



TENDER OPEN FOR SINO-LUSO TRADE COMPLEX
Bidding started yesterday for the design and construction of a new home for Forum Macau

P4



GRANT BOWIE WON'T SAY WHEN
MGM China CEO Grant Bowie would not say when the casino operator's latest resort on the Cotai Strip will open

P5 GAMING



CAMBRIDGE REFUSES TO KOWTOW TO CENSORSHIP

P10 CHINA

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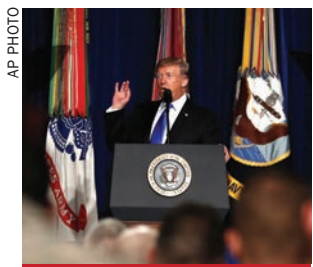
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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

WORLD BRIEFS



AFGHANISTAN
Reversing his past calls for a speedy exit, President Donald Trump recommitted the United States to the 16-year-old war in Afghanistan, declaring U.S. troops must "fight to win." He pointedly declined to disclose how many more troops will be dispatched to wage America's longest war. **More on p15**

CAMBODIA's prime minister said yesterday he has rescinded his decision to expel an American-led Christian organization that seeks to rescue and rehabilitate women working in the sex trade.



KOREA As North Korea vowed "merciless retaliation" against U.S.-South Korean military drills that it claims are an invasion rehearsal, senior U.S. military commanders yesterday dismissed calls to pause or downsize exercises they called crucial to countering a clear threat from Pyongyang. **More on p13**

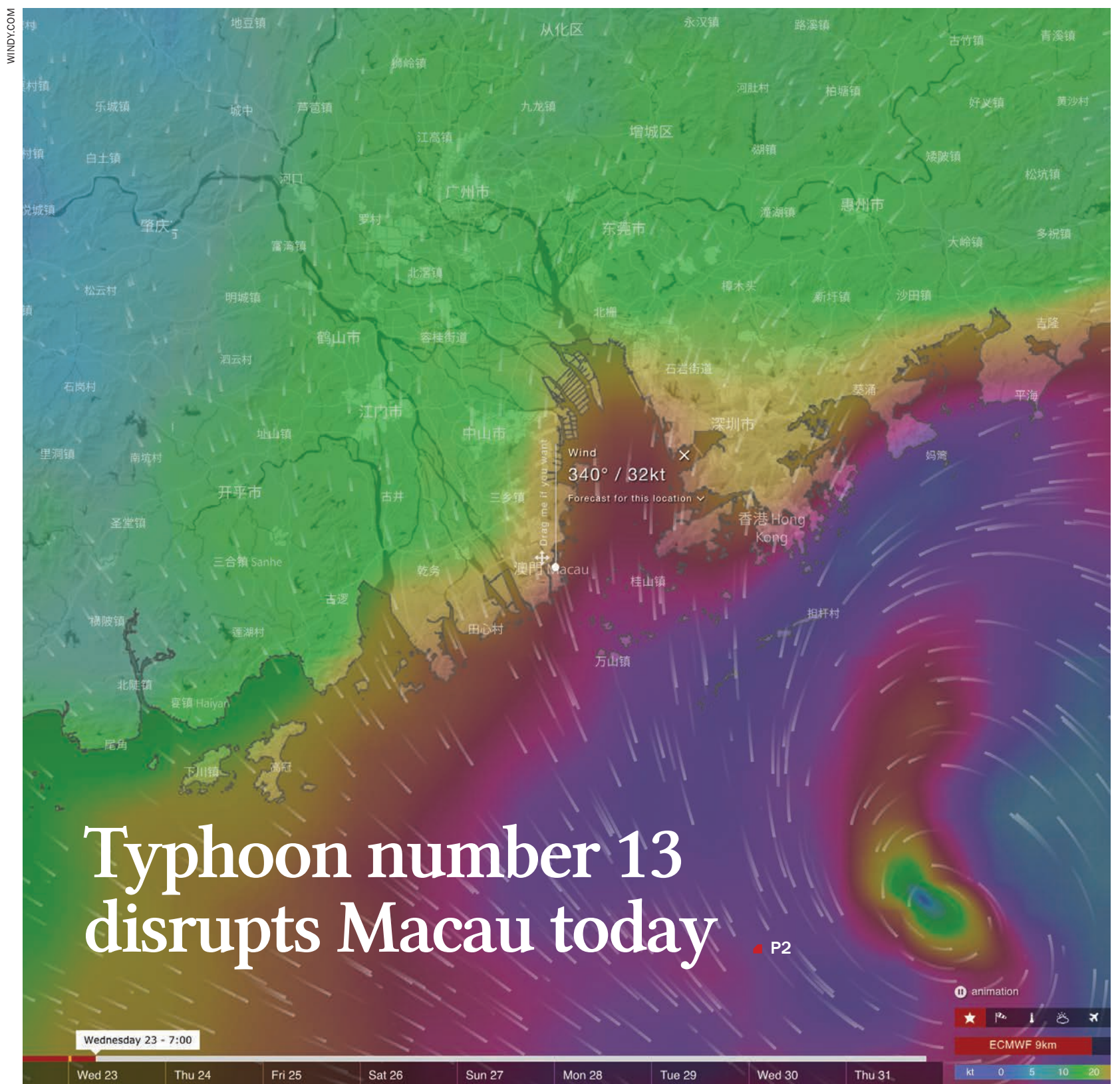
AUSTRALIA Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's government could collapse if a court rules that three of his lawmakers with dual citizenship are ineligible to hold office. Even if they stay, his handling of the constitutional crisis gripping Australia's parliament may have already sealed its fate. **More on p14**

More on backpage

UNIVERSITY OF MACAU BREAKTHROUGH

Anti-cancer drug screen results in 24h

P7



Typhoon Hato disrupts 52 flights today

Lynzy Valles

A total of 52 flights have been cancelled today in anticipation of tropical typhoon Hato, which is expected to make landfall this morning along the southern Chinese coast, according to yesterday's forecast by the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG).

Yesterday, Juneyao Airlines cancelled its flights to and from Shanghai, which were scheduled to depart and arrive in Macau at 9:55 p.m. and 9:10 p.m., respectively.

Information released last night from the Administration of Airports showed that the cancelled flights are mainly routes today to and from the mainland. Others were scheduled to fly routes to Manila, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur.

Air Macau is also delaying its routes to and from Tokyo's Narita Airport as well as Fukuoka, while AirAsia has rescheduled its Bangkok and Chiang Mai flights.

The bureau hoisted Signal No.1, the lowest warning for a tycoon, early yesterday. By



midnight, a notice had been posted on the SMG website that the signal might be elevated to Signal No.3 between 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. this morning.

SMG told the Times that raising the signal would depend on the wind force in the region.

"The wind and weather affecting the flight depends on the airplane type, pilot and the wind speed of the cross

wind," it said.

"If [the cross wind] is too strong, [it] may affect the landing and departure of the flight, but different types of airplanes can or cannot have difficulties when around the different cross winds," it added, noting that pilot technique remains a factor.

TurboJET has also adjusted its ferry schedule, suspending its routes to and from the Outer Harbor Ferry Terminal and Shenzhen Airport Fu Yong Ferry Terminal.

While most ferry routes to and from Macau will proceed as scheduled, the last ferry to Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) from the Outer Harbor departed at 5 p.m. yesterday, while a ferry from Macau to the airport last sailed at 7:45 p.m.

TurboJET was also operating limited services on its Outer Harbor – Shekou route.

The movement of the typhoon last night was 25 km/hour, while its maximum wind speed was 118 km/hour.

SMG warned drivers that winds over the bridges would be strong, and to pay attention to traffic safety.

The forecast today is expected to be cloudy, with showers and thunder at first, and force 4 to 6 north to northwesterly winds becoming force 6 to 8 southerly winds with gusts.

In Hong Kong, the typhoon is expected to fall within 100km of the city today.

According to Hong Kong reports, airlines have warned passengers of severe impact on flights in and out of HKIA from today until tomorrow

morning.

The majority of flights between 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. will be axed due to the storm, which is expected to affect hundreds of flights in the region.

In Guangdong's neighboring Fujian Province, more than 4,000 fish farmers and their families retreated inland on Monday. All fishing boats returned to the harbor yesterday.

Around 90 bullet trains between Shenzhen and cities in Fujian and Jiangxi provinces have been cancelled today, according to a Xinhua report.

China's national weather observatory issued an orange alert, the first level of its four-tier color-coded system for severe weather.

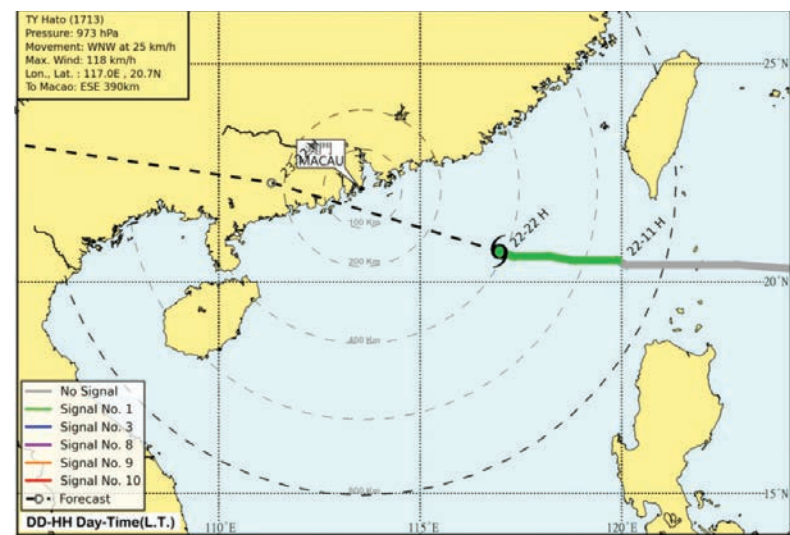
The National Meteorological Center (NMC) said in a statement that the 13th tropical cyclone in the region this year will move northwest to make landfall in Guangdong today, and lose strength as it moves further west. Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang and Taiwan will see torrential rain and gales in the coming days.

