yesterday

P7



HEAVY RAIN CAUSES FLOODS, KILLING 56

At least 56 people have been killed and 22 are reported missing as heavy rains continue to pummel southern China

P20

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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

WORLD BRIEFS



US-RUSSIA President Donald Trump will learn this week whether he gets a second chance to make a first impression as he returns to Europe and has his first encounter with Russia's Vladimir Putin. Every aspect of the bilateral meeting between the two unpredictable leaders is sure to be closely scrutinized as investigations press on into alleged Moscow meddling in the 2016 election and potential Trump campaign collusion.

EAST TIMOR Gay rights have taken a step forward in East Timor with its first LGBT pride parade and the prime minister announcing that the young nation's development depends on respecting the rights of all its citizens. *More on p12*



PHILIPPINES The Supreme Court upheld yesterday the president's declaration of martial law in the south in a legal boost to a military offensive that the defense chief said may soon succeed in quelling an uprising by Islamic State group-linked militants. *More on p12*

MYANMAR A mob in Myanmar's western Rakhine State has killed a member of the Muslim Rohingya ethnic minority who had been on a police-guarded trip to the city that many Rohingya were forced to flee five years ago.

More on backpage



Bloated Macau public sector still attracting thousands of jobseekers

P5 MDT REPORT

BLOOMBERG



ATM facial recognition enforced for mainland customers

STARTING yesterday, banks that operate automated teller machines (ATMs) without "Know-Your-Customer (KYC)" technology installed have been requested to suspend cash withdrawals services for mainland China UnionPay customers.

The new regulations, issued by the Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM), aim "at protecting legal interests of financial institutions and mainland China UnionPay cardholders," according to a statement issued by the AMCM yesterday. They also serve as a stepped-up measure to curb money laundering.

The relevant services will be resumed as soon as the KYC function is installed, the statement assured.

Holders of mainland China UnionPay cards may still make

cash withdrawals through ATMs with a "KYC ATM" logo, after identity verification. They are required to look into a camera for six seconds to allow its facial recognition software to take effect.

834 ATMs have KYC technology installed

Macau residents and holders of cards issued by banks of other jurisdictions are not affected.

AMCM requested that banks implement KYC technology into their ATMs in stages to ensure the protection of mainland cardholders legal rights through the region's latest efforts in strengthening anti-money laundering measures. Last

week, the government announced that as of June 26, there are a total of 670 ATMs with the ability to perform facial recognition scans. They have more recently announced that as of July 2, there were 834 ATMs in the MSAR with KYC technology installed.

The bureau requested that local banks speed up KYC implementation, and is collaborating with them to upgrade all ATMs in Macau, including those within casinos and in their surrounding areas, by the end of this year.

The bureau is starting with China UnionPay as it is the largest network in Macau and processes the largest amount of transactions.

Other payment providers, including Visa and Mastercard, will be required to support the technology in the future. **LV**

EDUCATION

Scholars discuss development of Greater Bay Area at UM

THE University of Macau (UM) and the Macau Convention and Exhibition jointly held a public forum this week titled "Development of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area in the Era of Artificial Intelligence".

UM Rector, Wei Zhao, said at the forum that 'artificial intelligence' and 'Greater Bay Area' are among the most popular subjects being researched and are closely linked to teaching and research in information science.

The keynote speakers at the event included Zhou Zhihua, professor from Nanjing University and a Changjiang scholar appointed by the Ministry of Education, and Yang Qiang, chair professor and New Bright and Professor of engineering from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Zhou gave a talk on "machine learning," while Yang gave one titled "From Deep Learning

to Transfer Learning". Both professors discussed advanced technologies in the area of artificial intelligence and how these technologies can help to develop the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area.

Following the talks from Zhou and Yang, a panel discussion was held, featuring Professor Thomas Eiter, from the Vienna University of Technology, and Professor Bernhard Nebel from Freiburg University. Both scholars expressed the belief that the Greater Bay Area has a well-developed manufacturing base and thus holds an advantage in the manufacturing industry. They agreed that if the Greater Bay Area can take full advantage of its technologies in artificial intelligence it can greatly increase its competitiveness.

The event attracted experts and scholars, faculty members, students and members of the general public.

LEGAL WISE BY MdME

João Benazra Faria*

CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

When I first arrived in Macau, roughly 10 years ago, one of the best things about practicing law here was a website that ensured a simple, reliable and immediate access to all laws, rules and regulations in force in the region. It was the Official Gazette's website of the Macau SAR, created and maintained by the Government Printing Bureau. It still exists, but was recently subject to changes.

A good friend of mine who was directly involved in the creation of such platform once told me that the website had been set up before the handover. This information made it seem even more remarkable, given that the

internet was still in its early days at the turn of the century. In 2007, in Portugal, we still had to deal with torrents of legal diplomas, reciprocally revoking, amending or superseding each other, typically only available in pdf format (or paper), resulting in unbelievable legal jigsaw exercises or in the superfluous acquisition of printed consolidated materials. Some online services catered to such needs, but they were paid and not very expeditious.

On the contrary, the website of the Official Gazette of the Macau SAR was free, straightforward and super-efficient, enabling anyone

who wanted to know the laws in force in each area – be it civil law, commercial law, procedural law, healthcare, external trade, etc. – to land in a page called All Categories, with immediate access to the relevant content. This was not only a tremendous tool for law professionals, but also a major contribution to implement the fundamental right of access to the law, to which all residents are entitled, in accordance with article 36 of the Macau Basic Law.

As mentioned, the website of the Official Gazette still exists, but was recently subject to changes, not only of aesthetic nature, but also in terms of how the access to the content is made. The content is there, the laws, rules and regulations are still displayed in lovely simple html pages, where keywords can easily be found with a swift Ctrl+f, but there is

no All Categories page anymore. Small change, big impact.

Currently, to find legislation applicable to a certain area, users must know what legal instruments they are specifically looking for, either by reference to the respective type and number or to the entities directly or indirectly related with said instruments – unsurprisingly, despite Google, users may not have such information and that circumstance may well be one of the reasons for the visit to the website.

The new website architecture does not prevent users from accessing Macau laws, rules and regulations, but certainly makes such access much less practical and effective.

Hope it will change, again, for the better.

*Senior Associate, MdME Lawyers

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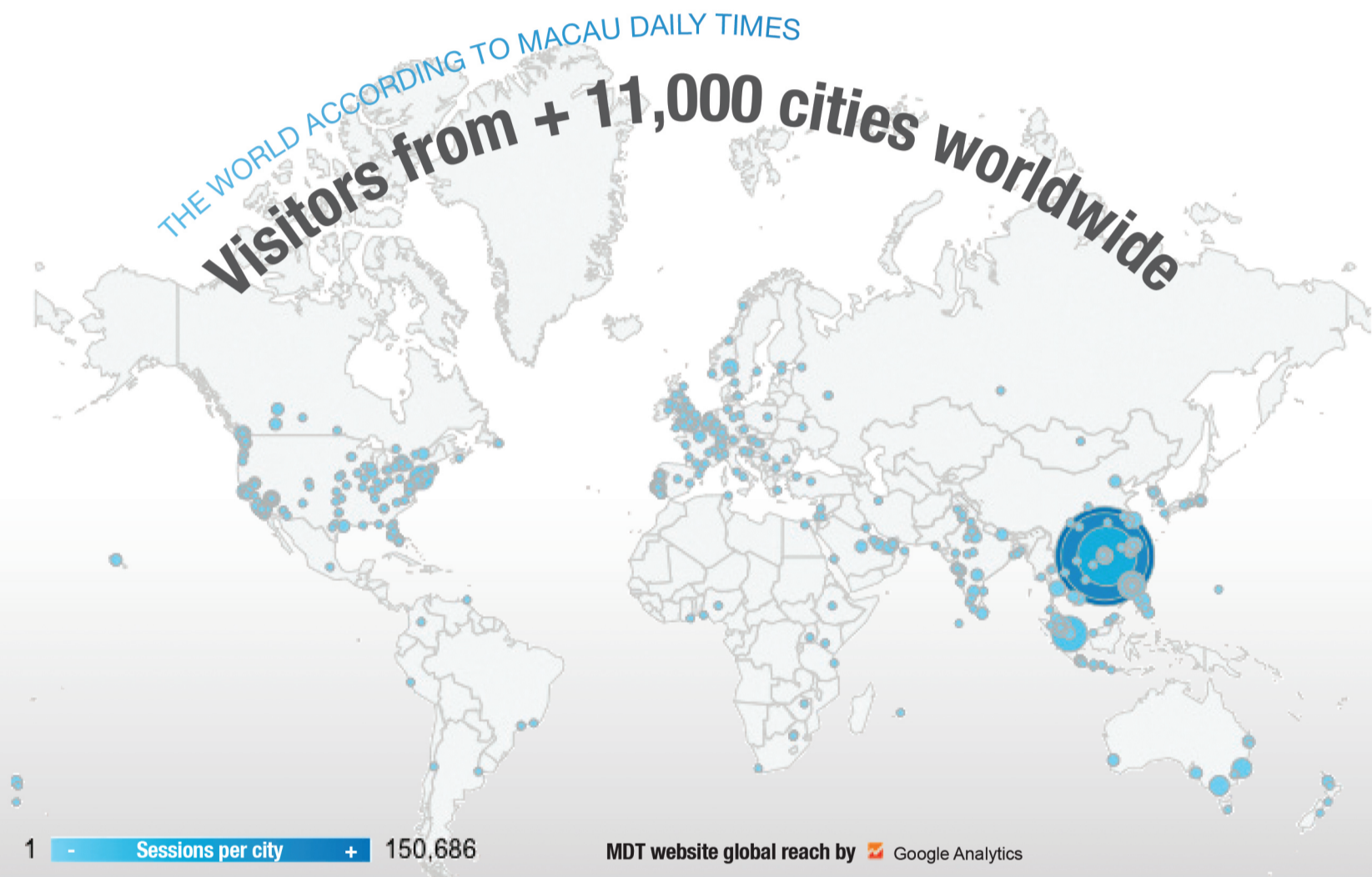
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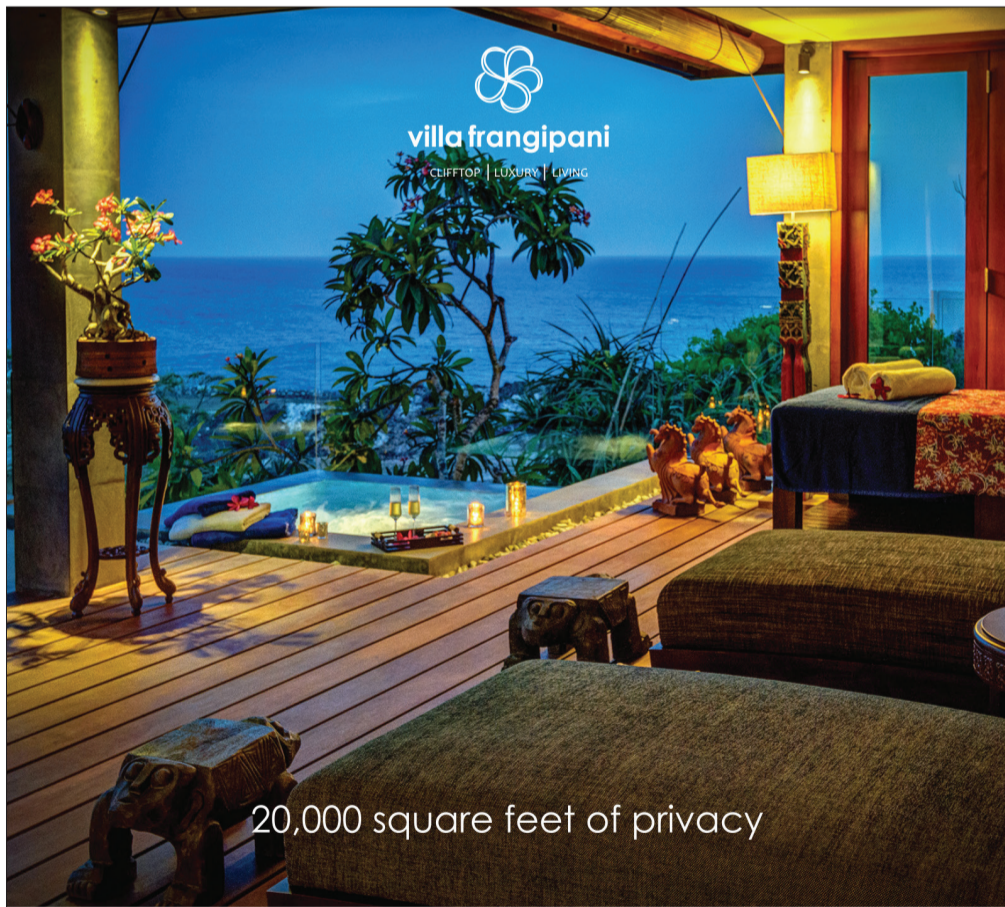
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Young jobseekers drawn to public sector

LAST month, around 11,000 people applied for a mere 160 government vacancies through the public sector recruitment examination process, making these jobs some of the most sought-after in the territory.