The NMC has recommended that local governments take precautions against possible geological disasters, and that ships in affected areas should return to port.

MACAU RECORDS HIGHEST TEMPERATURE SINCE 1930

MACAU YESTERDAY registered the highest temperature since the year 1930, according to a TDM report. The record temperature, 39 degrees Celsius, was detected at a weather station in Ka Ho, Coloane. At the Macau Ferry Terminal, the tem-

perature registered 38.9 degrees Celsius. Another station at Tai Tam Hill recorded 38 degrees Celsius. The Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau stated that the high temperatures were being caused by the incoming typhoon.



An SMG chart showing a projection of the typhoon's trajectory

THE Director of the Marine and Water Bureau, Susana Wong, said her bureau is paying close attention to the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge's (HKZMB) shuttle bus fare.

The Hong Kong transportation authority reportedly indicated that a single shuttle bus ride along the HKZMB will cost less than HKD100.

Marine and Water Bureau monitoring HKZMB shuttle bus fare

The number of passengers taking ferries between Macau, Hong Kong and Zhuhai is accordingly expected to decrease with the entry of the competitive service.

vice.

Wong said that her bureau has been communicating with ferry operators, who have plans to adjust ferry schedules and frequency of ferries.

Wong also said that the bureau will closely monitor the situation once the HKMZB opens.

She believes that the Taipa Ferry Terminal will continue to serve

other clients that cannot use road-based transportation services. For example, she expects that the terminal might be used for sightseeing boats in the future.

According to the Hong Kong media, the HKZMB's dedicated shuttle bus operator is required to provide between 90 and 140 shuttle buses daily, with another 30 on standby. Even after including the bridge toll fee – estimated to cost between MOP5 and MOP12 – the fare for a single ride will be less than HKD100.

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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

Sino-Luso trade cooperation complex priced between 0.6 and 1 billion patacas

Renato Marques

THE Macau Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) has announced that the Services Complex for Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries will cost between MOP590 million and MOP1.06 billion to build.

Bidding for design and construction opened yesterday morning at DSSOPT headquarters, with nine out of the initial 12 organizations participating in the public tender.

Before the bidding began, three proposals were immediately disqualified for not complying with the regulations of the tender, a DSSOPT spokesperson said.

The remaining nine participants put in bids which started at MOP590 million and eventually peaked at MOP1.06 billion.

According to Lei San Fat, an engineer from DSSOPT's Department of Public Buildings, "there is no date yet for the start of construction since such date will be dependent on the decision of the committee that



The nine bids for yesterday's tender enclosed in packages at the DSSOPT headquarters

is analyzing the proposals [...] only after the committee that analyzes the public tender decides on a final proposal [will] we know more about when the works will start."

Under the rules of the public tender, construction cannot last more than 600 working days. Proposed construction periods ranged between 586 days and the maximum 600.

Once built, the Services Complex will occupy the land plots identified by C15 and C16 of Nam Van Lake, in the vicinity

of Macau's Legislative Assembly. It will occupy a geographical area of about 14,200 square meters and a maximum floor area of 50,000 square meters.

The complex will house the Exhibition Centre for Products from Portuguese-Speaking Countries, the Service Centre for Companies from China and the Portuguese-Speaking Countries, the Information Centre, the Exhibition Hall on Economic and Trade Relations between China and the Portuguese-Speaking Countries and

their Cultures, the Training Centre between China and the Portuguese-Speaking Countries and the Exhibition Hall on the Urban Development of Macau.

The building will also serve as the official headquarters for the China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries Cooperation and Development Fund, which moved from the mainland to Macau in June and has since been temporarily lodged in an office in the Business Support Center, a unit under the Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute.

Macau, HK visitors to Taiwan up 7.6pct

THE number of international visitors to Taiwan fell almost 6 percent in the first six months of 2017, despite a 7.6 percent increase in arrivals from Macau and Hong Kong, according to Taiwan's Ministry of Transportation and Communications.

The drop was led by a significant decrease in visitors from mainland China – the island's biggest tourism market – which accounted for about 1.26 million of the 5.12 million visitors between January and June.

The number of mainland visitors plummeted to a five-year low in the six-month period, representing a 40 percent decline compared to the same period in 2016.

Meanwhile, arrivals from Macau and Hong Kong increased 7.6 percent to 810,000, while those from Japan increased 1.2 percent to 890,000.

Visitors from South Korea showed the strongest growth, posting a 30 percent increase year-on-year to 530,000.

Conversely, some 1.18 million Taiwanese visitors traveled to Macau and Hong Kong in the six-month period, while 1.92 million visited mainland China.

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Julie Zhu

GAMING

Bowie not disclosing MGM Cotai opening date

GRANT Bowie, chief executive officer and executive director of MGM China, said that the casino operator is still working with the Macau government regarding MGM Cotai's opening. He did not disclose the opening date.

Bowie made the comment on the sidelines of yesterday's MGM Lion Dance Championship-Junior Lion Dance Training Program ceremony.

"What we are doing is focusing on our own business," said Bowie. "We are excited about our project, so we are hoping that it's going to be a significant contribution to Macau."

"I think it's quite clear that we are very excited about opening our property in Cotai, and that it will obviously give us a significant increase to our capacity [...] we obviously hope that we can deliver successful results for the next decades."

MGM Resorts CEO James Murren said most recently that the new resort would open in the fourth quarter of this year, possibly coinciding with the National Day Golden Week holidays. The comments were made during a conference call with investors in late-April.

"We want to be open this year. It's important for us and it's important for Macau," Bowie added at the time.

When asked yesterday about MGM's share of the local market once the Cotai resort opens, Bowie said the company would focus on maximizing market share and profitability by "making sure we deliver a property that's interesting [and] can drive more visitors to Macau, not just from China but from all over Asia and the rest of the world."

The State Council of China has released new guidelines restricting Chinese companies from making overseas investments that go against the mainland's stance of "peaceful development, win-win cooperation, and China's macro[economic] control policies."



Grant Bowie (center)

The council said in a statement that the list includes real estate, hotels, entertainment, sports clubs, outdated industries and projects in countries with no diplomatic ties to China, as well as "chaotic regions and nations that should be limited by bilateral and multilateral treaties concluded by China."

Bowie said that he does not have an opinion on that announcement, but added, "I think that the government of China is laying down very clear rules for investment and I am sure it will be very clear in terms of what's acceptable and what's not acceptable."

"I don't think that affects us in Macau. I think we just have to continue to do our business as usual; we have to continue to be [agile] and make sure we meet all the expectations of our customers [...] if we meet the expectations of our customers, we will be successful," he added.

75 graduate from MGM children's lion dance program

MMGM celebrated its third MGM Lion Dance Championship – Junior Lion Dance Training Program with Macau's first-ever Junior Lion Eye-Dotting Ceremony.

This seven-week course, in collaboration with the Macau Hong Wai Sports and Recreations Association and with the support of the Macau Government Tourism Office as well as the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, trained 75 young masters aged between five and 10.

Guests were invited to officiate the ritual, which was followed by performances by the current and previous graduates, and concluded with the presentation of certificates.

Chow Chi Man, the Chairman of Macau Hong Wai Sports and Recreations Association, said that, "For the third consecutive



year, the MGM Junior Lion Dance Program has received positive feedback from the community, as this is an important platform to nurture the next generation of lion dancers. We hope that in the future, they can form teams, join competitions and support the sports scene of Macau."

To date, nearly 200 local children have joined the Junior Lion

Dance Program since its launch in 2015.

The program is designed for different ability levels, with modules ranging from foundational choreography training to formal lion dancing. Participants gain a deeper understanding of traditional lion dancing and have opportunities to perform at public community events.

Casino employment steady, salaries up 5 percent

THE latest survey by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) on gaming industry manpower and wages revealed that at the end of the second quarter of 2017, the number of full-time employees was similar to last year's 55,726, of which the number of croupiers dropped 1.3 percent to 23,980.

DSEC said in a statement that the survey, which excludes all junket promoters and associates, registered a 5 percent increase in croupiers' wages during the same period of time. Full-time employees' average earnings, excluding bonuses, were MOP23,080 – an increase of 4.6 percent year-on-

year – while the average earnings of dealers increased 5.1 percent to MOP19,930.

Job vacancies in the sector numbered 923 at the end of June, up by 36.4 percent year-on-year. More than half of these vacancies were for clerks and almost a third were for dealers.

Employers also deman-

ded higher academic qualifications for candidates. About 65 percent of jobs stipulated proficiency in Mandarin Chinese as a requirement, while 35 percent required English proficiency. Some 73 percent of jobs still listed senior secondary education as their minimum requirement.

The figures show a con-

solidation of the casino sector after the 2014-2016 gaming recession. When compared to the results of the 2012 survey, the number of gaming sector employees has held more or less stable until today, registering growth of just 1.6 percent over the last five years.

The average gaming sa-

laries registered faster growth in this period, with full-time monthly compensation growing by about 28 percent compared to 2012.

The number of job vacancies halved between 2012 and 2017, while the employee turnover rate decreased from 3.8 percent in 2012 to 1.7 percent in 2017. **RM**

Lawmaker calls for Alibaba agreement explanation

Lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong called for the government to reveal details regarding its 'smart city' development agreement with Alibaba. In his written inquiries to the government, Ng pointed out that the government did not organize a public tender for Macau's smart city strategy cooperation. He claimed the agreement was a political decision and that the Chief Executive had overlooked common administrative procedures. Ng urged the government to reveal all costs involved in the agreement, including construction projects, software purchases, and designing. Ng said the government should examine and adhere to all public tender procedures related to the Alibaba deal and take measures to control costs related to the projects under the agreement, so as to avoid significant cost overruns.



Sands China: No comment on 'London theme' report

London is reportedly the next source of inspiration for Sands Cotai Central, which will feature replicas of the city's iconic landmarks at its four towers. In Macau, the premises are home to several international hotel brands. As reported by Business Daily this week, an anonymous Sands China source said the four towers will feature outdoor displays of celebrated sites in London, yet did not confirm whether replicas of Big Ben or Buckingham Palace would be built. The unnamed source added that the hotels would change their interiors to mimic a London ambience, adding that the iconic double-decker buses are also part of the plans. "The decision is done, it's now just a matter of starting to work on it," the anonymous source said. The Times contacted Sands China, but the company did not confirm or deny the report. "Sands China Ltd. has no comment regarding speculation about changes to Sands Cotai Central," a representative of the company said.