Local sociologist Larry So puts the appeal of government jobs down to high entry-level salaries, a considerable number of annual leave days and several other benefits.

The proportion of Macau's 405,000-strong labor force employed in the public sector last year was 7.1 percent, down from 7.9 percent in 2011, but considerably higher than most other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

In datasets provided by the World Bank, the size of the public sector is normally expressed as a proportion of the total population rather than of the total labor force. Using this measurement, the approximately 28,750 civil servants in Macau represent around 4.4 percent of people in the MSAR, significantly higher than the 2.7 percent average for the Asia Pacific region between 2000 and 2013.

Macau's 4.4 percent is considerably higher than the 3.45 percent in Japan and the 2.5 percent in Singapore. It also far outstrips



estimates for Indonesia (less than 2 percent), the Philippines (1.3 percent) and East-Timor (1.8 percent), though is smaller than Thailand (about 5 percent), Vietnam (4.8 percent) and China (estimates vary, thought sometimes considered to be 6 percent).

Moreover, Macau's population includes the 180,000 migrant workers in the territory, accounting for around 27 percent of its people. It is not clear whether non-resident workers were included in the relevant World Bank data sets of the other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

"We have a high [proportion] of civil servants in Macau - especially compared to Hong Kong - and the question is, do we need that many?" said Larry So, speaking to the Times yesterday.

There is an expectation that, due to the fixed costs of government, countries with fewer peo-

ple will have a higher proportion of their population working in the public sector. While a trend exists, not all small countries with small populations have such high proportions.

Luxembourg (570,000) and the Bahamas (400,000) are on one end of the scale with extensive public sector employment, but Bahrain (1.37 million) and Barbados (285,000) are on the other.

So told the Times yesterday that although public sector employment in Macau represents a high proportion of the city's population, it would be even higher were the government to nationalize certain monopoly service providers.

He commended the fact that some services in the city are privatized in Macau under concessionaire agreements. In other jurisdictions, these services are

publicly owned or funded. Specifically, he mentioned the telecommunications and utilities sector, but also stressed that the casino industry might be included. According to DSEC, more than 81,000 people were employed by the gaming sector last year.

"The number of civil servants is diminished by the number of outsourced contracts," said So. "There are private companies that are required to do what the government tells them [to], without [their workers] being classified as civil servants."

He suggested that privatization would help to streamline governmental organizations, which around the world are considered bureaucratic and inefficient.

"The government could [privatize and] subsidize some services, for example in social welfare, culture and sport," proposed the scholar. "We need to ask ourselves whether the government needs [to be the one] to provide, when the alternative is to outsource many of these services to NGOs [non-governmental organizations] and this would be much cheaper than paying the salaries of all of these civil servants."

"It would also create more diversity in the services offered and make the organizations [involved in the delivery of services] more creative through competition," he added.

According to the International Labor Organization, Cuba, Russia, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Denmark and Norway are among the countries with the highest proportions of employees in the public sector. **DB**

Mainland considers new arrangements for residents

Lawmaker Chan Meng Kam, also a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, received a reply from China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of the State Council informing that the office is currently meeting with various Chinese departments and local governments to develop policies which will allow Hong Kong and Macau residents to have equivalent treatment as mainland Chinese residents while they are in mainland China. In this year's annual CPPCC meeting in Beijing, Chan submitted a proposal to mainland China for the enhancement of convenient policies for SAR residents who live in the mainland.

40 percent of medical facilities updates complete

The Health Bureau (SSM) has finished 40 percent of the updates for the city's medical system's facilities, according to a bureau representative who attended a TDM radio show yesterday. This encompasses a total of 18 medical projects targeted for development, including the medical complex that the government is currently building in Taipa. Currently, Macau has one public and one private nursing school. According to SSM, the two institutions will be able to meet Macau's future needs for medical services.

Ho suggests expanding electronic payment

Lawmaker Ho Ion Seng questioned the local government about how it is promoting methods of electronic payment in the city. In his written inquiry to the government, Ho said that local SMEs lack the initiative to begin providing electronic payments in their business transactions due to the high costs of installing electronic payment equipment. In this year's session addressing government policy the local government announced that it would improve and expand various types of internet management services in Macau. Ho requested authorities to disclose the schedule for this expansion.

EDUCATION

Science Center organizes problem solving activity

THE Macau Science Center (MSC) is organizing the "Think Brick - Play and Learn with Lego Education" activity, aiming to promote the "STEAM" (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) educational concept.

Co-organized by Semia Limited and Lego Education, the activity seeks to encourage children and the youth to "cultivate scientific thinking, acquire comprehensive knowledge and develop the ability to solve problem," as cited in a press release issued by MSC.

To be held until January 14, 30 mechanical models and a "Fun 3D Zoetrope" are showcased at the gallery, along with the "Little Brick Kingdom" Fun Zone, and the Giant "Lego Brick Wall."

In addition, the center is holding the "Interactive Classrooms", providing a series of



trial classes for children and teenagers who are interested in enrolling on-site.

According to the statement, participants will learn the basic knowledge of physics and engineering through the process of building bricks, using Lego bricks to build a robot and programming it. The activity aims to enhance the interest of children and teenagers in learning scienti-

fic knowledge across various fields. Each of the trial classes cost MOP50.

Similarly, the Planetarium is featuring a new animated program "The LEGO Movie The Experience."

Further, on July 15, the center will also launch a Photo Taking and Voting Activity at the MSC official Wechat account "mscmacao" which will run for a month.

ENVIRONMENT

17 tons of plastic bottles disposed daily

ENVIRONMENTAL Protection Bureau (DSPA) director Raymond Tam said Macau disposes of 17 tons of plastic bottles per day.

This statement was part of Tam's response to lawmaker Lei Cheng I's written inquiry to the DSPA regarding the date of plastic bottles which had been delivered to the incinerator for treatment.

Plastic bottle waste represents 1.24 percent of all of Macau's urban solid waste.

Macau's incinerator center charges MOP350 to dispose of one ton of waste.

Tam pointed out that the center had recycled 18 to 20 percent of the city's solid waste in recent years.

In Lei's inquiry, she also questioned whether the government will encourage local residents to use their own water bottles more frequently instead of buying bottled water.

Tam responded that the DSPA has continuously encouraged local residents to use fewer plastic bottles. He did not comment on whether the government plans to install more free water facilities in town.

Homage to Rui Afonso highlights his 'altruistic attributes'

Renato Marques

MANY members of Macau's society gathered to pay tribute to Rui Afonso during an event held on Monday at the Consulate of Portugal. A prominent lawyer and lawmaker in Macau for over 30 years, Afonso passed away at age 70 in mid-March this year, in Lisbon after a prolonged battle with an illness. He was remembered by a large group, that included his friends and family when they came to the Auditorium Stanley Ho to share their fondest memories of him.

On the auditorium stage, representatives of several stages of Afonso's life joined the event host, the Consul-General of Portugal for Macau and Hong Kong, Vitor Sereno, who delivered a personal message as well as a testimony from Ombudsman Councilor Judge Leal Henriques, who was unable to attend.

Sereno highlighted several important roles held by Afonso in Macau, such as his seat on the Advisory Council where he contributed decisively to the development of the Macau Basic Law. Another speaker was Anabela Ritchie, a long term colleague of Afonso, who delivered an emo-



Sergio de Almeida Correia (left), Anabela Ritchie, Vitor Sereno (center), Lei Heong lok and Neto Valente (right) were the panelists during an homage to Rui Afonso

tional speech on Afonso's contributions as a legislator and his "richness in human qualities."

Ritchie spoke of Afonso's "princeless role at the Legislative Assembly in the period between 1994 and 1997, when he allied his quality and technical accuracy to a great knowledge of Macau and found a way to uncover the right solutions that Macau needed in those troubled times of transition."

The president of the Macau Polytechnic Institute (IPM),

Lei Heong lok, recalled Afonso's capacity for altruism and his willingness to help others. Lei referred to Afonso as his "Portuguese brother," who for more than 30 years helped him in many legal issues – initially during the years of preparing for the handover, as translator and interpreter, and later in IPM's debut years, where Afonso was always available to aid him in the challenges he often faced.

Lei added that Afonso always nurtured what he considers one

of the most important human values – gratitude.

President of the Lawyers Association (AAM) Neto Valente recalled Afonso's "technical competence and visionary leadership," citing the occasions where Afonso proved to be the right man on the job, and testifying to the many examples found in his works that the "young generation can learn from."

Valente also noted Afonso's capacity to "bridge the communities" and his eloquence.


In an emotional address, lawyer and partner of office Sérgio de Almeida Correia also highlighted Afonso's sense of duty and altruistic acts, one of which led him to severe physical injury when he aided a person trapped inside a car after an accident in Portugal. Correia also noted the late lawyer's "key role in the reform of the public administration", reiterating his ability to link different communities in Macau, especially in his work creating bonds within the Chinese community.

He allied his quality and technical accuracy to a great knowledge of Macau.

ANABELA RITCHIE
FORMER AL PRESIDENT

Afonso started practicing in Macau in 1985. He was a legal adviser to the Secretary of Administration and Justice (1983-1984) and director of the Administration and Public Servants Service (1984-1985). Between 1984 and 1997, he was a lawmaker before returning to legal practice.

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HERITAGE

Macau photo exhibition unveiled in Guimarães, Portugal

A photography exhibition titled "Where the World Heritage Shines - Photography Exhibition of the Historic Center of Macau" is currently being held in the city of Guimarães, Portugal.

The exhibition features more than 90 photographs of the historic center of Macau taken by Chan Hin Io. The photographs show the charm of the small city through various angles, revealing the beauty and exuberant vitality of Macau's cultural heritage. Among the photographs is a large-scale image of the Ruins of St. Paul's, measuring 3 meters tall and 12 meters wide.

Chan is an experienced and well-known photographer in Macau. In recent years, he has been devoted to capturing Macau's customs as well as the city's landscapes, and has received several awards for his work.

The exhibition of his work commenced on June 23,



and its opening ceremony was held at the Vila Flor Palace in Guimarães, Portugal. The ceremony was officiated by representatives from Macau, including the President of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, Leung Hio Ming.

The ceremony was preceded by a talk about the historic center of Macau and Guimarães in the Vila Flor Cultural Center, presented by Leung and the architect and chief of the Historic Center Division of Guimarães, Miguel Frazão. The speakers discussed both historic centers and shared their experiences in the

conservation and revitalization of historical buildings. Guimarães and Macau were both added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2001 and 2005 respectively.

The exhibition and talk were part of a series of activities held in celebration of the Day of the City of Guimarães, highlighting the importance the city of Guimarães places on cultural exchange and dialogue with Macau.

The exhibition will be held at the Vila Flor Palace in Guimarães until August 12, after which it will be exhibited in Porto, Portugal in March 2018.

RENATO MARQUES



Yang Chongwei

New privacy watchdog intends to follow predecessors' steps

Renato Marques

YANG Chongwei, who was sworn in as new coordinator of the Office for Personal Data Protection (GPDP) yesterday, intends to build upon the "firm foundation left from the previous two coordinators."

On the sidelines of a seminar on Clients Data Protection at the World Trade Center, held by the GPDP in collaboration with the Judiciary Police and Macau's financial institutions, Yang said that his main goal is to continue to develop the activities launched by his predecessors.

These activities encompass two fields: the first being the coordination of juridical works and the second being the promotion of personal data protection to the general public.

In response to questions on the possibility of the GPDP proposing changes to the Personal Data Protection Law, which has been in force for over 10 years, Yang said that he believes the current law in force in Macau is largely up to date, and that minor changes may be put into effect after a review of the law. "We know there was a rapid development [worldwide] regarding personal data protection, but we are closely monitoring the progress all over the world [and] most of the principles of our data protection law are still valid," Yang said.

"We are also closely monitoring to see whether we need or not to make improvements [to our law], but I think in the short term we can [just] issue some guidelines to the data controllers so [they] can apply new changes [to the system]," he added.

Yang also dismissed the claim that the new facial recognition system installed in ATM machines for users of mainland bank cards could pose a new challenge for the Office. "The facial recognition technology is not very new.

We have a lot of knowledge on that, [which] is why I can say there is not a very serious problem to Macau to implement this kind of new system," he said.

"We will continue to monitor the development [and implementation] and whether there is any record of problems and whether data controllers can have more technology [available]," he assured, adding that the data protection authorities worldwide have been cooperating and sharing views on new developments of supervisory and identity verification technology.