THE introduction of facial recognition technology at automated teller machines (ATMs) in Macau has coincided with a surge in withdrawals by UnionPay customers in Hong Kong, the South China Morning Post reported this week.

In May this year, the MSAR government introduced new requirements for mainland China UnionPay customers seeking to withdraw funds in Macau.

In an effort to curb money laundering and deter capital flight from China, the new requirements include the mandatory use of mainland identification cards and facial recognition technology installed at cash withdrawal machines.

Though the technology will eventually be applied to all ATMs in Macau, the initial focus is on machines inside casinos.

Representatives of Hong Kong's Monetary Authority (HKMA) refused to confirm or deny the alleged rise in withdrawals, but SCMP claims to have obtained evidence showing a "staggering" increase since May.

"The rise in ATM withdrawals in terms of volume and number has been staggering. The taps are gushing," an unidentified source with knowledge of the matter told the newspaper.

"It seems quite clear that as the introduction of ATM facial recognition technology in Macau has put the squeeze on cash dispensing withdrawals in Macau, the pattern of withdrawals has followed the path of least resistance – and that is to Hong Kong."

A representative from HKMA told the newspaper that Hong Kong currently has "no plans to require ATMs to install facial recognition technology," despite proposing in May that it would consider such technology to shore up financial

FACIAL RECOGNITION

Macau ATM rules lead to surge in HK withdrawals



A Bank of China new ATM Machine is seen in Macau on May 25

security.

This latest decision comes after a study on the feasibility and cost efficiency of facial recognition technology and other types of biometric authentication systems, HKMA said.

Mainland visitors are currently permitted to withdraw up to RMB100,000 when abroad and exchange up to USD50,000 in foreign currency each year.

A separate but related regulation stipulates that UnionPay cardholders from China may withdraw up to RMB10,000 each day for every card in their possession.

Consequently, a number of mainland visitors acquired multiple UnionPay cards – often under different aliases

The pattern of withdrawals has followed the path of least resistance – and that is to Hong Kong.

ANONYMOUS SOURCE

or registered to other people – to repeatedly withdraw funds abroad.

The tactic prompted authorities in Beijing and Macau to tighten the rules for withdrawing money in the territory, including the implementation of facial recognition technology, to prevent an individual from using a card registered to another person.

Macau residents and holders of cards issued by other banks are not affected by the new ATM technology, and are not required to undergo the same checks as mainland UnionPay cardholders. **DB**

Sea of Mirrors aiming at 2018 premiere

SET and shot mostly in Macau, Thomas Lim's latest film, Sea of Mirrors, wrapped up shooting last month with the completion of several scenes filmed in Los Angeles. Post-production is nearing completion, according to the director, and a premiere in the MSAR is being planned for 2018.

With the film set in Macau, Singaporean-Chinese director Lim and a predominantly local crew filmed Sea of Mirrors exclusively on an iPhone 6S,

stating that this "would first and foremost suit the visual texture of the story."

According to a press release from Island Man Pictures, L.A.-based Toru Uchikado, the star of popular American TV series Heroes Reborn, joined the cast as its final member last month.

Born in the U.S and raised in Japan, Uchikado played the important role of "Ren Shimosaawa" in the NBC science fiction serial drama Heroes Re-

born, aired nationwide in America in 2015 and 2016.

Uchikado said that he was attracted to the project due its quirk of being filmed entirely on an iPhone and mostly in the Macau enclave.

"Macau is an extremely popular travel destination in Japan, and I've always hoped to be in a movie set there," he said, according to the press release. "When Thomas [Lim] told me the story of Sea of Mirrors, which

involved Japanese elements, and that he was shooting on the iPhone, I was very intrigued and immediately said yes."

Sea of Mirrors tells the story of a fictional, former Japanese actress, Riri Kondo, who travels to the MSAR with her young daughter to meet a rich investor who claims to be her fan, who is interested in investing in a movie with the former star as the lead.

She turns down the offer, however, once she

realizes the investor's true motivation is to coerce her into sexual relations. Her daughter is kidnapped in response, resulting in a helpless and desperate attempt to find her child before Kondo's growing obsession with casino lights in the city pushes her to the brink of madness.

According to the director's schedule, post-production for the film should be completed later this year, with a Macau premiere in 2018. **DB**



UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

Medical breakthrough predicts anti-cancer drug results in 24h

A multidisciplinary research team from the University of Macau (UM) achieved a significant breakthrough in drug susceptibility testing for cancer cell lines and human primary cancers, UM health science faculty said

yesterday.

The UM said their research team combined the expertise in precision medicine, microfluidic chip, and image processing to shorten the analysis process within 24 hours, which laid a foundation for evidence-based drug

susceptibility tests for precision cancer therapy.

The paper entitled "Drug Screening of Cancer Cell Lines and Human Primary Tumors Using Droplet Microfluidic" was recently published in the open access journal Scientific Reports

under the Nature Publishing Group.

In this study, UM researchers tested the susceptibility of cells dissociated from cancer tissues to different drugs on amicrofluidic chip developed by the State Key Laboratory of Analog and

Mixed Signal VLSI (very-large-scale integration).

Exploitation of an artificial intelligence-based image processing technology developed by the Faculty of Science and Technology facilitated the observation of single cell viability in each microfluidic droplet post-treatment for the purpose of drug screening, and achieved results within 24 hours.

The UM said the resolution and statistical capability of this study opened the door to studying single cell differential drug response within heterogeneous cancers. **Xinhua**

THE Philippine casino market has significant room for growth and the Okada Manila's recent entrance to the gambling sector will not give rise to any market cannibalization, according to a new report from the investment banking firm Morgan Stanley cited by GamingToday.

GAMING

Philippine casinos are 'the fastest growing' market in Asia

The Okada Manila opened its doors in December of last year. The local gambling sector is now benefitting from a Chinese tourist boom that is largely being pushed by

recently improved relations between China and the Philippines.

According to Morgan Stanley, when ongoing construction at Okada is completed,

they predict it to become the market-leader. The 76.6-acre property is expected to have more than 1,500 hotel rooms.

Tiger Resort Leisure and

Entertainment controlled by Japanese businessman Kazuo Okada, operates the complex. The casino/resort is seeking to compete with casinos in Macau and to

thrust Metro Manila into the forefront as a regional and international destination.

The Philippine gambling market is currently said to be "the fastest growing in Asia."

corporate bits

CONRAD MACAU TO LAUNCH BREAST CANCER CAMPAIGN FOR 5TH YEAR



Conrad Macau, Cotai Central will launch its 'PINK Inspired 2017' breast cancer awareness campaign for the fifth consecutive year. Events and

giveaways will be held throughout October to raise funds for breast cancer.

The hotel said in a statement that its premises will

be decorated with pink floral arrangements and other trimmings.

Bede Barry, General Manager, emphasized his support for the cause by stating, "breast cancer is the most prevalent form of cancer among women, regardless of age, in both developed and developing countries."

The hotel will launch a series of limited 'pink' experiences and collectibles on October 1. These experiences include spa treatments with pink Himalayan Stones as well as a pink-themed afternoon tea, happy hour and a special menu at in-house restaurant Dynasty 8.

Additionally, a Pink Charity Ladies Lunch, held in partnership with the International Ladies Club of Macau, will take place on October 19.

ALTIRA OFFERS 180-DEGREE PANORAMIC VIEW FOR INT'L FIREWORKS CONTEST



In preparation for this year's Macau International Fireworks Display Contest, Altira Macau's private dining room Yi Pavilion will offer

a 180-degree panoramic view over the city's spectacular skyline. This will be accompanied by Chef Fliegau's personal tas-

ting menus on September 22 and 23. Fliegau's menu will showcase his take on modern European cuisine, with a distinctive use of ingredients and culinary creations inspired by his favorite Asian flavors.

Fliegau won his first Michelin star at the age of 26 and now owns three restaurants – each awarded two Michelin stars – making him Switzerland's most acclaimed chef. He is renowned for his produce-driven dishes and inventive uses of seasonal ingredients.

Highlights of the menu include foie gras mûsli, combining Swiss cereal with frozen foie gras and blackcurrants. Other dishes include organic celeriac gyoza with black truffle in onion broth, and braised veal cheek.

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3D LED Taillight

The Tiguan 2 is a great all-grown-up SUV with distinctive styling which redefines its class and confidently points the way to the future. The new generation Tiguan is the first sport utility vehicle to be based on the modular transverse matrix (MQB), and it sets new standards in design, comfort and functionality. In doing so it of course remains capable of off-road, with a rugged all-wheel drive system that includes premium class technology for use on and off the highway. The Tiguan 2 is, then, both more SUV and more than an SUV.


Volkswagen

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MOZAMBIQUE

Maputo hosts Tokyo International Conference on African Development

MOZAMBIQUE will host the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) from today to Friday, an event that will be attended by foreign ministers, among other government officials, the Mozambican press reported.

The meeting, which is taking place for the first time in Mozambique, has already confirmed the participation of 31 African ministers, including 24 Ministers for Foreign Affairs, seven other ministers and vice ministers, according to the Mozambican Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Oldeiro Balói.

The Minister said that TICAD is an opportunity to showcase cooperation between Japan and African countries, with the opening session due to be inaugurated by the President of Mozambique.

The Mozambican delegation at the meeting will take the opportunity to reveal the result of Japan's cooperation in the country, with Balói citing

as examples the recovery of the port of Nacala, laying asphalt on the Mandiba/Lichinga road and the construction of the Infulene Institute of Sciences and Health.

The TICAD process consists of five co-organizers, namely the Government of Japan, the African Union Commission, the Office of the United Nations Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono will be present on both days of the conference, and on Sunday will travel onwards to Ethiopia to meet with African Union officials.