Yang declined to confirm whether the "facial recognition data" would be handled by the financial institutions or by the Monetary Authority of Macau.

In his opening speech for the seminar, Yang mentioned that credit card fraud is still an important matter in Macau as electronic payment methods are "not so widespread as they are in Hong Kong and other neighboring areas," with credit cards being the most common payment method used both online and in physical stores.

He added that "data leakage and inefficient safeguarding of the cardholder's personal data are the main risks to credit card use in terms of privacy breaching," and that these problems were aggravated by criminals using this information to commit financial crimes.

Guest speakers later addressed additional problems on the use and handling of the credit cards by retail outlets as well as measures to prevent fraud.

Commenting on one of these interventions, Joseph Lee, representative of Evolution Security Systems Asia Limited, noted that "fear strikes consumption" – in other words, trusting the consumer to decide on the appropriate time to handle credit card bill payments can have a "great impact on trust" and that this trust can play a decisive role in whether people decide to spend, especially for tourists.

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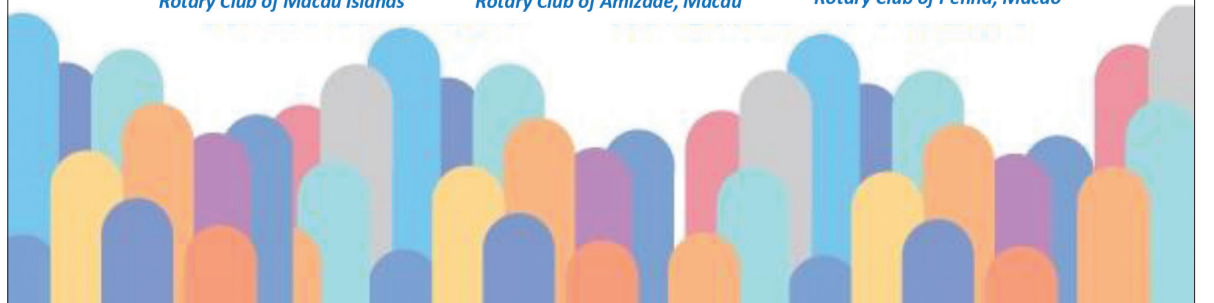
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Marijuana sales in Nevada exceed stores' expectations

Regina Garcia Cano,
Las Vegas

RECREATIONAL marijuana sales have exceeded the expectations of Las Vegas area store owners, who have seen long lines outside their dispensaries since Saturday, when Nevada became the fifth state with shops selling pot to the public.

That move jumpstarted a market projected to be fueled by the tens of millions of visitors that Sin City welcomes each year.

Eager pot customers on Monday again lined up before dispensaries opened their doors. Some were looking to make their first purchase since Saturday, and others were shopping for seconds. Tourists and locals alike have taken advantage of the change in state law.

"I'm a very happy with the way sales have gone



and continue to go, especially when you consider that the word didn't really get out ahead of time," said Andrew Jolley, president of the Nevada Dispensary Association and a store owner. "The public really only had a couple of weeks' notice, whereas Colorado had a full

year to prepare." Nevada voters approved legalizing recreational pot in November, but regulations needed before the sales could start weren't approved until the past two weeks. The state later this week will release a report regarding the unannounced enforcement inspec-

tions that were conducted Saturday at dispensaries across the state.

The demand for recreational marijuana has been such that dispensaries had to turn away customers in line over the weekend, and at least one extended its hours of operation. Dispensaries reported

wait times of 45 minutes to an hour Saturday afternoon and up to 20 minutes Sunday.

The Euphoria Wellness dispensary had 50 people waiting to make purchases midmorning Monday. Its marketing coordinator, Jim Ferrence, said budtenders helped at least 1,000 customers during the first two days of legal recreational pot sales.

Customers on average bought a quarter of an ounce of marijuana flowers and a sampling of various edibles and concentrates, Ferrence said. "Everyone was calm, cool and collected. No unruly crowds at all," he said.

Those 21 and older with a valid ID can buy up to an ounce of pot. As of Friday, the state had licensed 44 dispensaries to sell recreational marijuana. Thirty-nine of those shops are in the Las Vegas area.

More than 42 million tourists flock for business and pleasure to Las Vegas every year. They along with visitors to the rest of Nevada are expected to make nearly two of every three recreational pot purchases

in the state.

But people can only use the drug in a private home as it remains illegal to consume it in public, including the Strip, hotels and casinos. Violators face a misdemeanor citation and a USD600 fine.

Fifteen tourists on Monday hopped on a bus for a three-hour tour of dispensaries in the Las Vegas area. The "Cannabus" took the visitors to two stores with whom they have an agreement to allow riders to skip the lines.

The recreational marijuana sales did not cause Las Vegas police a headache over the weekend. The department did not deploy additional officers and does not track misdemeanor citations, Officer Larry Hadfield on Monday said.

"It was business as usual," he said. "Everything went smooth as far as we can tell."

The state stands to earn millions from the sales of recreational marijuana, but the tax collection data won't be available for several weeks.

Nevada joins Colorado, Oregon, Washington and Alaska in allowing adults to buy the drug that's still banned by the federal government. The market in the Silver State is expected to outpace all others in the U.S., at least until California starts its sales.

"With all due respect to Denver, Seattle, and Portland, Las Vegas is already the party capital of the world, and this is just an extension of that," Ferrence said. "There's no question that the demand is ever going to relent." AP

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TUI said to weigh resurrecting leisure carrier

TUI AG is considering resurrecting efforts to form a joint venture with Air Berlin Plc and Etihad Aviation Group by taking a bigger role in the endeavor than originally planned, according to people familiar with the situation.

TUI is studying whether to take a majority stake or even full ownership of the proposed leisure airline - which was intended to combine assets from Air Berlin's Niki and TUI's TUIfly - said the people, who asked not to be identified as the talks are private. However, TUI's reluctance to add German capacity stands in the way of a deal, said one of the people.

The original project, which collapsed a month ago when Abu Dhabi-based Etihad

pulled out, was aimed at letting German tour operator TUI revive its unprofitable TUIfly airline while allowing loss-burdened Air Berlin to offload its Niki leisure brand.

While TUI could buy Niki and is considering such a deal, that option isn't likely because carving Niki out of Air Berlin would be costly and time-consuming, one of the people said. Plus, TUI wants to reduce its German airline capacity amid a glut of seats.

That said, it's in TUI's interest to ensure Air Berlin's survival because if that carrier fails, TUIfly would have to take back the 14 aircraft and crews it is leasing to its partner, once again setting back its streamlining efforts.

Representatives for Air Berlin and Etihad declined to comment. **MDT/Bloomberg**

Bank of Mozambique opens new headquarters in Maputo

THE Bank of Mozambique spent USD300 million of its own resources to build its new headquarters in Maputo, a set of three buildings in the city center occupying an area of more than 87,500 square meters, which was inaugurated on Monday by the Mozambican President.

The main building, called Torre de Escritorios (Office Tower), has 29 floors and occupies an area of 25,900 square meters, the second largest, the Car Silo, has 19 floors and occupies an area of 56,000 square meters, with the rear of the first 14 floors reserved for car parking.

The third building, the smallest, is called the Technical Hub, and on its six floors houses a variety of equipment including power transformers and emergency generators.

The contract for its construction, which began in 2011, was awarded to Por-

tuguese company Teixeira Duarte and its main aim was to modernise the former headquarters of the central bank, improve the working conditions of the staff and ensure a better range of banking services to the State and other Institutions.

The central bank reported that the construction project included security and technology elements that will ensure the handling and storage of money according to international standards and added that the former headquarters building was out of touch with the current needs as it was built in 1964.

The old building, which was built to house the Banco Nacional Ultramarino's headquarters in Mozambique, will remain in the possession of the Bank of Mozambique, according to statements made on Monday by Governor Rogério Zandame-la. **MDT/Macauhub**

ANGOLA

Sonangol posts profit of USD68 million in 2016

ANGOLA oil company Sociedade Nacional de Combustíveis de Angola (Sonangol) posted net profit of more than 13 billion kwanzas (USD68 million) in 2016, the chairwoman of the company, Isabel dos Santos, announced on Monday in Luanda.

Presenting the results for the previous year, dos Santos said net income and EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) of 525 billion kwanzas (\$2.755 billion) reversed the sharp downward trend of the previous two years.

Cited by Angolan news agency Angop, Isabel dos Santos stressed that the company kept oil production above 1.7 million barrels a day in 2016, "despite all the constraints associated with the drop in oil prices," making Angola the bi-

ggest oil producer in Africa. Isabel dos Santos noted that the current Sonangol board, which was appointed in June 2016, took on that responsibility in the context of an economic crisis in the country and with the state company registering a 60 percent drop in revenues compared to 2013/2016, high debt and falling oil prices.

The chairwoman of the oil concessionaire in Angola said that it was possible to increase revenues and reduce expenses by introducing a number of programs, such as Sonaplus and Sonalight.

Sonaplus involved increasing sales of bitumen, optimising Luanda Refinery products, reviewing lubricant prices and adopting revenue guarantee programmes at Clínica Girassol.

The Sonalight programme is focused on making savings of up to 200 billion kwanzas



Sonangol's headquarters in Luanda

(\$1.2 billion), and effective savings of 53 billion kwanzas (\$320 million) which have already been achieved in the second half of 2016. **MDT/Macauhub**

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Visitors look at models of China's Long March space rockets at the China Beijing International High-Tech Expo in Beijing

Rocket failure likely to set back next space missions

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

THE failure of China's Long March 5 rocket deals a rare setback to China's highly successful space program that could delay plans to bring back moon samples and offer rival India a chance to move ahead in the space rankings.

Experts say the still unexplained mishap shows that for all its triumphs, China's space program is not immune to the tremendous difficulties and risks involved in working with such cutting-edge technology.

"China's approach has been slow and prudent, trying to avoid this kind of 'failure,' even though they knew it was going to occur sooner or later," Joan Johnson-Freese, an expert on China's space program at the US Naval War College, wrote in an email.

Authorities say the Long March 5 Y2 that took off Sunday in the second launch of a Long March 5 rocket, suffered an abnormality during the flight after what appeared to be a successful liftoff from

the Wenchang Space Launch Center in the southern island province of Hainan. The incident is under investigation and the authorities have yet to comment on possible causes, or any knock-on effects on the program as a whole.

Since the first launch in 1970, China's Long March series of rockets have been a remarkably solid bet

In a testimony to the high respect China's program now commands, the failure drew widespread commentary in the space community, including from SpaceX founder and chief executive Elon Musk, who tweeted Sunday:

"Sorry to hear about China-launch failure today. I know how painful that is to the people who designed & built it."

Nicknamed "Chubby 5" for its massive, 5-meter girth, the Long March-5 is China's largest and most brawny launch vehicle, capable of carrying 25 tons of payload into low-earth orbit and 14 tons to the more distant geostationary transfer orbit in which a satellite orbits constantly above a fixed position on the earth's surface.

That's more than double that of the Long March 7, the backbone of the Chinese launching fleet, making it the linchpin for launch duties requiring such massive heft such as interplanetary travel.

First among those is the mission slated for November by the Chang'e 5 probe to land a rover on the moon before returning to Earth with samples — the first time that has been done since 1976. China's most technically demanding mission to date, it had been put off before because of funding and then technology, Johnson-Freese said. While

the Long March 5 has suffered other setbacks, the lunar mission is "certainly the most visible one," she said.

Other upcoming Chinese missions include the launch next year of the 20-ton core module for China's orbiting Tiangong 2 space station, along with specialized components for the 60-ton station that is due to come on-line in 2022 and other massive payloads in future. The Long March 5 was also due to be the launch vehicle for a Mars rover planned for the mid 2020s.

Problems with the Long March 5 may stem from its use of liquefied gases that are less stable than the solid propellants used in other rockets, said Morris Jones, an Australian space analyst and regular contributor to SpaceDaily.com. Unlike earlier rockets that used highly toxic fuels, the Long March 5 burns a more environmentally friendly and less expensive kerosene-liquid oxygen-liquid hydrogen mix — which is more complex and harder to regulate.

Jones called such setbacks typical of the development phase of a new rocket and said additional launches may be required to work out the kinks. Sunday's launch failure will delay the Chang'e 5 mission at least until next year, while there may also be a small delay in launching the

space station components, Jones said.

Finding a fix "takes a lot of time and effort but there is no other way to produce a reliable rocket," Jones said.

Test launched for the first time last year in what had been a towering success, the 57-meter two-stage rocket is just slightly less powerful than the most powerful rocket in service, the U.S.' United Launch Alliance's Delta IV, although SpaceX's Falcon Heavy is designed to carry a payload into low-earth orbit of more than 50 tons.

Since the first launch in 1970, China's Long March series of rockets have been a remarkably solid bet, achieving a success rate of around 95 percent. That's helped facilitate a program that conducted its first crewed space mission in 2003, making China only the third country after Russia and the U.S. to do so, put a pair of space stations into orbit, and landed its Yutu, or "Jade Rabbit" rover on the moon. Administrators suggest a manned landing on the moon may also be in the program's future.

Not all has been smooth sailing, however. A Long March 3B rocket launched June 18 launch placed its communications satellite in a lower-than planned for orbit. Though the satellite is climbing into its proper altitude on its own, the effort will reduce its useful lifespan in space. A least two similar incidents reportedly occurred last year.

With two mishaps coming so close together, Chinese space officials may decide to take a pause to re-evaluate manufacturing quality or other aspects of the program, said Stephen Clark of Spaceflight Now. That may include launching another Long March 5 test flight before attempting the Chang'e 5 mission, Clark said.

Both Clark and Johnson-Freese said they hope the failure doesn't deter Chinese officials in their pursuit of greater transparency and international participation in the country's space program.

Yet, rivals, primarily India, may see the setback as an opportunity to steal a march on China, whose geostrategic influence has benefited significantly from its role as a technology leader in space, said Johnson-Freese.

India's Mars Orbiter Mission, called Mangalyaan, is already orbiting the red planet, years before China is ready to launch such a mission, and it won acclaim and a place in the record books earlier this year by placing 104 nano satellites in orbit from a single rocket.

"The failure of the Long March 5 may provide a window of opportunity for India," said Johnson-Freese. **AP**

China, Germany step up as U.S. retires from world leadership

Marc Champion, Peter Martin and Brian Parkin

THE U.S. traditionally takes point in the search for common approaches to the big global issues of the day at G-20 summits. Not this time.

When world leaders meet in Hamburg on Friday, China and Germany will move in to usurp the U.S.'s role.

The two industrial powerhouses of Asia and Europe are being nudged into an informal alliance to pick up the leadership baton that the U.S. is accused of having dropped since President Donald Trump's inauguration earlier this year, according to diplomats and officials from several Group of 20 members.

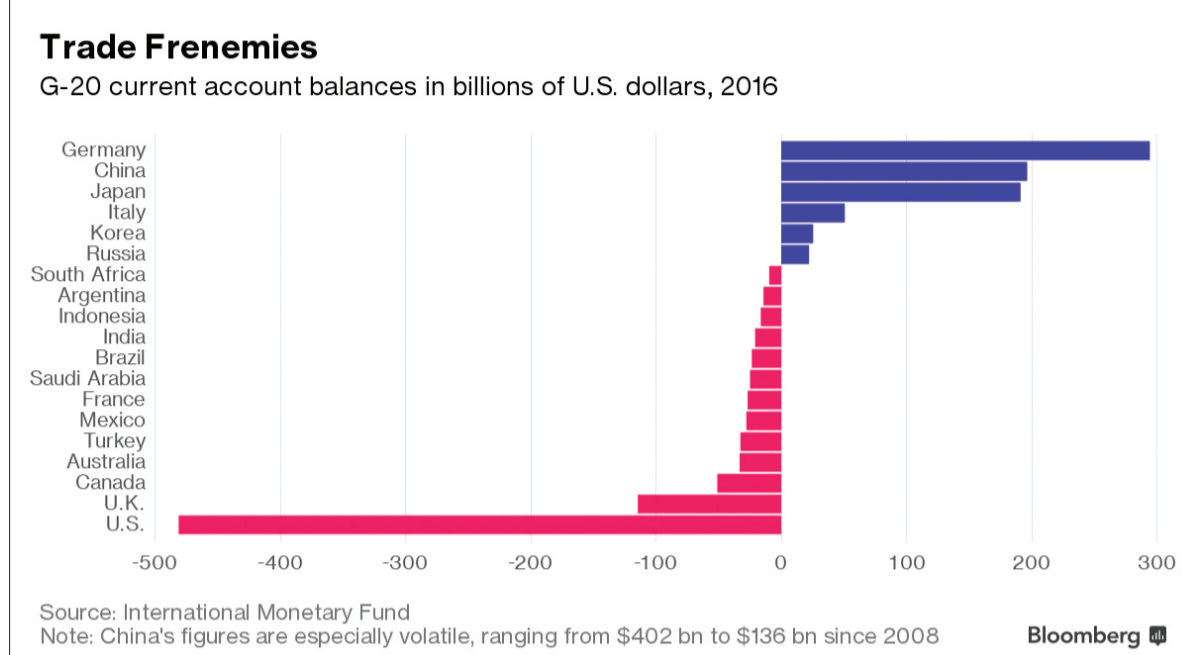
The situation has crystallized ahead of this year's annual G-20 meeting, which will be held in Germany's busiest commercial port. That's in part because, for the first time since the group's founding, the U.S. will be represented by a president who embraces protectionism, abandoning decades of American cheer-leading for free trade.

"The strategic character of Chinese-German relations is steadily gaining in importance," Chinese President Xi Jinping said in an op-ed article published yesterday in German newspaper Die Welt. The two countries "should intensify cooperation on implementing China's 'One Belt, One Road' and jointly make contributions to the security, stability and prosperity of neighboring countries."

The U.S. was also isolated on climate change at a May summit of the smaller Group of Seven club in Italy, where the final communique split six-to-one on the issue. This time, Trump risks finding himself alone against a united front of European allies, neighbors such as Canada and Mexico, and America's former Cold War foes on the two biggest summit items.

As the previous and current hosts, Xi and Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel would in any case have worked together on the G-20 agenda. Yet three visits to Germany by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to date, the latest just last month, suggest the two nations are aligned on stepping more broadly into a space that the U.S. has, at least temporarily, left vacant under Trump's presidency.

"China and Germany's new closeness is something that happened because of the Trump episode," said Diego Ramiro Guelar, ambassador to Beijing for G-20 member Argentina. "The two most important leaders in the world are President Xi and Chan-



cellor Merkel at the moment."

Ties between China and Germany have been strengthening for years, driven by common economic interests and unobstructed by the kinds of geopolitical rivalries that were complicating relations between Beijing and Washington long before Trump's election. Germany needs markets for its high-end industrial machinery and motor vehicles, and China wants them -- so much so it bought German robotics company Kuka AG.

Xi will make his second state visit to Germany just before the summit. Two giant pandas that China will loan to the Berlin Zoo arrived already, a gesture sometimes described as panda diplomacy. China gave two pandas to the U.S. in 1972, after President Richard Nixon made his historic first visit to Communist China.

"Relations between China and Germany are at their historic best," said Michael Clauss, Germany's ambassador to Beijing, in a recent briefing with reporters. "The economic and political dynamic from a German perspective is moving toward the east."

The U.S. has "left somewhat of a vacuum" in the region by abandoning the proposed 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership free-trade agreement, Clauss said. The deal sought to build a U.S.-centered free-trade bloc among Pacific Rim countries from Chile to Vietnam, as an alternative to more China-dominated initiatives such as One Belt One Road. Trump withdrew the U.S. from the TPP plans within a day of taking office.

The Trump vacuum is still more evident when it comes to climate change, after he announced last month that he was pulling the U.S. out of the 2015 Paris Agreement to slow global warming. The accord was signed by more than 190 countries, including all of the G-20 members.

The U.S. and China, the two biggest polluters, had formed a de facto G-2 for climate change, during the administration of former President Barack Obama. Other partners were brought in only once the big two had settled on the framework they wanted for reducing harmful emissions; neither wanted the quota-based approach favored by the European Union.

That format for climate change negotiations disappeared with Trump's election. A new vanguard group comprising Canada, China and the EU met for the first time in May. A bilateral China-Germany working group on climate change met in Berlin last week, when each side jointly committed to take "an ambitious" approach to implementing Paris agreement goals, and to press that collective approach in Hamburg.

"There's a clear recognition of our leaders that German-Chinese leadership is now needed," said Karsten Sach, Merkel's main climate-change sherpa for the G-20, speaking at a conference in Berlin on Friday. "Both nations are very strong exporters and in terms of

the technology aspects of fighting climate change I see very strong cooperation."

There are still significant limits to how far a Germany-China tandem can go, reflecting frustrations at what Merkel - like Trump - sees as lopsided terms of trade. Germany sold more than USD85 billion worth of goods to China last year and was Europe's largest investor in the Middle Kingdom. But it thinks those figures could be much higher, if the Chinese didn't impose barriers that don't exist in Europe.

In 2016, Chinese direct investment across the EU rose by 77 percent over the previous year, building on years of annual 30 percent increases, according to a study by the Rhodium Group and the Mercator Institute for China Studies. Kuka and resource recovery firm EEW Energy from Waste GmbH were among the prime targets.

Yet European investment in China fell for the fourth year in succession, with hurdles in industries such as insurance, onerous joint venture requirements and concerns over a new cybersecu-

ty law, which some foreign investors fear could be used to disadvantage them.

China meanwhile prefers to lean on Germany rather than the EU due to wider disputes with the bloc which continues to oppose the granting of market economy status to China at the World Trade Organization.

The two most important leaders in the world are President Xi and Chancellor Merkel at the moment.

DIEGO RAMIRO GUELAR
ARGENTINIAN AMBASSADOR TO BEIJING

Some foreign policy baggage China carries could also hinder its ability to create international consensus around its goals, such as its unacknowledged role as protector for North Korea. On Tuesday, Pyongyang successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time, landing in Japanese waters.

Merkel is aware of the dangers of allowing China to peel Germany away from the EU, creating a decidedly unequal partnership between countries that have very different political systems and few shared values. Interviewed in this week's edition of the German business magazine Wirtschaftswoche, Merkel backed French President Emmanuel Macron's call for EU governments to be able to do more to block foreign purchases of important companies.

"If countries such as China want to simply buy up something that's been built up with a lot of subsidies, we have to react to that," she told the magazine, citing the kinds of technology companies that interest China most, such as microchips and artificial intelligence.

"Seen from Beijing, Europe is more like an Asian peninsula," she said. "Obviously, we see things differently." **Bloomberg**



PHILIPPINES

Court upholds martial law as siege's end seen

THE Philippine Supreme Court upheld yesterday the president's declaration of martial law in the south in a legal boost to a military offensive that the defense chief said may soon succeed in quelling an uprising by Islamic State group-linked militants.

Supreme Court spokesman Theodore Te said 11 of 15 justices voted to dismiss petitions against the declaration of martial law, which President Rodrigo Duterte imposed across the country's southern third for 60 days after hundreds of gunmen waving IS-style black flags laid siege to southern Marawi city on May 23.

The petitioners argued the siege did not constitute a rebellion that could justify martial rule which might foster human rights abuses in a country that ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos in a 1986 revolt for massive rights violations.

"We were hoping the Supreme Court would be our last line of defense against a patently absurd decision built on a failure of intelligence and a rhetoric of violent

machismo," said Machris Cabreos of Akbayan, a left-wing political party whose officers were among the petitioners. "Instead they caved in and unwittingly opened the door to further creeping authoritarianism."

The government's top lawyer, Solicitor General Jose Calida, welcomed the decision, saying, "as the conscience of our nation, the Supreme Court did not sit idly to watch our country get dismembered."

Calida has said evidence showed that an IS-linked alliance of four local extremist groups plotted to seize predominantly Muslim Marawi as part of a plot to create an Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia. Duterte's move helped troops capture militants and block their movement, security officials said.

After 43 days of intense ground assaults and airstrikes, troops have recaptured most areas of Marawi including parts of its central business district, where the gunmen turned buildings into

AP PHOTO



Opponents argued that the siege did not constitute a rebellion that could justify martial rule

sniper posts that slowed the military's advance for weeks. Troops regained control Monday of a key school compound where they recovered 15 assault weapons and found the remains of a foreign-looking fighter, probably a Singaporean, military officials said.

In a speech marking the air

force's founding anniversary at Clark freeport north of Manila, Duterte said more than 40 Philippine aircraft were involved in the Marawi offensive.

"As we wrap up in our campaign to liberate Marawi, I am confident that the Philippine air force will once again take an active role in the rebuilding of the city," Duterte said.

About 400,000 villagers have abandoned Marawi, a bastion of Islamic faith with hundreds of mosques, and outlying towns in Lanao del Sur province, about 800 kilometers southeast of Manila.

The unprecedented urban attack has alarmed Southeast Asian and Western governments, which fear that the Islamic State

group's brutal rule in Syria and Iraq, now collapsing, may have galvanized Asian militants into attempting to create their own so-called Islamic caliphate in the region with funds from Middle East-based jihadis.

Despite Duterte's antagonism toward U.S. and Australian officials, who have criticized his bloody crackdown on illegal drugs, the Western allies have deployed surveillance planes to help Philippine troops track down the remaining militants in Marawi.