In addition to Taro Kono and other members of his delegation, representatives of more than 50 Japanese companies are expected to be present in Maputo, according to the number mentioned by the Japanese ambassador to Mozambique, Toshio Ikeda, after a meeting with Mozambican Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosário. **MDT/Macauhub**

Chinese group HNA expands business by buying shares in duty-free stores

CHINESE group HNA has acquired 16.2 percent of the Dufry group, raising its stake in the Basel-based group to 20.92 percent, which operates more than 2,200 duty-free and duty-paid stores in airports, ports, cruise ships, train stations and tourist areas, the Swiss group said yesterday.

This deal was made with the GIC and Temasek companies, and the trade press reported that the HNA group has invested more than USD1 billion in the Dufry group, taking into account its market capitalization.

The HNA Group is a conglomerate based on Hainan Island which operates in the aviation, industrial, tourism, logistics and financial sectors and became a shareholder of airline Azul – Linhas Aéreas Brasileiras after paying 1.7 billion reais for a 23.7 percent stake.

Under the deal, the Chinese group has an indirect stake in TAP-Portugal, having in May 2016 announced that it purchased 25 percent of the company's



convertible bonds for 30 million euros.

The deal, which was made through Azul (a company that is part of the Atlantic Gateway consortium, a shareholder of TAP), has allowed the Chinese group to increase its economic interests in TAP to 23 percent and to take a seat on the board of directors.

Beijing Capital Airlines, of the HNA group, recently established

a link between China and Portugal, specifically between Hangzhou and Lisbon, with a stopover in Beijing, with an initial frequency of three flights a week.

In July, the group concluded the purchase for \$19 million of Brazilian group Odebrecht's stake in the RioGaleão consortium that manages Tom Jobim International Airport in Rio de Janeiro. **MDT/Macauhub**

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CHINA QUARTERLY

Editor says Cambridge University Press to restore articles

Danica Kirka & Louise Watt, London

CAMBRIDGE University Press (CUP) agreed yesterday to restore more than 300 politically sensitive articles that had been removed from the publisher's website in China at the behest of authorities.

Tim Pringle, editor of "The China Quarterly," told The Associated Press that the publisher agreed to repost the articles immediately. The action followed a petition circulating among academics calling on the university press to turn down censorship requests from the Chinese government.

"I am delighted by the support of the international academic community," Pringle said.

Cambridge University Press said over the weekend that it had complied with a request to



The campus of the University of Cambridge (file photo)

block certain articles from "The China Quarterly" within China. They touch on politically sensitive subjects, including the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution and the

status of Tibet.

"Access to published materials of the highest quality is a core component of scholarly research," Pringle wrote in a post on Twitter announcing the decision. "It is not the

role of respected global publishing houses such as CUP to hinder such access."

The university later confirmed the decision to restore the articles, saying they had been reluctant to block the material in the first place.

"Academic freedom is the overriding principle on which the University of Cambridge is based," the press said in a statement on Twitter. "Therefore, while this temporary decision was taken in order to protect short-term access in China to the vast majority of the Press's journal articles, the University's academic leadership and the Press have agreed to reinstate the blocked content, with immediate effect, so as to uphold the principle of academic freedom on which the University's work is founded."

The furor comes against a tightening of controls by Chinese President Xi Jinping's government over a wide range of groups that could feed opposition to the ruling Communist Party, including lawyers who take on sensitive cases, non-governmental organizations and churches.

Academics say that universities, which have long endured some degree of political interference, have also come under increased supervision, including regular monitoring in classrooms and ideological audits.

Christopher Balding, an associate professor in economics at Peking Uni-

versity HSBC Business School in Shenzhen, said he started the petition to bring pressure on not just CUP, but also universities and academics who interact with China as well as Chinese universities and academics "to stand up to" censorship by the Chinese government.

With Chinese universities increasingly hiring internationally, Beijing is concerned "that these universities are not going to have the ideological adherence to what Beijing wants them to say," Balding said.

The petition that circulated among academics calls on CUP to turn down censorship requests from the Chinese government. It says that academics and universities reserve the right to boycott CUP and related journals if it gives into the Chinese government's demands.

Academic freedom is the overriding principle on which the University of Cambridge is based.

CUP STATEMENT

"The fundamental driver of this [...] is simply to exercise control, to try to impose what they think is the correct way of thinking," said Balding. He said that scholars in China who really want to read the papers will still be able to access the articles through their networks of colleagues or by skirting Chinese restrictions on

the internet known as the "Great Firewall."

However, "the signal is being sent: 'we don't want Chinese scholars publishing on this,'" said Balding. "You will mostly likely see a decline in basically any scholarly work on these particular issues."

By Monday, more than 200 people had signed the 3-day-old petition on change.org.

The Global Times newspaper, published by the ruling Communist Party, said in an editorial Monday that China blocks some information on foreign websites that it deems "harmful" to Chinese society, and that CUP has to abide by Chinese law if it sets up a server within China.

If Western institutions "think China's internet market is so important that they can't miss out, they need to respect Chinese law and adapt to the Chinese way," the editorial read.

Chen Daoyin, a political scientist at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, said scholars in China self-censor anyway and don't work on politically sensitive topics, such as the June 4, 1989, crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

"Most of the young generations in China don't know about June 4," Chen said. "And this is what Chinese authorities are doing now, working for the future."

Cambridge University Press, which is part of the famed British university, said in its Friday statement that it had complied with a request from a Chinese import agency to block individual articles within China to ensure that other materials it publishes would remain available in China.

It added that it was "troubled by the recent increase in requests of this nature" and intended to discuss the issue with Chinese authorities at the Beijing International Book Fair, which takes place this week. **AP**

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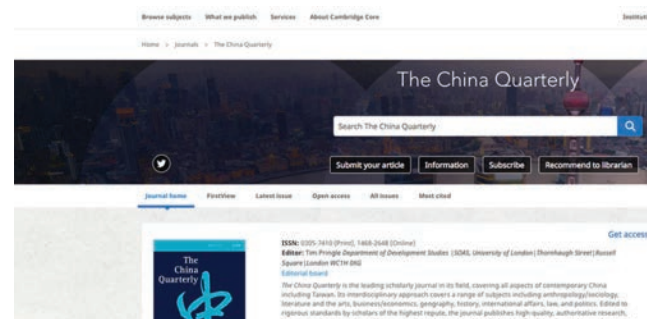
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Screenshot of The China Quarterly website

COURTS

Activist admits to using Twitter to incite subversion

Louise Watt, Beijing

A prominent Chinese human rights campaigner pleaded guilty to inciting subversion of state power yesterday, saying he had used social media to inspire distrust in the Chinese government, in the latest trial in a sweeping crackdown on independent lawyers and rights activists.

Parts of the trial of Jiang Tianyong were broadcast on the social media account of Changsha Intermediate People's Court in the central province of Hunan, an unusual move for such a politically sensitive case. Prosecutors said he had used social media platforms to denigrate the government and judicial authorities and incited others to subvert state power, including fabricating claims that a lawyer had been tortured in custody. Rights groups said the trial was a sham.

Jiang was filmed saying he had used Twitter and Sina Weibo and interviews with overseas media to spread anti-government messages among the public.

"I wanted to [...] mislead internet users into hating our country's current social system and into sharing my own sense of dissatisfaction with society, in order to inculcate hopes of changing the current social order with the goal of subverting our country's current social order," Jiang said in the footage. He wore a short-sleeved white shirt and sat alone in the middle of the court.

Jiang is one of the last lawyers and activists detained in relation to a crackdown that began in July 2015 to go on trial. Critics say the campaign is aimed at snuffing out

AP PHOTO



Jiang Tianyong speaks to journalists outside a hospital after his failed attempt to see blind activist Chen Guangcheng in May 2012

any potential opposition to the ruling Communist Party.

In remarks available to watch on video on the court's Sina Weibo microblog account, Jiang said he felt remorse for his "criminal behavior" and that he deserved

■ **A HK-based researcher at the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders, called the hearing 'a pre-written piece of theater'**

"whatever punishment I get."

"I also hope that those so-called human rights activists and lawyers who hold the same ideas as I used to can learn lessons from my case and from today's trial," he said. "Don't do things like this; these kinds of things do cause serious damage to our country, our society and hurt our families."

Frances Eve, a Hong Kong-based researcher at the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders, called yesterday's hearing "a pre-written piece of theater" and said that "as expected under the circumstances, Jiang confessed at the end."

"He was held in a secret location for six months and never given access to the lawyers hired by his family. Any confession under these circumstances wouldn't hold up in a truly independent

court," Eve said.

Courts in China are controlled by the Communist Party and convictions are virtually assured. Human rights groups and victims say the extraction of coerced confessions, sometimes through the use of physical and psychological torture, is common, despite being banned by Chinese law.

Jiang was taken away by state security agents in November and in March purportedly gave an interview to a state newspaper and was shown on state TV saying that he had made up a story about a lawyer, Xie Yang, being tortured. Jiang's wife and rights groups said the supposed confessions were false, and his legal team questioned how reporters were able to meet with Jiang when his relatives and lawyers were not.

Xie was released in May after pleading guilty to charges of incitement to subversion and disturbing legal proceedings, and telling the same court he hadn't been tortured or forced into giving a confession. Xie's wife, who fled to the U.S., called the trial a sham and the U.S. State Department said Xie's confession "appeared to be given under duress."

Jiang was a lawyer who took on politically sensitive cases, and defended blind activist Chen Guangcheng and followers of the outlawed Falun Gong spiritual group. He was disbarred in 2009, and became an activist and helped publicize the plight of lawyers arrested in the crackdown that began in July 2015.

Jiang was initially charged with subversion of state power, but it was downgraded to the lesser charge of incitement, which is often punished with time served while under investigation. A sentence will be announced at a later, unspecified date.

Vaguely defined subversion-related charges are frequently leveled against rights activists and perceived political foes of the Communist Party.

Jiang's friend, former lawyer Liu Xiaoyuan, said that Jiang's case was being dealt with much faster than that of other lawyers, such as Wang Qianzhang, who has been detained since 2015.

Liu said the unusual broadcasting of clips of the case on Sina Weibo meant there was an expectation Jiang would admit guilt.