European officials, also often a target of Duterte's verbal attacks, announced yesterday they will provide 49 million pesos (USD980,000) in emergency aid for displaced civilians. **MDT/AP**

INDIA

Government forces kill three rebels in Kashmir

Government forces killed three rebels in a gunbattle in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir while 35 civilians were injured in anti-India protests and clashes in solidarity with militants, police and witnesses said yesterday.

The 24-hour long fighting erupted Monday after soldiers and counterinsurgency police raided southern Bahmnoo village on a tip rebels were hiding there, police Inspector-General Muneer Ahmed Khan said.

Witnesses said the fighting ended yesterday morning after troops blasted and destroyed four homes during the fighting.

Khan said soldiers were searching for the body of a fourth militant in the debris.

At least six police and soldiers were injured in the fighting.

The gunfight triggered intense clashes after hun-



dreds of civilians marched near the site to help the trapped militants escape.

Government forces fired bullets, shotgun pellets and tear gas to stop the march by rock-throwing protesters who were chanted slogans such as "Go India, go back" and "We want freedom."

At least 35 civilians were injured, including five

with bullet wounds.

Yesterday, anti-India protests and clashes spread to at least three other areas in volatile southern Kashmir. Reports said hundreds of men and women threw rocks after government forces fired tear gas shells to stop the demonstrators from conducting protest marches.

In recent years, Kashmi-

ris, mainly youths, have displayed open solidarity with anti-India rebels and sought to protect them by engaging troops in street clashes during military operations against the militants. The anti-India protests and clashes have persisted despite the Indian army chief warning recently that "tough action" would be taken against stone throwers during counterinsurgency operations.

India and Pakistan control part of Kashmir, but both claim the Himalayan territory in its entirety. Rebel groups have been fighting since 1989 for Kashmir's independence or merger with neighboring Pakistan. Nearly 70,000 people have been killed in the fighting and the ensuing Indian crackdown.

India has accused Pakistan of arming and training the rebels, which Pakistan denies.

Rebel groups have largely been suppressed by Indian forces in recent years and public opposition to Indian rule is now principally expressed through street protests. **MDT/AP**

EAST TIMOR

PM calls for acceptance after first LGBT parade

GAY rights have taken a step forward in East Timor with its first LGBT pride parade and the prime minister announcing that the young nation's development depends on respecting the rights of all its citizens.

The parade in the capital, Dili, on June 29 attracted several hundred people and was supported by local and international organizations including the Hatutan youth group, the U.N. and U.S. Embassy.

The same week, Prime Minister Rui Maria de Araujo called on Timorese to accept people's differences.

"Discrimination, disrespect and abuse towards people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity does not provide any benefit to our nation," he said.

Allowing all citizens to contribute to the develop-

ment of East Timor will "make the most of the independence we all fought for," he added.

The former Portuguese colony gained independence from 24 years of Indonesian occupation following a referendum in 1999, though it suffered devastating reprisals by the Indonesian military and militias.

With the prime minister's statement, the still impoverished country is charting a tolerant course compared with its massive neighbor Indonesia, where anti-LGBT rhetoric is on the rise and a case before the Constitutional Court is seeking to criminalize gay sex and sex outside marriage.

Bella Galhos, the organizer of the Dili parade, said she was motivated by a desire to see East Timor become a just society that is "better for all." **AP**



This photo distributed by the North Korean government shows what was said to be the launch of a Hwasong-14 intercontinental ballistic missile



People watch the news about the ground-to-sea cruise missile in Pyongyang

North Korea claims its first successful launch of an ICBM

Kanga Kong, Keith Zhai and David Tweed

NORTH Korea said yesterday it successfully test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile, a claim that brings the isolated state closer to its aim of building a device capable of hitting the continental U.S. with a nuclear warhead.

The missile was a newly-developed ICBM that reached an altitude of 2,800 kilometers (1,740 miles) and was fired at its highest angle, an announcer said on North Korean state television. She said the projectile that flew for 39 minutes could hit "anywhere in the world," adding it caused no risk to neighboring nations.

Leader Kim Jong Un signed the order for the test of the missile called a Hwasong-14, according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the projectile was fired around 9:40 a.m. and flew about 930 kilometers. Japan's Defense Ministry said it reached an altitude that "greatly exceeded" 2,500 kilometers.

Neither the U.S., South Korea nor Japan have confirmed whether it was an ICBM. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secre-

tary Yoshihide Suga said the country was examining North Korea's claim.

Either way, the launch suggests an advancement in North Korea's capability and risks escalating friction with its neighbors and the U.S. It comes ahead of a planned meeting this week between President Donald Trump and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping at the Group of 20 summit in Germany.

"It's an ICBM for sure," said Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, California.

"The North Koreans seem to have made quite a lot of progress in the past year," he said. "I don't want to speculate until we can measure everything carefully, but it's possible that it could strike targets in the continental U.S."

China called for calm and restraint by all parties, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said yesterday at a regular briefing, according to China Central Television. Beijing firmly opposes any actions by North Korea that contravene United Nations Security Council resolutions, he said.

There are already renewed tensions between the U.S. and China about how best

to rein in Kim, with Trump saying Xi has not done enough to curtail his neighbor and ally. China is North Korea's main economic lifeline but fears too strong a squeeze on the regime could risk its collapse, leading both to a refugee crisis and a greater U.S. military presence on its doorstep.

Hard to believe that South Korea and Japan will put up with this much longer.

DONALD TRUMP
US PRESIDENT

"The ICBM launch could make an enormous impact on China-U.S. relations and even cause severe damage," said Zhang Liangui, a professor at the Chinese Communist Party's Central Party School. "The leaders from both sides need to be very careful to not let North Korea manage their relationship."

"It's not important if the North is making a real claim or not," Zhang added. "The

launch shows that they keep moving forward."

Trump responded earlier yesterday on Twitter to the missile launch, asking of Kim "does this guy have anything better to do with his life?"

"Hard to believe that South Korea and Japan will put up with this much longer," Trump said. "Perhaps China will put a heavy move on North Korea and end this nonsense once and for all!"

The U.S. president has said all options including military force are available against Pyongyang, though North Korea's neighbors have warned a strike could be disastrous for North Asia, given the risk of retaliation. South Korea's new government has also urged talks with Kim, a stance that puts it potentially at odds with Trump's administration, which says negotiations can only happen if Kim halts his nuclear program.

South Korea will seek stronger sanctions against North Korea if the missile proves to be an ICBM, a presidential official told reporters yesterday, adding it will take several days to analyze the launch. President Moon Jae-in still wants to pursue talks with North Korea to ease tensions, the official said.

The North Korean jitters hit

markets in Asia. Japan's benchmark Topix index finished the day 0.3 percent lower after wiping out earlier gains of as much as 0.7 percent, while the yen rose against the dollar. South Korea's Kospi stocks index fell 0.6 percent.

David Wright, a co-director of the Union of Concerned Scientists, wrote on the group's website that the projectile could have a maximum range of about 6,700 kilometers with the potential to reach all of Alaska. That range, he wrote, wouldn't be enough to reach the lower 48 states or the large islands of Hawaii.

"They have done some pretty significant things in tests in the past year or two already," said Andrew Gilholm, director of analysis for North Asia at Control Risks Group. "There is no clear red line set where the U.S. says 'if you pass this red line, we'll do something different'."

KCNA said that North Korea was a "full-fledged nuclear power" with ICBMs that can hit any part of the world. "The DPRK will fundamentally put an end to the U.S. nuclear war threat and blackmail and reliably defend the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula and the region," it said, referring to an abbreviation for the nation's formal title.

China's ambassador to the UN warned on Monday that "the consequences would be disastrous" if the U.S. and North Korea failed to resume talks. "We cannot afford to wait for too long before dialogue" Liu Jieyi told reporters in New York. **Bloomberg**

CZECH REPUBLIC

Orchestra of disabled musicians gets world attention

Karel Janicek

IT'S an unusual orchestra, one that has played in London, Madrid, Moscow and Jerusalem. Its next stops are New York, Washington and Chicago.

Tap Tap, created 18 years ago to give students at a renowned school for the disabled in Prague an extracurricular activity, has become a major musical operation that has drawn millions of fans, first at home and gradually abroad.

You can't tell from its professional, typically rhythmic sound that many of the musicians are in wheelchairs with serious disabilities. And that's just what its director wants.

Band leader Simon Ornest believes that often the disabled aren't challenged enough and people tend to be too solicitous of them.

"My goal from the very start was



The Tap Tap orchestra perform during a charity concert in Prague

not to do it as a therapy but as a band with everything that it could involve," Ornest said. "[Those] around 18 to 20 years old are confronted in our band for the first time with a situation where we really want something from them. We insist on it."

Ornest said he had a feeling the

concept was viable but has been astounded at its success.

"I wouldn't believe it would be possible to develop it as we have done. It's an elaborate system with hard work behind it, unexpectedly hard work," he said.

He said the band's strength is based on its two essential rules.

"We come on time and we do what we promised among ourselves to do. It's a pretty good basis for any teamwork," he said.

In the beginning, Tap Tap started with cover versions of their favorite songs. Today it produces music of its own, with help from local musicians, and lyrics that target the world of the disabled.

"We try to sing about the people with disabilities in a sensitive but also humorous way," Ornest said.

Their recent hit, "The Bus Director" is about a bus driver who prevents a disabled man from boarding the bus with his bicycle. The song has had over 6.9 million views on YouTube — quite an accomplishment for a song sung in Czech in a country of only 10 million.

"At the beginning, people were more curious about what we are, about what the disabled can per-

form," said Jana Augustinova, a Tap Tap singer. "And then [came] pity, wonder. Now, we have fans as any other band. They like our music and they don't consider us a band of disabled kids but as a real band."

Today, the 20-member ensemble plays about 60 concerts a year and has been performing a musical at the National Theatre in Prague. Despite all the difficulties of going on the road, Tap Tap has played a number of European capitals. This year it is crossing the Atlantic to put on concerts in New York City, Washington D.C. and Chicago.

The orchestra's next project for next year is to perform in Czech prisons together with inmates in concerts that will be broadcast live by Czech public television.

"What the people just released from prison and the disabled have in common is that the public doesn't expect much from them," Ornest said.

Ladislav Angelovic, the band's master of ceremonies, said Tap Tap is ready to face a whole new level of challenges.

"We started as an extracurricular activity and it got out of our hands a bit," he said. "In fact, we are a professional ensemble now." AP

TANZANIA

Dam project said to affect World Heritage site

Christopher Torchia

THE United Nations has called it one of Africa's biggest remaining wilderness areas. Now a dispute over a planned hydropower dam in Tanzania's Selous wildlife reserve pits the country's president against conservationists who say the project could cause irreparable damage to the UNESCO World Heritage site.

Yesterday, a few days after President John Magufuli said the Stiegler's Gorge dam will be built "come rain, come sun," the WWF conservation group said in a report that the project threatens an important wetland as well as the livelihoods of more than 200,000 people in impoverished areas, reliant on fishing, that would be downstream.

The Selous, which covers nearly 50,000 square kilometers, has been under pressure from poachers who have decimated its elephant population to supply the illegal ivory market. Mining concessions and other industrial projects are also a concern



In this photo supplied by World Wildlife Fund and taken Aug, 2016, Stiegler's Gorge is shown in Tanzania's Selous wildlife reserve

as the East African nation's campaign to boost its economy conflicts with international efforts to preserve habitats and their wildlife.

Speaking Saturday in Dar es Salaam, Magufuli said the dam and resulting reservoir will cover only about 3 percent of the Selous.

"We are not going to listen to people who speak about impacts on environment without facts on the ground," Magufuli said, according to Tanzania's Daily News newspaper.

However, conservation-

nists say the project could have a negative impact on a much bigger area, for example by cutting off wildlife migration routes. The WWF has asked for an environmental assessment in line with Tanzanian law and wants the government to consider alternative ideas for generating power.

The plan at Stiegler's Gorge has been discussed for decades. Once completed, the project would increase Tanzania's power generation from 1,450 megawatts to at least 4,000 megawatts, according to the Daily News. AP

EUROPEAN UNION

Juncker to EU parliament leader: 'You are ridiculous'

Raf Casert

THE head of the European Union's executive body denounced the bloc's parliament as "totally ridiculous" during a spat over the meager attendance at yesterday's plenary session.

After EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker thanked the few dozens of the 700-plus legislators in the huge atrium for showing up, he insisted that "parliament is not serious" for failing to show up in large numbers for the keynote debate of the day.

EU Parliament President Antonio Tajani chided Juncker and asked for "a more respectful attitude." Tajani added: "The Commission does not control the parliament. It is the parliament that should be controlling the Commission."

To which Juncker retorted: "There are only a few members in the parliament to control the Commission. You are ridiculous."