Despite it being billed as an "open" trial by the court, Liu said a lawyer had applied to attend the hearing but was refused, and that authorities had blocked off the roads surrounding the court.

Diplomats from the embassies of the U.K., Canada, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the U.S. and Germany had sought to attend Jiang's trial, but were prevented from getting even close to the courthouse because of the sealed-off roads, a Western diplomat said on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the case. **AP**

CHINA, Washington's main rival for influence in the Asia-Pacific, has seized on the collision of a U.S. destroyer to accuse the Navy of endangering maritime navigation in the region.

A string of accidents this year shows the U.S. Navy "is becoming a dangerous obstacle in Asian waters," the official China Daily newspaper said in its online edition.

"The U.S. Navy, which likes to claim its presence can help safeguard 'freedom of navigation' in the South China Sea, is proving to be an increasing hindrance to ships sailing in Asian waters," the newspaper said in an un-

Beijing scores points off McCain collision

signed editorial.

The USS John S. McCain collided with an oil tanker on Monday as it was heading to Singapore on a routine port visit after conducting a sensitive freedom-of-navigation operation last week by sailing near one of China's man-made islands in the South China Sea.

China's claims to most of the South China Sea have resulted in territorial disputes with several Southeast Asian nations and prompted international concern about its militarization of waters that

are a vital route for global trade.

"Anyone should be able to tell who is to blame for militarizing the waters and posing a threat to navigation," the newspaper said.

In Manila, officials yesterday said Chinese navy stalked Philippine area.

Two Filipino security officials say China has deployed its navy and coast guard ships in a cluster of uninhabited sandbars in the disputed South China Sea amid concerns that the Philippines may build structures on them in an

emerging territorial issue that the government stated was quickly resolved.

Two senior Philippine security officials told The Associated Press yesterday that three Chinese navy ships and other vessels kept watch near Sandy Cay on Aug. 12 after Filipino fishermen were spotted on the sandbars. The Filipinos eventually left.

A government report says the Chinese ships stayed for days off Sandy Cay, about 2.5 nautical miles from a Philippine-occupied island.

AP PHOTO



Tugboats from Singapore assist the Guided-missile destroyer USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) as it steers towards Changi Naval Base, Singapore

The Chinese presence sparked concerns in Manila, but its top diplomat

said without elaborating that the issue has been resolved. **MDT/AP**



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KOREA

As Pyongyang vows response, US dismisses calls to pause drills

Lee Jin-man & Hyung-jin Kim,
Osan Air base

AS North Korea vowed “merciless retaliation” against U.S.-South Korean military drills that it claims are an invasion rehearsal, senior U.S. military commanders yesterday dismissed calls to pause or downsize exercises they called crucial to countering a clear threat from Pyongyang.

The heated North Korean rhetoric, along with occasional weapons tests, is standard fare during the spring and summer war games by allies Seoul and Washington, but always uneasy ties between the Koreas are worse than normal this year following weeks of tit-for-tat threats between President Donald Trump and Pyongyang in the wake of the North's two inter-continental ballistic missile tests last month.

There have been calls in both the United States and South Korea to postpone or modify the drills in an attempt to ease hostility on the Korean Peninsula following North Korea's threat to lob missiles toward the U.S. territory of Guam. But a visiting group of senior U.S. military commanders, including Adm. Harry Harris, the commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, said the drills are critical for the allies to maintain readiness against an aggressive North Korea.

“A strong diplomatic effort backed by a strong military effort is key because credible combat power should be in support of



U.S. Pacific Command Commander Adm. Harry Harris Jr. (front)

diplomacy and not the other way around,” Harris said during a news conference at the Osan Air Base in South Korea.

Vincent Brooks, commander of U.S. Forces Korea, said the allies should continue the war games until they “have reason not to.” “That reason has not yet emerged,” he said.

The U.S. military officials later traveled to the site of a contentious U.S. missile-defense system in South Korea later Tuesday.

North Korea's military said in a statement that it would launch an unspecified “merciless retaliation and unsparing punishment” on the United States over the Ulchi Freedom Guardian drills that began Monday for an 11-day run.

Despite the threat, an unprompted direct attack is extremely unlikely because the United States vastly outguns Pyongyang, which values the continuation of its dictatorship above all else. Impoverished North Korea hates the annual drills in part because they force it to respond with expensive military measures of its own.

The North Korean statement accused the United States of deploying unspecified “lethal” weapons for the drills that it says involve a “beheading operation” training aimed at removing absolute ruler Kim Jong Un.

“No one can vouch that these huge forces concentrated in South Korea will not go over to an actual war action now that the military

tensions have reached an extreme pitch in the Korean Peninsula,” the statement said. “Moreover, high-ranking bosses of the U.S. imperialist aggressor forces flew into South Korea to hold a war confab.

An unprompted direct attack is extremely unlikely because the US vastly outguns Pyongyang

Such huddle is increasing the gravity of the situation.”

Sen. Edward Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat who visited Seoul with other lawmakers, said Tuesday that dialogue would be the best way to defuse the North Korean nuclear standoff, though he argued that the United States and its allies must be ready to respond to potential aggression by North Korea with “overwhelming force.”

“Talking with North Korea is not a concession; it is the only way to reach an agreement to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula and to reinforce that our military strength is there only to deter aggression and to defend against attack,” Markey told a news conference.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono offered a different view, saying pressure, not talks, is needed to push North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons. He said Pyongyang had used dialogue in the past to buy time.

The Ulchi drills are largely computer-simulated war games held every summer, and this year's exercise involves 17,500 American troops and 50,000 South Korean soldiers. No field training like live-fire exercises or tank maneuvering is involved in the drills, in which alliance officers sit at computers to practice how they would engage in battles and hone their decision-making capabilities. The allies have said the drills are defensive in nature. **AP**

JAPAN

Minister sees unity with Trump, pressure on North Korea

JAPAN'S new foreign minister is a reputed renegade, famous for bashing his ruling party's policies with stands against nuclear power and for stricter checks on foreign aid.

Taro Kono, appointed earlier this month, said he won't abandon his pet issues, but will make sure to send a united message when representing his country to the outside world.

In comments to reporters yesterday at the Foreign Ministry, Kono was the mark of diplomacy when referring to Japan's

relations with the U.S., its most important ally.

He said he saw no divisions or confusion in the administration of President Donald Trump in his recent talks with officials including Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Ambassador to Japan William Hagerty.

“Things have never been easier,” he said. “We can have solid talks.”

When asked about how some observers found Washington divided and confusing, Kono acknowledged that some changes were inevitable simply

because Trump is a Republican, unlike his predecessor, Barack Obama.

But he said the basics of Japan's relationship with the U.S. have remained the same, and such solidarity was important given the crisis over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

Kono, who has always tended to take a tough stand on North Korea, said continued pressure, not dialogue, is what is needed now to get it to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Kono accused North Korea of using talks in

the past to buy time, and said “loopholes” in recent U.N. sanctions on the North need to be dealt with instead, because ample money was continuing to flow into North Korea for its missile and nuclear programs.

“When North Korea clearly shows its willingness to give up nuclear weapons and takes such action, that is when we start talks,” Kono said. “It is time for continued pressure until North Korea shows a clear will and acts in that way.”

The selection of Kono along with other popular



Japan's Foreign Minister Taro Kono

legislators for the Cabinet, announced Aug. 3, was widely seen as an effort by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to curry favor with the public after a series of scandals badly dented his approval ratings.

Kono, 54, is unusual for a Japanese politician, having graduated from

Georgetown University in the United States and worked in Washington for Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby, then a congressman. He is fluent in English and more casual in his personal mannerisms in a Japanese political world often criticized as insular and lacking in diversity. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull

AUSTRALIA

Citizenship chaos threatens rudderless government

PRIME Minister Malcolm Turnbull's government could collapse if a court rules that three of his lawmakers with dual citizenship are ineligible to hold office. Even if they stay, his handling of the constitutional crisis gripping Australia's parliament may have already sealed its fate.

The High Court will begin hearin-

gstomorrowtointerpreta117-year-old law that bars dual nationals from sitting in parliament. Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce and two other Cabinet ministers are among seven lawmakers caught up in the fiasco that's sparked incredulity even in a nation that's grown used to political turmoil.

Instead of quelling the crisis,

the government seems to have exacerbated it. By allowing Joyce and Fiona Nash, the rural health minister, to remain in the Cabinet, even after Resources Minister Matt Canavan stepped aside, Turnbull has opened himself to charges of double standards.

"Turnbull's inability to deal with the recent chaos has exacerbated

existing views among voters that his government is rudderless," said Martin Drum, a senior lecturer in politics at the University of Notre Dame in Perth. "Controversies are always a lot worse when they affect governments already seen to have lost focus."

The drama began last month when two senators in the minority

Greens party, one born in Canada and the other in New Zealand, resigned from parliament for unwittingly breaching Section 44 of Australia's constitution. The law says people are disqualified from becoming federal lawmakers if they are "a subject or a citizen or entitled to the rights or privileges of a subject or a citizen of a foreign power."

The Liberal-National coalition slipped further behind the main opposition Labor party in a News-poll published Monday, 46 percent to 54 percent. Should that margin be replicated at the next election, due by 2019, the government, which holds a one-seat majority in the lower house, would be wiped out.

Its majority may disappear even sooner, if the High Court rules against Joyce. In that scenario, Joyce - who has now renounced his New Zealand citizenship - would have to re-contest his seat in a special election.

If he lost, Turnbull may be forced to lead a minority government. That could bring fresh political uncertainty to a nation where no prime minister has served a full three-year term in the past decade.

Australia's political climate has deteriorated over the past five years to reach the riskiest level relative to its peers since at least 2009, according to Bloomberg's country risk gauges. The country has lost ground in recent years when it comes to scores for government effectiveness and regulatory quality. **MDT/Bloomberg**

INDIA

Instant divorce unconstitutional, court rules

Upmanyu Trivedi, Iain Marlow

INDIA'S top court has ruled that Muslim men can no longer instantly divorce their wives, in a closely watched case that has divided opinion in the country's 170-million strong Muslim community.

In a ruling yesterday, the Supreme Court of India ruled as unconstitutional the divorce procedure known as "triple talaq," in which a Muslim man can instantly leave his wife by saying the word "talaq" - which means divorce - three times.