Juncker is considered a key leader of the 28-nation bloc. The Commission prepares rules and regulations for the bloc and runs its day-to-day business. The parliament has increased its clout over the past year but many of the decisions



European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker

are still made by the leaders of the member states or the Commission.

The exchange at the legislature in Strasbourg, France, was even more amazing since Juncker and Tajani belong to the same EPP Christian Democratic group.

Though the European parliament has increased its clout over the past years after earning a bigger say in a host of issues, it is often still perceived as an easy job for politicians without a big national portfolio and veterans seeking a leisurely way to retirement.

The views of the parliament bore out Juncker's assertion with row after row of empty seats. Philippe Lamberts of the Greens group, one of the few to show up, was seen applauding the rebuke of Juncker.

The session centered on the Maltese presidency of the EU which ended on July 1, and Prime Minister Joseph Muscat was attending the plenary.

While Muscat was still in the hall, Juncker referred to the German and French leaders while scolding the parliament.

"If Mr. Muscat would have been Mrs. Merkel — tough to imagine — or Mr. Macron — easier to imagine — we would have had a full house. The parliament is totally ridiculous," Juncker said.

Gianni Pittella, the leader of the Socialist bloc, said attendance should have been better but added that "whenever we have major events, votes on major files, members of the European parliament are there and present." AP

SYRIA

US-backed forces breach wall around IS-held Raqqa

Sarah El Deeb, Beirut

U.S.-BACKED forces in Syria have breached the wall around Raqqa's Old City, the U.S. military said yesterday, marking a major advance in the weeks-old battle to drive Islamic State militants out of their self-declared capital.

The U.S. Central Command said the coalition struck two "small portions" of the Rafiqah Wall, allowing the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces "to advance into the most heavily fortified portion" of the city, bypassing booby traps and snipers. It said the strikes left most of the 2,500-meter wall intact.

The head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Rami Abdurrahman, said the breaching of the wall was the most important development to date in the battle for Raqqa. He said three SDF units advanced toward the wall under air cover, breaking through the IS defenses, and that heavy clashes were underway.

Footage provided by the SDF showed their fighters roaming



This undated file frame grab from video posted online on May 29 by a media arm of the Islamic State group, shows people inspecting damage from airstrikes and artillery shelling in Raqqa

Qasr al-Banat, a historic quarter inside Raqqa's Old City. Another unit entered through the so-called Baghdad Gate, opening up a second front inside the Old City.

Brett McGurk, the top U.S. envoy for the international coalition against the Islamic State group, hailed the breach, saying it was a "key milestone" in the campaign to seize the IS stronghold.

The U.S. military said IS fighters were using the historic wall as a fighting position, and had

planted explosives at several openings. It said coalition forces were making every effort to protect civilians and preserve the historic sites.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces launched a multi-pronged assault on Raqqa in early June, after securing the surrounding countryside. On Sunday, the U.S.-backed fighters crossed the Euphrates River on the southern edge of the city, completing its encirclement.

The Islamic State group sei-

zed Raqqa, their first major city stronghold in Syria, in January 2014. The city later became the de facto capital of IS' self-proclaimed caliphate, stretching across lands controlled by the militant group in Syria and Iraq.

U.N. officials say 50,000 to 100,000 civilians remain in the city amid "dire" conditions. Those who try to escape risk being attacked by IS militants or forcibly recruited as human shields.

The U.S.-led coalition is providing close air support to the

SDF, which has already driven the extremists from much of northern and eastern Syria.

Several IS leaders were once based in Raqqa, where the group plotted attacks in Europe. The loss of the northern Syrian city, one of the last IS strongholds, would deal a major blow to the group. The militants are also on the verge of losing their last foothold in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, from where IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed the IS caliphate in July 2014.

As IS loses ground, tensions are rising among the array of forces battling it.

Turkey shelled several villages in Syria overnight yesterday, killing a woman and two children, according to Kurdish officials and Syrian activists. The Kurdish-run Hawar news agency said the three were killed, and several others wounded, near Afrin, a Kurdish-controlled enclave near the border with Turkey.

Turkey's private Dogan news agency said Turkish artillery units responded after the border region came under fire late Monday.

The SDF is dominated by the People's Protection Units, or YPG, which Turkey views as an extension of the Kurdish rebels fighting in its southeast.

Turkish Defense Minister Fikri Isik said yesterday that Turkey may launch a cross-border operation into Afrin if it constitutes a "constant security threat." AP

Qatar, isolated by neighbors, plans gas output boost



A gas production facility is seen at Ras Laffan, Qatar

Maggie Hyde

THE energy-rich Gulf nation of Qatar, facing further isolation from its neighbors amid an ongoing diplomatic rift, said yesterday it plans to boost production of liquefied natural gas by 30 percent over the coming years.

The timing of the announcement suggests that OPEC member Qatar, the world's largest producer of liquefied natural gas, aims

to project an image of business-as-usual economic strength as it weathers the crisis.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain cut ties with Qatar early last month in large part over their allegations that it supports extremist groups — a charge Qatar rejects. On Monday, it handed over a response to a 13-point list of demands made by the four Arab countries aimed at

resolving the row.

State-run Qatar Petroleum said the anticipated production increase stems from a decision to double output from a new gas project on the southern portion of its vast underwater North Field, which Qatar shares with its neighbor Iran. The Arab countries have demanded Qatar curb its ties with Iran.

The increase should eventually give Qatar the capacity to produce 100 million tons of liquefied natural gas per year, up from 77 million tons now, the company said.

QP President and CEO Saad Sherida al-Kaabi said the increased capacity could come online by 2022 to 2024.

Al-Kaabi said QP's development plans have been unaffected by what he called a "blockade" by the Arab quartet, and there has been no change in the level of communication with Iran over their shared gas field.

Qatar does not have any current plans to stop exporting gas to the UAE, he added, but he said he would not rule it out if the crisis continued.

"Of course if there were to be an additional escalation, I cannot say that we will never stop the gas," he said. "This is a decision which would

not only be made by Qatar Petroleum but also for the government, and of course depends on the situation in the country."

Qatar currently sends about 56 million cubic meters of natural gas a day to the UAE through the undersea Dolphin Energy pipeline, provi-

ding about a third of that country's needs. About 200 million cubic feet of that goes onto Oman.

Emirati Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazrouei said last week that his country has sufficient resources to make up for any potential shortfall should Qatari supplies be cut. AP

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what's ON



DEBRIS - WORKS BY ALEXANDRE FARTO AKA VHILS
 TIME: 10am-7pm
 UNTIL: November 5, 2017
 VENUE: Navy Yard No. 1
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699

NOCTURNE - SOLO EXHIBITION BY FILIPE DORES
 TIME: 12pm-8pm (Tuesdays to Sundays)
 3pm-8pm (Mondays)
 UNTIL: July 9, 2017
 VENUE: Albergue SCM
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 1601

ABSTRACT PAINTINGS FROM THE MAM COLLECTION
 TIME: 10am-7pm (Last admission at 6:30pm, closed on Mondays)
 UNTIL: September 17, 2017
 VENUE: Macau Art Museum
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

Offbeat

AP PHOTO



Chris Christie (right) uses the beach with his family and friends at the governor's summer house at Island Beach State Park in New Jersey

CHRISTIE LOUNGES WITH FAMILY ON BEACH AT PARK HE SHUT DOWN

Gov. Chris Christie spent part of Sunday lounging with his family on a beach at a state park he ordered closed to the public amid a government shutdown that showed little sign of ending.

The unpopular Republican governor, whose family was using the state residence at Island Beach State Park for the weekend, said later Sunday at a news conference in Trenton that he flew on a state helicopter to the residence.

"That's where my family is sleeping so that's where I'll sleep," he said. "When I have a choice between sleeping with my family or sleeping alone, I generally like to sleep where my family is."

The governor was photographed by NJ.com sitting with his family on a beach chair in sandals and a T-shirt before flying to talk to reporters in Trenton, where he worked without result to end the shutdown.

During the news conference, Christie was asked if he had gotten any sun that day, to which he said he didn't, NJ.com reported. The governor's spokesman agreed that Christie didn't get any sun; he said Christie was wearing a baseball hat.

Christie defended his use of the state property during the shutdown that affected the public, which is being kept out of state parks with signs blaming Democratic Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto, on Saturday, saying: "That's the way it goes. Run for governor, and you can have the residence."

Christie said Sunday that he's "frustrated" by the shutdown and is open to making a deal to reopen government.

Few lawmakers were around the statehouse Sunday, and Christie said that unless he sent state police to retrieve them he could not force them to be there.

Christie, for at least the second time, referred to himself as "Mr. Reasonable" and said he would consider the Democratic budget along with legislation to overhaul the state's biggest health insurer, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield. Or without the Horizon legislation he has called for, he would line item veto about \$350 million of the Democratic priorities.

"It should end today. Send me a budget," he said. "I'm ready to work, but I can't work if I don't have any money. These guys have to get their act together."

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:40	Revenge Sr 2
18:20	Now Generation (Repeated)
19:10	TDM Interview (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
21:30	Now Generation
22:20	TDM News
22:55	Miscellaneous
00:45	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:20	Miscellaneous
03:45	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

29 JUN - 5 JUL



DESPICABLE ME 3

ROOM 1
 2:30, 4:15, 7:45, 9:30pm
 Director: Eric Guillon, Kyle Balda, Pierre Coffin
 Starring: Steve Carell, Kristen Wiig, Trey Parker
 Language: Cantonese
 Duration: 90min

TRANSFORMERS: THE LAST KNIGHT

ROOM 1
 2:00, 4:45, 9:30pm
 Director: Michael Bay
 Starring: Mark Wahlberg, Anthony Hopkins, Josh Duhamel
 Language: English
 Duration: 148min



THE MUMMY

ROOM 1
 2:30, 9:30pm
 Director: Alex Kurtzman
 Starring: Tom Cruise, Sofia Boutella, Annabelle Walls
 Language: English (Chinese)
 Duration: 141min

MACAU TOWER

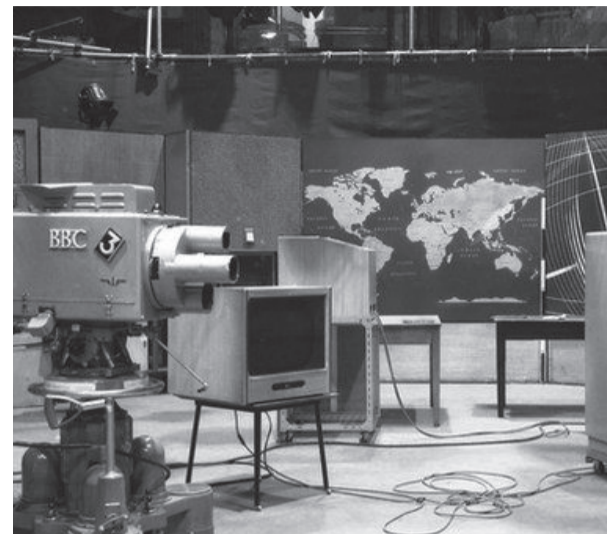
22 JUN - 5 JUL



TRANSFORMERS: THE LAST KNIGHT

ROOM 1
 2:00, 4:45, 9:30pm
 Director: Michael Bay
 Starring: Mark Wahlberg, Anthony Hopkins, Josh Duhamel
 Language: English
 Duration: 148min

this day in history



The BBC's first newsreader Richard Baker

1954 BBC LAUNCHES DAILY TV NEWS

The BBC has broadcast its first daily television news program. The 20-minute bulletin was read by Richard Baker and was introduced as an "Illustrated summary of the news [...] Followed by the latest film of events and happenings at home and abroad."

The present Television Newsreel program, which is to be discontinued, is prepared in advance and contains news items which are often days old.

The new service is intended to be more up-to-date and will also eventually include studio interviews.

Tonight's edition began with news of truce talks being held near Hanoi and an item on French troop movements in Tunisia.

Richard Baker could be heard reading the news while a series of headlines, still photographs and maps were shown on the screen.

BBC Director General Sir Ian Jacob acknowledged last week there had been significant difficulties producing the new television bulletins.

"News is not at all an easy thing to do on television. A good many of the main news items are not easily made visual - therefore we have the problem of giving news with the same standards that the corporation has built up in sound."

He added that the format of the program was likely to change, but said the BBC was committed to television news. "This is a start on something we regard as extremely significant for the future," he said.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The first television news bulletin was not met with universal approval. The program was variously described as "absolute ghastly", "crazy" and "as visually impressive as the fat stock prices".

BBC Radio was also very skeptical of the new service and insisted it retain editorial control over the headlines and story content.

But between 1954 and 1955 the amount of television time devoted to news was doubled and in September 1955 Independent Television News launched its first service.