Three members of a five-judge bench headed by India's chief justice J.S. Khehar said the law was unconstitutional.

"Triple talaq is against the basic tenets of the Holy Koran and consequently, it violates Shariat," said Justice Kurian Joseph, one of the three judges in majority on the panel, who said the practice is not an integral part of Islam.

The case is likely to be praised by women's rights activists, who disliked the law because it allowed men to instantly



Farha Faiz, a Supreme Court lawyer, speaks to the media yesterday

disown their wives and shirk familial responsibilities. As the case progressed, several Muslim women and women's groups petitioned the court, opposing the practice.

However, some Muslim leaders have viewed the push against instant divorce as an assault on India's tradition of allowing its sizable Muslim minority to govern itself by some Islamic laws - known in India as Muslim personal law. Chief Justice Khehar, on behalf of himself and Justice S. Abdul Nazeer, who were

in the minority, said instant divorce could not be held unconstitutional because it was part of Muslim personal law.

Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has pushed for a so-called "uniform" civil code that would apply equally to all Indians, a move some Muslim groups have opposed. Modi described the ruling as "historic", tweeting "It grants equality to Muslim women and is a powerful measure for women empowerment." **Bloomberg**

INDONESIA

Sixth province declares emergency as fires spread

THE number of dry season fires burning across Indonesia has jumped to more than 500 and a sixth province has declared a state of emergency, the disaster mitigation agency said yesterday.

Spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said satellite images show 538 fires across 23 provinces, up from about 160 early in the month.

Plantation companies and villagers often set the fires deliberately to clear land for planting. They spread easily because a widespread practice in Indonesia of draining swampy peatlands for palm oil and pulp wood plantations has made swathes of land highly combustible.

Nugroho said Central Kalimantan was

the latest province to declare a state of emergency. Last month five provinces - Riau, Jambi, South Sumatra, West Kalimantan, and South Kalimantan - declared emergencies in anticipation of a worsening of the fires and to enable measures to mitigate the choking smoke that peatlands generate when burned.

He said the agency has deployed 21 helicopters to help extinguish fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan as well as a Casa 212 aircraft to induce rain in Sumatra.

More than one-third of the fires are in West Kalimantan on the Indonesian part of Borneo and one quarter are in the easternmost Indonesian region of Papua. Typically the fires have affected

Sumatra and Kalimantan the most, but plantation companies have found new frontiers in Papua's wilderness, exposing it to greater fire risk.

In 2015, record fires burned 2.6 million hectares, more than four times the area of Bali, and blanketed Sumatra, Borneo, Singapore, Malaysia and southern Thailand in health-damaging haze that a Harvard and Columbia study estimated has hastened 100,000 deaths in the region.

The World Bank said the fires, which were worsened by El Nino drought conditions, caused USD16 billion in losses. President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo imposed a moratorium on new development of peatlands but enforcement of it is uneven. **AP**



Trump vows continued fight in Afghanistan; reversing stance

Josh Lederman
& Robert Burns, Washington

REVERSING his past calls for a speedy exit, President Donald Trump recommitted the United States to the 16-year-old war in Afghanistan, declaring U.S. troops must “fight to win.” He pointedly declined to disclose how many more troops will be dispatched to wage America’s longest war.

In a prime-time address to unveil his new Afghanistan strategy, Trump said Monday the U.S. would shift away from a “time-based” approach, instead linking its assistance to results and to cooperation from the beleaguered Afghan government, Pakistan and others. He insisted it would be a “regional” strategy that addressed the roles played by other South Asian nations — especially Pakistan’s harboring of elements of the Taliban.

“America will work with the Afghan government as long as we see determination and progress,” Trump said. “However, our commitment is not unlimited, and our support is not a blank check.”

Still, Trump offered few details about how progress would be measured. Nor did he explain how his approach would differ substantively from what two presidents before him tried unsuccessfully over the past 16 years.

Although Trump insisted he would “not talk about numbers of troops” or telegraph military

moves in advance, he hinted that he’d embraced the Pentagon’s proposal to boost troop numbers by nearly 4,000, augmenting the roughly 8,400 Americans there now.

■ The plan was cheered by Afghanistan’s government, which called it a ‘10 out of 10’

Before becoming a candidate, Trump had ardently argued for a quick withdrawal from Afghanistan, calling the war a massive waste of U.S. “blood and treasure” and declaring on Twitter, “Let’s get out!” Seven months into his presidency, he said Monday night that though his “original instinct was to pull out,” he’d since determined that approach could create a vacuum that terrorists including al-Qaida and the Islamic State would “instantly fill.”

“We will ask our NATO allies and global partners to support our new strategy, with additional troop and funding increases in line with our own. We are confident they will,” Trump said in comments echoed by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

Earlier this year, Trump announced he was entrusting Mattis and the military with the decision about how many

troops would be needed. In talking points sent Monday to congressional Republicans and supportive groups, the White House affirmed that the troop numbers were up to Mattis and added that the administration wasn’t seeking more money from Congress for the strategy in the current fiscal year, which concludes at the end of next month.

While Trump stressed his strategy was about more than just the military, he was vague on other “instruments of American power” he said would be deployed in full force to lead Afghanistan toward peace, such as economic development or new engagement with Pakistan and India. Absent military specifics, it was difficult to assess how his plan might dissolve the stalemate between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

On one point — the definition of victory — Trump was unequivocal. He said American troops would “fight to win” by attacking enemies, “crushing” al-Qaida, preventing terror attacks against Americans and “obliterating” the Islamic State group, whose affiliate has gained a foothold in Afghanistan as the U.S. squeezes the extremists in Syria and Iraq.

Trump’s definition of a win notably did not include defeating the Taliban, the group whose harboring of al-Qaida led the U.S. to war in Afghanistan in the days after the 9/11 attacks. Like President Barack Obama before him, Trump conceded that any

solution that brings peace to Afghanistan may well involve the Taliban’s participation.

“Someday, after an effective military effort, perhaps it will be possible to have a political settlement that includes elements of the Taliban in Afghanistan,” Trump said. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, in a statement after the speech, said the U.S. was ready to support peace talks with the Taliban “without preconditions.”

Talk of future Taliban reconciliation was one of several echoes of Obama woven into Trump’s plan. Like Trump, Obama insisted near the start of his presidency that the “days of providing a blank check are over,” urged a regional approach and said U.S. assistance would be based on performance.

Still, Trump was intent on differentiating his approach from his predecessors — at least in rhetoric. He emphasized there

would be no timelines, no hamstringing of the military and no divorcing of Afghanistan from the region’s broader problems.

One step being considered to further squeeze Pakistan is to cut foreign aid programs unless Islamabad clamps down on the Taliban and an associated group known as the Haqqani network, senior administration officials told reporters ahead of Trump’s speech. Using civilian and military aid as a pressure lever with the Pakistanis has been tried for years.

Trump’s speech concluded a months-long internal debate within his administration over whether to pull back from the Afghanistan conflict, as he and a few advisers were inclined to do, or to embroil the U.S. further in a war that has eluded American solutions for the past 16 years. Several times, officials predicted he was nearing a decision to adopt his commanders’ recommendations, only to see the final judgment delayed.

And while Trump has pledged to put “America First,” keeping U.S. interests above any others, his national security advisers have warned that the Afghan forces are still far too weak to succeed without help. Even now, Afghan’s government controls just half the country.

In Kabul, Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid dismissed Trump’s speech as “old” and his policy as “unclear.” But the plan was cheered by Afghanistan’s government. Ambassador Hamdullah Mohib, the Afghan envoy to Washington, called it a “10 out of 10.”

“We heard exactly what we needed to,” Mohib said in a phone interview. “The focus on the numbers has taken away the real focus on what should have been: what conditions are required and what kind of support is necessary.”

At its peak, the U.S. had roughly 100,000 in Afghanistan, under the Obama administration in 2010-2011. The residual forces have been focused on advising and training Afghan forces and on counterterror operations — missions that aren’t expected to dramatically change under Trump’s plan.

“I share the America people’s frustration,” Trump said. But he insisted, “In the end, we will win.” AP



what's ON



CONSTELLATION - WORKS BY NICOLAS DELAROCHE

TIME: 10am-9pm

UNTIL: October 8, 2017

VENUE: Tap Seac Gallery

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6866

BRAND STORY - POP-UP SHOP

TIME: 10am-8pm

UNTIL: October 1, 2017

VENUE: Macau Fashion Gallery

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 3341

RESTLESS NATURE BY TONG CHONG

TIME: 12pm-8pm

UNTIL: September 6, 2017

VENUE: Taipa Village Art Space, Rua dos Clerigos

No 10, Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

ORGANIZER: Taipa Village Cultural Association

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2857 6118

MY HANDS MOULD MY THOUGHTS -

SCULPTURAL WORKS BY WU HIN LONG

TIME: 11am-7pm (Closed on Mondays and public holidays)

UNTIL: August 27, 2017

VENUE: Macau Art Garden

ADMISSION: Free

ORGANIZER: Art for All Society

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6064

REPRESENTING WOMEN THROUGH THE MAM

COLLECTION - 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

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

UNTIL: December 10, 2017

VENUE: Macau Art Museum

ADMISSION: Free

ORGANIZER: Cultural Affairs Bureau

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

32ND COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION OF MACAO

ARTISTS - EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY WINNERS

TIME: 10am to 8pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: August 27, 2017

VENUE: Old Court Building, Avenida da Praia Grande

ADMISSION: Free

ORGANIZER: Cultural Affairs Bureau

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

Offbeat

WISE GUY. DUBAI ARRESTS MAN FOR HIDING 5.7M PILLS IN SHEEP INTESTINES

A state-owned newspaper in Dubai is reporting a man has found himself in a legal mess after allegedly trying to smuggling 5.7 million amphetamine pills into the sheikhdom hidden inside sheep intestines.

Al-Bayan newspaper reported in its yesterday edition that the man appeared in court on charges he hid the pills in intestines packed into drums heading into Dubai's massive Jebel Ali port.

Prosecutors say the man said his brother had told him to try to bring the intestines into the country. Customs authorities discovered the pills when they inspected the cargo before it was to be released and taken to a warehouse.

Amphetamine busts are common in the United Arab Emirates, as smugglers ship the drugs into the country in an effort to try and reach Saudi Arabia.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
19:10	The Brazillians (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Portuguese in New England
21:25	Ui Di Sabroso Sr. 2
21:40	Miscellaneous
22:10	The Brazillians
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:55	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

18 Aug - 23 Aug



DORAEMON THE MOVIE 2017

ROOM 1

2:30, 4:30PM

Director: Atsushi Takahashi

Starring: Wasabi Mizuta, Megumi Ohara, Yumi Kakazu

Language: Cantonese (Chinese)

Duration: 101min



GINTAMA

ROOM 1

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

Director: Fukuda

yuichi

Starring: Oguri Shun, Tsuyoshi Domoto, Suda Masaki

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 131min



HITMAN'S BODYGUARD

ROOM 2

2:30, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30pm

Director: Patrick Hughes

Starring: Ryan Reynolds, Samuel L. Jackson, Gary Oldman

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 118min

THE EMOJI MOVIE

ROOM 3

2:15, 5:45, 7:30pm

Director: Tony Leondis

Starring: T.J. Miller, James Corden, Anna Faris

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 86min

THE BATTLESHIP ISLAND

ROOM 3

7:00, 9:30pm

Director: Ryoo Seung-Wan

Starring: Hwang Jung-Min, So Ji-Sub, Song Joong-Ki

Language: Korean & Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 132min

this day in history



Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev

1991 GORBACHEV PUNISHES COUP PLOTTERS

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has begun his purge of cabinet members and officials involved in the failed coup four days ago.

Two of the three ministers who signed the committee's takeover decree, defence minister Dmitri Yazov and KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov, have been arrested.

The third, interior minister Boris Pugo, committed suicide to avoid arrest.

Mr Gorbachev also sacked his prime minister, Valentin Pavlov, and foreign minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh. Dozens of other party officials and senior army officers resigned or were dismissed.

During an address to the Russian Parliament, the leader said his "entire government" should resign for failing to oppose the takeover.

But Mr Gorbachev was unable to prevent his political rival, Russia's president Boris Yeltsin, capitalising on support he gained from opposing the coup and suspending the Russian Communist Party.

The exchanges between the Russian President and Soviet leader in parliament appeared to indicate that the balance of power in post-coup Moscow is rapidly shifting away from Mr Gorbachev.

Mr Yeltsin forced him to read out a list of those who had supported the takeover, taken from notes of the cabinet meeting on the morning of the coup.

When Mr Gorbachev had finished reading the notes, the president said: "Now, on a lighter note, I will sign this decree suspending the Russian Communist Party."

Mr Gorbachev pleaded with him not to sign the document, telling parliament he would never agree to something that infringed the interests of "millions of workers and peasants".

"You can't say that the whole Communist party supported the conspirators - if we do things like this it will be a witch hunt," he added.

But Mr Yeltsin responded by saying he was not banning the party, merely suspending it "prior to investigation of its involvement in the coup" - and signed the document to loud applause.

Mr Gorbachev praised the Russian Parliament and Mr Yeltsin for their role in defeating the coup, but was frequently heckled during his speech.

During his description of what happened during the takeover attempt one member of the parliament shouted: "We all know that. Talk about the reasons."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Soviet Union collapsed four months later and Mr Gorbachev resigned on 25 December 1991.

Russia, Ukraine and Belarus formed the Commonwealth of Independent States, an alliance which was eventually joined by all the former Soviet republics except the Baltic states.

In 1992, Russia took the former USSR's seat at the United Nations.

Mr Yeltsin's path to democracy was far from smooth. In 1993 he suspended parliament and called for new elections after a series of disagreements with his MPs.

When they barricaded themselves into the parliament building, he was forced to order the army in to recapture it.

Mr Yeltsin resigned in 2000 and was replaced by Vladimir Putin. The 1991 coup plotters were pardoned in 1994.

YOUR STARS



Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You've never had a problem with conversation. In fact, you can always find something to chat about, no matter who you're with. But for the moment, you're also going to be amazingly sensitive.



Taurus

April 20-May 20

No one is going to be as lucky in love as you -- as if you ever needed any help in that department. Your usual magnetic charm will be running on high, but you'll also be incredibly perceptive.



Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

Don't just sit there. Listen to your intuition. Someone needs you, but they're far too proud to ask. So offer. Go to them, and let them know you'll be there for them, no matter what they need.



Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Put all the nonsense of the past few days behind you -- it's time. Focus on the days ahead, which will be interesting and unusual. Oh, and speaking of interesting, prepare yourself for a terrific period.



Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Ready to snuggle up, get close and become intimately involved? Well, here's a tip: The last part of that has probably already happened. Now it's just a matter of admitting it -- first of all, to yourself.



Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Right now, the stars are busy turning up the volume on all your personality traits: compassion, tenderness, and intuition, for starters. Since it's also your time to relax and have fun, you might want to start celebrating now.



Libra

Sep.23-Oct. 22

You'll be an emotional creature today, that's for sure -- even more so than usual, which is really saying something. That's fine, though, because what you'll be expressing are all good feelings.



Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

These new folks you've been seeing so much of lately? They're really something, aren't they? You feel quite happily involved with them. In fact, it probably feels as if you've known them all for far longer than you have.



Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Your honest enjoyment of people always promises a good time, and that's particularly true today. You have energy and imagination to spare, and when it comes to the social scene, you can't be beat.



Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Yesterday's luck hasn't gone anywhere just yet. In fact, since the universe has decided to grant you an amazing dose of intuition in addition to all your gifts, you won't believe just how fortunate you'll be.



Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

For quite a while, you've been considering what to do about your relationship with a certain possessive someone. Should you end it, slow it down or jump right in? The fact that you're not sure is a statement in itself.



Pisces

Feb.19-Mar. 20

Don't worry about this romantic roll you're on coming to a close. It's really just getting started. And it's not going to be strictly the romance that will be devastatingly good. You have luck coming at you in all categories.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

		8			6		7	
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Hard

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CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Units; 6- Kill; 10- Record with a VCR; 14- Role for Valerie; 15- Heap; 16- Cast; 17- Gum; 18- Work without ____; 19- "What I Am" singer Brickell; 20- An organization; 23- Maze runner; 27- Native New Zealander; 28- Busy as ____; 29- Aboriginal; 34- Spy in Canaan; 36- Defamation; 37- Floors; 40- Church principles; 43- Morse symbol; 44- Twice, a comforting comment; 45- Having wings; 46- Occupant; 48- Like Nash's lama; 49- ____ Grows in Brooklyn; 53- Legless larva of certain flies; 55- Negligent practice; 60- Zip-____-Doo-Dah; 61- Composer Khachaturian; 62- Variety show; 67- Manuscript enc.; 68- Over-50 org.; 69- Perfect; 70- Flat sound; 71- RR stops; 72- Peripheries;

DOWN: 1- Like some discounted mdse.; 2- Definite article; 3- Dawn goddess; 4- Start of the 16th century; 5- Capital city of Yemen; 6- Health resorts; 7- Start to type?; 8- Actor Guinness; 9- Himalayan legend; 10- Iota preceder; 11- Recording of acoustic signals; 12- Earlier; 13- 1985 Kate Nelligan film; 21- RR stop; 22- Aviator Earhart; 23- Tied; 24- Fiber obtained from a banana plant; 25- Gush forth; 26- Winder for holding flexible material; 30- Extraterrestrial; 31- Jewelled crown worn by women; 32- "Hedda Gabler" playwright; 33- Fido's appointment; 35- Superior; 37- Wild as wild ass of Tibet; 38- Bony prefix; 39- Refine metal; 41- "____ loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah"; 42- Thick-soled shoe; 47- HBO competitor; 49- Gather; 50- Triumphant cries; 51- Like non-oyster months; 52- Fencing swords; 54- Hawk's home; 56- Small batteries; 57- Pluto's tail?; 58- Skater Lipinski; 59- Little rascals; 63- Actor Byrnes; 64- ____ out (relax); 65- Abu Dhabi's fed.; 66- Golfer Ernie;

Yesterday's solution

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

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Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333

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IACM 28 387 333

Tourism 28 333 000

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FOOTBALL

English soccer embraces payback for Asian money

PERHAPS it's just a clever ploy to sell the caffeine-packed drinks produced by the competition's title sponsor.

Domestic supporters of English clubs wanting to instantly discover their next opponent in the League Cup will have to be awake at 4:15 a.m. on Thursday (U.K. time).

The second-ranked cup competition's draw masters aren't pulling

an all-nighter. Dancing to the tune of their Asian title sponsor, Football League officials are uprooting to Beijing to pick out the balls containing holder Manchester United's name and other Premier League powers. Fans can't even watch the draw on television because British broadcasters aren't committing resources to a pre-dawn show.

There was inevitable wailing on

social media from fans feeling disrespected and the growing influence of commercial interests on soccer. Followed, within hours of the original announcement, by a lengthy justification of the decision to take the draw to China.

"We understand that not everyone will agree on the timing," the Football League said, "but in staging in this way it will give the

competition both the maximum exposure in the UK, Chinese and South East Asian markets."

The Football League has cause to be grateful for those Asian markets. After losing American financing firm Capital One as the title sponsor, Thai energy drinks firm Carabao was persuaded to fill the sponsorship vacancy.

That's why the draw has already been taken on the road this season to Bangkok, in June, albeit in daytime hours back in Britain. But it was a botched affair that saw Charlton drawn out twice and its manager ridiculing organizers. No wonder the Beijing event isn't being shown on television.

Yet, is British soccer really so wrong to sell out to the money-men? The League Cup already faces a constant fight for relevancy as leading teams focused on European and Premier League titles deploy weakened teams, and stadiums can feature thousands of empty seats.

Taking the draw abroad even isn't unique to this season, or the Premier League era. Go back 26 years and the draw balls were also flown abroad — to Trump Tower in Manhattan. Donald Trump picked out the teams in 1991 when the competition was known as the Rumbelows Cup after a now-defunct electronics retailer.