BBC television news has expanded considerably since its early days and is now available round-the-clock on BBC News 24. In July 2004, the corporation celebrated 50 years since the first daily 20-minute bulletin.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 It's time to relax and have some fun, but certainly not alone. Get ready to focus on partners and relationships today. The stars are urging you to have some fun and spend some time with just one quality person.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You're due to catch someone's eye -- and touch their heart, too -- in a very, very nice way, thanks to the sentimental stars. As a result, your already sensual nature will be running on high.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Thinking about going somewhere? With a partner? Well, it's no surprise -- and what a great time to start planning! The stars are in a romantic, partner-oriented mood and they're especially excited about love affairs.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Family matters could be tricky, but that won't keep you from getting involved and possibly being able to solve something that's been ignored for far too long.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to temper the rhetoric of all parties concerned with a bit of tact by translating. You know -- it's the 'what he really meant to say was' kind of thing.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You've probably already got more penciled into your social calendar than you can possibly pull off -- that is, unless you're careful with your time, and you usually are. That said, don't go over the top.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Don't be surprised if you're attracting an awful lot of admiring attention for at least the next couple of days. The stars turn up the volume on your personality, bringing out your most social, charming qualities.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Communication is the name of the game -- especially regarding secrets, at least for starters. It's all about undercover encounters and enticing partners. So, hey -- one little clandestine meeting couldn't hurt, right?

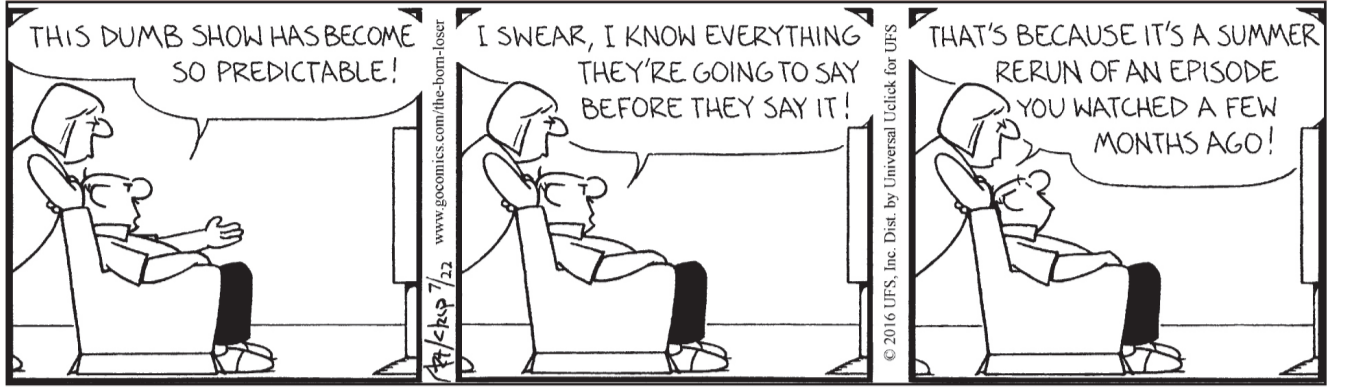
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Does this sound familiar? Someone you know and love gets ticked off by something that you say quite off the cuff and in an entirely playful way -- something that you mean as a joke. Easy, there.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 An elder relative or authority figure who's had their eye on you for a while now is just about ready to let you know how well you've done -- especially based on recent stressful situations.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You're about to rush headlong into something you were never expecting: An intimate encounter with someone who's so interesting and unusual -- no, downright fascinating.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 The stars are all about peace and cooperation, inspiring one and all to make amends, deliver or accept apologies. If you've been feeling the need to try to put an end to a dispute between dear ones.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy Sudoku grid with numbers 6, 2, 8, 1, 5, 6, 2, 4, 2, 9, 1, 8, 4, 9, 7, 5, 1, 5, 9, 3, 3, 7, 8, 2, 1, 6, 2, 3, 7.

Easy+ Sudoku grid with numbers 2, 6, 9, 5, 3, 7, 9, 4, 8, 5, 9, 3, 4, 8, 7, 3, 7, 1, 5, 7, 9, 7, 8, 3, 1, 2.

Medium Sudoku grid with numbers 1, 2, 6, 9, 4, 5, 5, 9, 6, 9, 4, 2, 8, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 8, 8, 7, 3, 1, 4, 7.

Hard Sudoku grid with numbers 9, 1, 7, 6, 8, 6, 2, 3, 5, 1, 3, 5, 1, 4, 3, 8, 2.

WEATHER

Weather table with columns MIN, MAX, and CONDITION for various cities in CHINA and WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Glossy fabric; 6- Juicy fruit; 11- ___ glance; 14- Snapshot; 15- Perrier rival; 16- Weep; 17- Brother of Moses; 18- Brit's bottle measure; 19- Driver's aid; 20- Uttered; 22- Removes wrinkles; 24- Vernacular; 28- On the train; 30- Speaker; 31- Atty.-to-be exams; 32- Lowermost deck; 33- Tropical fruit; 37- Go bad; 38- Office solution; 39- Lower limb; 40- Massacre; 43- Macbeth, for one; 45- Mattress supports; 46- Noises; 47- Passenger ships; 49- Costless prescription?; 50- Aquarium buildup; 51- ___ Lang Syne; 52- Arctic explorer John; 53- Worries; 56- Desi's daughter; 61- 911 respondent; 62- Loosen; 63- "All My Children" vixen; 64- Penlight battery; 65- Wears well; 66- One in a cab, say; DOWN: 1- Health resort; 2- Eureka!; 3- Craggy hill; 4- Lance on the bench; 5- Without interruption; 6- Pertaining to song; 7- Gung-ho; 8- It may be picked; 9- Long-jawed fish; 10- The tiniest bit; 11- Role player; 12- Tendency; 13- Affirmative votes; 21- Atmosphere; 23- Coarse file, angry tone of voice; 24- Portals; 25- Swashbuckler Flynn; 26- Island near Sicily; 27- Siouan speaker; 28- Ed of "Lou Grant"; 29- Boxer Max; 31- Queues; 33- Annie of "Designing Women"; 34- Flat surface; 35- Makes a loan; 36- Discharge; 38- ___ she blows; 41- Annapolis inst.; 42- Merry; 43- Rug rat; 44- Ben-___; 46- Poivre's partner; 47- South American ruminant; 48- ___ Kick Out of You; 49- Public transports; 50- Calculus calculation; 51- Plugging away; 54- Genetic messenger; 55- Aliens, for short; 57- Mentalist Geller; 58- El ___; 59- Frozen water; 60- Organ of hearing;

Yesterday's solution crossword grid with filled-in letters.

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
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
IACM 28 387 333
Tourism 28 333 000
Airport 59 888 88



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Mandarin Residences Serviced Duplex, Macau 3,487 sq ft / HKD 25,236 sq ft. HKD 88M Panoramic Views Ref: 17065522
Macau, One Central Residences, Macau 3 Bedroom Apartment Fully Furnished HKD 25,000 / 1,819 sq ft Ref: 16050589

Nam Hong Studio Apartment Macau 520 sq ft / HKD 6,500 sq ft HKD 3.154M Historical Studio Apartment Ref: 17055519
Riveira H Unit, Tower 1 Macau 2 Bedroom Apartment Stunning Views HKD 16,500 / 1,238 sq ft Ref: 17060650

St Pauls Ruins Central Macau 716 sq ft / HKD 5,558sq ft HKD 3.98M Modern Apartment Ref: 17035511
Camellia Court, Hellene Gardens, Coloane 3 Bedroom Apartment Green Views & Great Kitchen HKD 12,300 / 1,663 sq ft Ref: 17020639

Cattleya Court, Ocean Gardens Taipa 1,503 sq ft / HKD 7,172 sq ft HKD 10.78M Ocean Gardens complex Ref: 16095497
Soi Cheung, Taipa Village Taipa 1 Bedroom Apartment Wonderful Private Terrace HKD 13,800 / 700 sq ft Ref: 15090530



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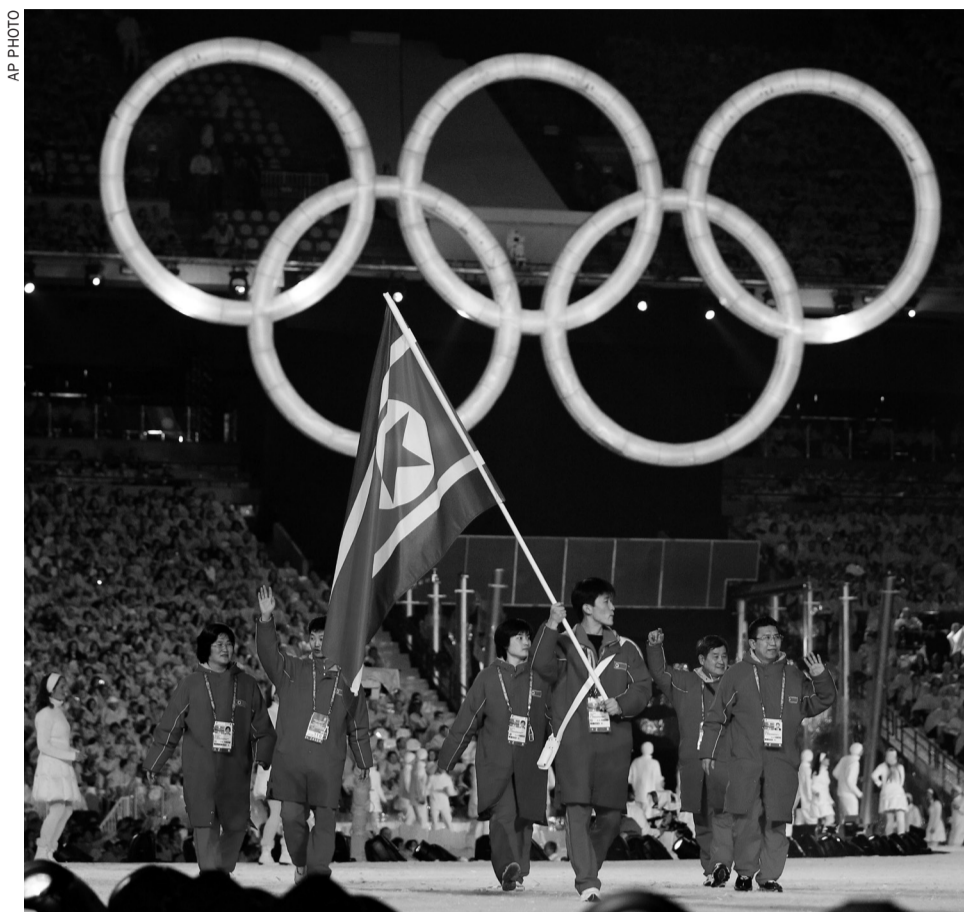
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Pyeongchang Olympics are icy path to warmer Korean relations

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

TEARS and hugs after North and South Korean women won the 1991 team table tennis world championships. A standing ovation when athletes from the two Koreas marched together to open the 2000 Sydney Olympics. A selfie taken by a South Korean gymnast with her North Korean opponent that went viral at last year's Rio de Janeiro Games.

Seven months ahead of the Pyeongchang Olympics, South Korea's new liberal President Moon Jae-in hopes the first Winter Games on Korean soil could produce more of these feel-good sparks of seeming reconciliation and pave the way for deep engagement to ease the rivals' 72-year standoff.

In a good development for Moon, IOC President Thomas Bach on Monday expressed his support for Moon's overture while North Korea recently allowed its taekwondo demonstration team to perform in the South in the Koreas' first sports exchanges since Moon's May 10 inauguration.

But there is also plenty of skepticism about Moon's efforts because of a serious escalation in North Korean nuclear and missile arsenals — North Korea yesterday test-fired a missile likely capable of striking Alaska — and a weak North Korean winter sports program that sent only two athletes to the 2010 Vancouver Games and none to the 2014 Sochi Games. Sydney and Rio

were both Summer Olympics.

North Korea's only IOC member, Chang Ung, said last week that cooperation on the Pyeongchang Games could prove hard considering the shortage of time and difficult politics.

What follows is an examination of South Korea's attempt to make North Korea a key part of the Olympics set for Feb. 9-25.

MOON'S PLAN

During a speech at the world taekwondo championship in the South that drew Chang and North Korean athletes, Moon appealed for North Korea's Olympic participation while talking about the power of sports and citing the historic "pingpong diplomacy" between the United States and China in the 1970s.

"I think [North Korea's Olympic attendance] would greatly contribute in realizing Olympic values, which are about bringing humanity together and promoting world peace," Moon said during the event's opening ceremony on June 24.

Moon has previously said he wants North Korean athletes to visit the South by crossing over the heavily fortified land border between the Koreas — a deeply symbolic event that would excite frenzied media coverage. He has also proposed holding a pre-Olympic celebratory event at the North's scenic Diamond Mountain, where the two Koreas once ran a tourism program.

Moon's sports minister, Do Jong-hwan, told lawmakers recently that South Korea was also studying a joint women's ice ho-

ckey team with North Korea for the Pyeongchang Games. Other ideas: using a recently built North Korean ski resort as a training site and adding North Korea to the Olympic torch relay route.

During their meeting at Moon's presidential palace in Seoul on Monday, Bach said he actively supports Moon's push for Korean peace and said it's in accordance with the Olympic spirit, according to Moon's office. But some of the measures floated by the Moon government require formal IOC approvals, and Pyeongchang organizers say nothing has been officially determined yet.

Chang suggested it may be too late to try to field a single Olympic team, saying it took five to six months or 22 rounds of inter-Korean talks before fielding a single women's table tennis team in 1991. He also questioned how much sports could impact relations between the Koreas.

"Did table tennis improve relations between the United States and China? Pingpong was able to work as a catalyst because a political foundation had already been created. The world was saying pingpong made things work, but that wasn't the case," Chang told South Korean reporters last week. "Politics are always above sports."

THE SPORTS OBSTACLES

North Korea is not strong in winter sports.

The only North Korean athletes who are thought to have a realistic shot at making the 2018 Olympics are a North Korean

pairs figure skating team. Even if they qualify, it will mean less than 10 North Koreans — two athletes plus coaches and officials — would come to Pyeongchang.

This small squad — or no athletes at all — could make it difficult to create a mood of reconciliation. Still, South Korean officials are looking at other ways to get North Korea involved.

Pyeongchang's organizing committee said it's discussing with South Korean government officials whether to ask the IOC and other international sports bodies to give North Korea special entries if no North Korean athletes qualify for the Olympics.

South Korea is also reviewing whether to hold out-of-competition matches during the Olympics that would allow North Korean athletes to compete, according to Moon's Unification Ministry.

The South's organizing committee said special entries and extra games have not been allowed at past Winter Games.

THE NUCLEAR OBSTACLES

Relations between the Koreas are dismal as the North pursues its nuclear ambitions.

Since taking power in late 2011, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has conducted three atomic test explosions and ordered a raft of ballistic-missile launches as part of his stated goal of building nuclear missiles capable of reaching the continental United States. Moon's conservative predecessors responded by suspen-

ding major aid shipments and cross-border cooperation projects.

Moon has pledged to improve ties and promised to use the Pyeongchang Games to ease cross-border animosities. But any big North Korean weapon test close to the Pyeongchang Games could trigger strong anti-North sentiments both at home and abroad and make it hard for Moon to press ahead with his overtures.

"What's most important is that North Korea not act in a way that earns President Moon criticism when he makes a gesture of reconciliation," said Jung Moon-hyun, a sports science professor at Chungnam National University in South Korea.

SPORTS DIPLOMACY

At the height of the Cold War, sports were another battlefield between the Koreas. North Korea boycotted the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympics, both held in Seoul.

But sports exchanges briefly flourished in the early 1990s before a nuclear crisis erupted. This cooperation included the North-South women's table tennis team championship over China in 1991, and a unified world youth boys' soccer team that reached the quarterfinals later that year.

These were the last unified Korean sports teams, but the rivals found other ways to cooperate.

After the leaders of North and South Korea met for landmark summit talks in Pyongyang in June 2000, athletes from the Koreas walked behind a blue-and-white "unification" flag for the first time at the opening ceremony of the Sydney Summer Games. This happened at other major international sports events, but the practice stopped after the 2007 Asian Winter Games in Chuangchun, China.

Despite terrible political ties amid the nuclear standoff, cross-border sports exchanges between the Koreas did not disappear entirely.

North Korea attended the 2014 Asian Games held in Incheon, South Korea. At the close of the games, three top Pyongyang officials made a surprise visit and held the Koreas' highest-level face-to-face talks in five years.

This spring, North Korea's women's ice hockey team came to the South to take part in the group rounds of the world championships, while the South's national women's soccer team traveled to the North for an Asian Cup qualifying match.

One of the feel-good highlights of the Rio Games last year came when a 17-year-old South Korean gymnast named Lee Eun-ju took a selfie with North Korea's Hong Un Jong as they trained for competition. The photo captured global headlines, and Bach described it as a "great gesture."

It's far from certain whether Pyeongchang will have any similar gestures. **AP**

opinion

Macau Matters

Richard Whitfield



CADMIUM RICE

The June 10 issue of The Economist contains a terrifying article about pollution in China. It makes the point that air, water and land pollution across China, in major cities and in farmland, is very bad. This means that in Macau we need to be especially careful of the quality of food supplies coming from China (and other Asian countries that possibly have similar problems).

This problematic situation has arisen for several reasons. Industrial complexes were initially sited in "remote" locations and when they were developed the existing safety and environmental regulations were very weak and even more weakly enforced. Consequently there have been many toxic spills over time that were never properly cleaned up. Even now many industrial complexes far from urban centers are still polluting their neighborhoods with the tacit approval of local officials who rely on the employment and taxation associated with them.

Smelting activities, especially, have resulted in a lot of heavy metals pollution. Cadmium, Lead, Arsenic and other such smelting wastes are very toxic and lead to major life threatening health problems in the long term. The bodies of most plants and animals cannot eliminate heavy metals so they accumulate and cause increasingly severe health problems. The article cites examples of rice being grown for sale that contains 50 percent more than the legal limits of cadmium. Similarly, pressures to increase crop yields because of population increases and the loss of farmland to urbanization have resulted in widespread over use of fertilizers and pesticides thus polluting more land.

With urbanization, industrial complexes that were initially sited in "remote" locations are now being enveloped by suburbs. Many local governments in China stay solvent by selling land for residential and commercial development, and recycling industrial land without properly cleaning up pollution can sometimes be too easy. There are increasing examples of severe health problems arising for people at schools, residential complexes and other buildings constructed on polluted ground.

There are also severe water shortages in northern China, as indicated by government plans for large scale water diversions from south to north China. As a consequence, many northern farmers are resorting to using "grey" water, ie only partially processed residential and industrial waste water, for their crops and animals. This is resulting in even more polluted land and contaminated crops.

Studies suggest that 10 percent - 20 percent of all arable land in China is currently severely polluted and should not be used for agriculture. "Cleaning" this polluted ground is very expensive - in the UK they spent £3,000/m3 cleaning old industrial ground so it could be used for the Olympics.

The article shows a map of 400-450 "cancer cities" in China where a 2015 study found a correlation between soil pollution and elevated cancer rates in the population. Seven of these cities look to be in the Pearl River Delta, and the whole area is identified as having high soil contamination risk.

Clearly there are soil and other pollution problems in China that are leading to contaminated food production. I suspect that other South East Asian countries have similar problems, so that in Macau we need to be especially careful of food imported from nearby regions. I understand that food contamination testing is done regularly, but I am concerned that not all potential contaminants are being tested for, and that the frequency of testing is too low so that contaminated food can "slip through the net".

Can the relevant local government department please explain in detail the measures being taken to test imported food in Macau and satisfy us that it is all safe? I really do not want to die from cancer brought on by eating cadmium contaminated rice.

THE BUZZ AUSTRIA READY TO 'PROTECT' BORDERS AGAINST MIGRANTS

Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz says his country is ready to "protect" its borders with Italy amid growing concerns that the influx of migrants into Italy could soon result in a spillover into his country. Kurz spoke to the Austria Press Agency yesterday amid preparations to tighten border controls.

Defense Minister Hans Peter Doskozil says his ministry is ready to deploy armored vehicles to

the Brenner border crossing between the two countries within 72 hours. Ministry spokesmen yesterday dismissed reports that the vehicles already are at the Brenner, the main crossing from Italy.

Officials say there has been no upsurge in migrant entries. But Kurz says both Italy and the European Union need to know that "we are ready to protect our Brenner border if necessary."

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	20-40 Good	😊
High Density Residential Area	20-40 Good	😊
Ambient	20-40 Good	😊

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

BANGLADESH A boiler explosion at a garment factory in Bangladesh owned by export-oriented Multifabs Ltd. has killed 10 people and injured 50, officials said yesterday. Authorities have ordered an investigation into the cause of the explosion.



SYRIA U.S.-backed Syrian forces have breached the wall around Raqqa's Old City, the U.S. military said yesterday, marking a major advance in the weeks-old battle to drive Islamic State militants out of their self-declared capital. More on p15

ISRAEL-INDIA India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, yesterday kicked off a high-profile visit to Israel aimed at celebrating 25 years of diplomatic relations and strengthening his country's already warm ties with the Jewish state.



TURKEY appeared to toughen its stance in talks to reunify Cyprus by insisting yesterday that it won't sign up to any deal involving the withdrawal of all its troops from the ethnically divided Mediterranean island nation.

TANZANIA A dispute over a planned hydropower dam in Tanzania's Selous wildlife reserve pits the country's president against conservationists who say the project could cause irreparable damage to the UNESCO World Heritage site. More on p14

VENEZUELA'S opposition said it will hold a symbolic referendum to give voters the opportunity to reject President Nicolas Maduro's plans to rewrite the constitution.

Man wins lawsuit over gay conversion therapy

Gerry Shih, Beijing

A gay man in central China has successfully sued a mental hospital over forced conversion therapy, in what activists are hailing as the first such victory in a country where the LGBT rights movement is gradually emerging from the fringes.

A court in Zhumadian in Henan province ordered a city mental hospital to publish a public apology in local newspapers and pay the 38-year-old man 5,000 yuan (USD735) in compensation, according to a copy of the June 26 judgment seen by The Associated Press.

The man, surnamed Yu, had been forcibly admitted to the institution in 2015 by his wife and relatives and diagnosed with "sexual preference disorder," court documents show. He was forced to take medicine and receive injections before finally walking free after 19 days.

In its relatively narrow ruling, the court did not weigh in on the practice of gay conversion therapy or account for Yu's sexual orientation. The court said forcing Yu into a mental institution if he did not pose a danger to himself or others amounted to "infringing on the plaintiff's right to individual freedom."

When reached by phone yesterday, Yu's lawyer expressed satisfaction with the outcome but declined to discuss the case, saying his firm asked him not to speak to media. Yu declined to comment.

China removed homosexuality from its list of recognized mental illnesses more than 15 years ago, but stories are rife



In this July 31, 2014 file photo, gay rights campaigners act out electric shock treatment to protest outside a court when the first court case in China involving so-called conversion therapy is held in Beijing

of families admitting their relatives for conversion therapy.

Gay rights activists say the case marks the first victory against a public mental institution for compulsory therapy against a patient's will. In 2014, a Beijing man named Peng Yanhui checked himself into a private conversion clinic to investigate its advertised electroshock treatments. Peng, a gay rights activist who goes by Yanzi, then sued the clinic and won a \$500 decision from a Beijing court for the suffering he endured in treatment.

The recent ruling in Zhumadian "confirmed the illegality of forced treatments," Peng told the AP. "It's time for China to enact laws to prohibit forced gay conversion therapy."

While few Chinese have religious objections to homosexuality and homophobic violence is rare, the country's authoritarian politics and conservative society's preference for marriage and childbearing create subtle barriers that keep most gays in the closet.

Vibrant gay scenes do exist

in a few large cities including Shanghai, which has an annual gay pride parade, and depictions of same-sex relationships are increasingly seen in Chinese films and television. China's internet censors have also tolerated increasingly open debate about LGBT issues.

Last week, Chinese netizens expressed outrage on social media after a government-affiliated internet TV industry association warned streaming content providers against depicting "abnormal" sexual behavior including incest and homosexuality.

Hours later, a provincial branch of the Communist Youth League, an influential organization of the ruling political party, appeared to join the debate, declaring on Weibo that "homosexuality is not a mental disorder," and urging its followers to "put down your prejudice and hostility, you can do it!" The unexpected post from a party organization was soon reposted tens of thousands of times and attracted an outpouring of support as well as criticism.

CHINA

Heavy rain causes floods, killing 56

At least 56 people have been killed and another 22 reported missing as heavy rains continue to pummel southern China, flooding towns, cutting off power and halting traffic, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs said yesterday.

As much as 48.6 centimeters of rain has been dumped on several cities since Thursday, including the scenic resort city of Guilin in the

Guangxi region, the ministry said.

More than 11 million people in 11 southern provinces were affected by floods, landslides and hailstorms, the ministry said. Rivers have broken their banks, inundating surrounding communities.

The ministry said water levels in major rivers and lakes in the southern province of Hunan have surged to alarming levels, and that the

collapse of levees forced large-scale evacuations.

Dozens of flights at several airports serving major cities in the region including Chengdu, Changsha, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen were canceled or delayed, stranding thousands of travelers. Trains also were halted, and roads were cut off to many towns and villages in the region. Television footage showed major flooding in cities, where the lower floors of homes and shops have been submerged.

The national meteorological center forecast more rain to come this week in southern China. AP