While the Football League felt compelled to defend transporting the draw east, the English game

happily accepts investment from China and the wider region. Seven clubs in the top two divisions have benefited from an injection of Chinese capital — mostly recently last season's beaten League Cup finalist Southampton as well as 2016 winner Manchester City.

But double standards surrounding foreign intrusions into English football are nothing new.

Once, the mission was to attract foreign stars to elevate the status of the Premier League. Once international supremacy appeared to be validated, by television revenue at least, it wasn't long before a backlash grew about homegrown players being squeezed out of teams.

Likewise while a manager like Antonio Conte complains that "the Chinese market is a danger for all," that doesn't stop clubs like Chelsea snapping at fat transfer fees offered for their players. Chelsea banked around 60 million pounds (USD77 million) when it sold Brazil midfielder Oscar to a Shanghai club in the last year.

So while players might dangle the threat of a move to China to hike up pay packets, the moneyed clubs there can be just as ripe for English clubs to exploit.

The fuss over the League Cup draw's overseas adventure is just a prime example of English football wanting foreign cash or players without accepting that, with the benefits, there are inevitable consequences. **MDT/AP**

AD

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Regina Garcia Cano, Las Vegas

THE fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Conor McGregor may not have sold out yet, but that won't stop Las Vegas from putting on its party hat.

Sin City's nightclubs have booked a long list of celebrities — including one of the fighters — and high-rolling gamblers and VIPs have snagged some of the most luxurious accommodations in town. Boxing-themed cocktails have even been concocted for the occasion.

The social media-fueled Saturday night fight at the T-Mobile Arena will be a weekend-long, city-wide affair, though in some respects it may not tip the scales as much as a previous Mayweather fight.

"It's going to be a crazy weekend," said Ryan Thompson, senior vice president and regional chief marketing officer for Caesars Entertainment, whose Planet Hollywood, The Cromwell and Caesars Palace casino-resorts on the Las Vegas Strip have a few rooms available. "The energy over that weekend is going to be on par with a New Year's Eve in the city."

Caesars and MGM Resorts International, which owns the fight's venue, expect their properties to sell out as the weekend approaches. But unlike the bullish market created by Mayweather's fight with Manny Pacquiao in May 2015 in Las Vegas, hotel rooms are still available.

The MGM Grand has cut its prices for the weekend three times, with a two-night stay now at USD329 a night. Rooms at several other hotels on the Strip can still be found for \$200 or less a night.

Many VIPs and high-rolling gamblers need not worry about prices, they will be "comped" with free hotel rooms and tickets, as it is customary. Others not so lucky — but certainly with deep pockets — have booked the most lavish accommodations on the Strip.

The villas at Caesars Palace (starting at \$25,000 a night) and Nobu Hotel at Caesars Palace (\$35,000 a night and previously used by the likes of Jennifer Lopez and Johnny Depp) have been claimed for the weekend.

"We get a ton of requests for tickets. We have plenty of our high-end players and guests who come in specifically for the event," Thompson said. "We put them up for the weekend and they will be attending the fight. We like to take care of our best guests."

McCarran International Airport spokeswoman Christine Crews said the number of private aircraft that flew in

AP PHOTO



Floyd Mayweather Jr.



Conor McGregor

BOXING

Sold out or not, Vegas will party during Mayweather-McGregor

for the Mayweather-Pacquiao fight overwhelmed available apron parking and forced a taxiway to be closed and used as a jet parking lot. Crews said there is no plan to do that again this weekend but officials are requiring pilots to make parking reservations and encouraging the use of two nearby general aviation airports, in suburban Henderson and North Las Vegas.

UFC fighter McGregor will enter a boxing ring for the first time as a professional when he takes on the undefeated Mayweather, who is coming out of retirement for a fight that will make him tens of millions of dollars.

Just four days to fight night, there are plenty of tickets still available in the T-Mobile Arena, which seats 18,000 for boxing, and prices on the secondary market are starting to come down.

Ticketmaster has hundreds of non-VIP tickets ranging from roughly \$1,400 to \$17,000. Still available are VIP tickets that include ho-

tel accommodations, round-trip airport transportation, an official souvenir, food and drinks.

Those who can't afford what's supposed to be the year's hottest ticket can watch the fight inside six of the seven theaters that regularly host Cirque du Soleil shows, which are going dark for the night.

Restaurants, bars and strip clubs around town will also show the fight. Closed-circuit seats are available at various MGM properties, including hundreds for \$150 each at the Park Theater just a few steps from the T-Mobile arena itself. By comparison, Mayweather-Pacquiao closed-circuit tickets sold out the day they went on sale.

Pay-per-view sales at \$100 each are expected to be in the neighborhood of 5 million buys, topping the Mayweather-Pacquiao record of 4.6 million.

The city's sports books say this will be the most heavily bet fight ever. So far most of

the tickets are on McGregor, who is about a 5-1 underdog, with the William Hill chain saying a McGregor win would cost them more than \$1 million.

Many VIPs, high-rollers need not worry about prices; they will be 'comped' with free hotel rooms and tickets, as is customary

R&B star Chris Brown and his crew of dancers will perform at Drai's Nightclub on Saturday. Other venues will see performances by Puff Daddy, Jamie Foxx, Travis Scott, Chase B and Kaskade. The night before the fight, 50 Cent,

Trey Songz and Jeezy will have a combined performance.

Win or lose, McGregor will have to party after the fight. The Irish MMA champion is scheduled to be a host at Encore Beach Club that night as part of a two-year agreement to entertain partygoers at the Encore casino-resort.

The tallest observation wheel in the world, the High Roller at The Linq casino-resort promenade, will get in on the action by turning its lighting red, white and blue if Mayweather wins or green, orange and white if McGregor pulls off the upset.

For fans who want to toast the fighters with something other than a Guinness, mixologists have created special cocktail menus. At the bars and lounges of The Cosmopolitan, The Pretty Boy is a mix of Ciroc pineapple, lemon and tropical Red Bull, while the Bob and Weave gets you Patron Silver, lime, lemongrass, lychee and cucumber soda. **AP**

opinion

World Views

Jean-Michel Paul, Bloomberg

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF QUANTITATIVE EASING

Quantitative easing, which saw major central banks buying government bonds outright and quadrupling their balance sheets since 2008 to USD15 trillion, has boosted asset prices across the board. That was the aim: to counter a severe economic downturn and to save a financial system close to the brink. Little thought, however, was put into the longer-term consequences of these actions.

From 2008 to 2015, the nominal value of the global stock of investable assets has increased by about 40 percent, to over \$500 trillion from over \$350 trillion. Yet the real assets behind these numbers changed little, reflecting, in effect, the asset-inflationary nature of quantitative easing. The effects of asset inflation are as profound as those of the better-known consumer inflation.

Consumer price inflation erodes savings and the value of fixed earnings as prices rise. Aside from the pain consumers feel, the economy's pricing signals get mixed up. Companies may unknowingly sell at a loss, while workers repeatedly have to ask for wage increases just to keep up with prices. The true losers though are people with savings, which see their value in real purchasing power severely diminished.

John Maynard Keynes famously said that inflation is a way for governments to "confiscate, secretly and unobserved, an important part of the wealth of their citizens." Critically, inflation creates much social tension: "While the process impoverishes many, it actually enriches some. The sight of this arbitrary rearrangement of riches strikes not only at security, but at the confidence in the equity of the existing distribution of wealth."

Asset inflation, it turns out, is remarkably similar. First, it impedes creative destruction by setting a negative long-term real interest rate. This allows companies that no longer generate enough income to pay a positive return on capital to continue as usual rather than being restructured. Thus the much-noted growth of zombie companies is one consequence of asset price inflation. Thus also the unreasonable leverage and price observed in real estate, with the credit risks it entails for the future.

Second, it also generates artificial winners and losers. The losers are most found among the aging middle class, who, in order to maintain future consumption levels, will now have to increase their savings. Indeed, the savings made by working people on stagnant wages effectively generates less future income because investable assets are now more expensive. The older the demographics, the more pronounced this effect. Germany, for instance, had a contraction of nearly 4 percent of gross domestic product in consumer spending from 2009 to 2016.

The winners are the wealthy, people with savings at the beginning of the process, who saw the nominal value of their assets skyrocket. But, as with consumer inflation, the biggest winner is the state.

The most striking similarity between consumer price inflation and asset inflation is its potential to cause social disruption. In the 1970s workers resorted to industrial action to bargain for wage increases in line with price increases.

Today, the weakened middle class, whose wages have declined for decades, is increasingly angry at society's wealthiest members. It perceives much of their recent wealth to be ill-gotten, not resulting from true economic wealth creation, and seeks social justice through populist movements outside of the traditional left-right debate. The QE monetary disruption almost certainly contributed to the protest votes that have been observed in the Western world.

Rather than debating how and how fast to end quantitative easing, the central bank assets generated by this program should be put into a huge fund for education and infrastructure. The interest earned on these assets could finance real public investment, like research, education and retraining.

If the proceeds of QE are invested in growth-expanding policies, the gain will help finance tomorrow's retirements, and the government-induced asset inflation can be an investment, not simply a tax.

THE BUZZ POPULAR ROBOTS ARE DANGEROUSLY EASY TO HACK, RESEARCHERS SAY

Some of the most popular industrial and consumer robots are dangerously easy to hack and could be turned into bugging devices or weapons, IOActive Inc. said.

The Seattle-based cybersecurity firm found major security flaws in industrial models sold by Universal Robots, a division of U.S. technology company Teradyne Inc. It also cited issues with consumer robots Pepper and NAO, which are manufactured by Japan's Softbank Group Corp., and the Alpha 1 and

Alpha 2 made by China-based UBTECH Robotics.

These vulnerabilities could allow the robots to be turned into surveillance devices, surreptitiously spying on their owners, or let them to be hijacked and used to physically harm people or damage property, the researchers wrote in a report released yesterday.

IOActive was able to remotely hack the Universal Robots's software that controls the robot and disable key safety features.

JOINT VENTURES

Ford, Chinese partner look at possible electric car venture

AP PHOTO



FORD Motor Co. and a Chinese automaker said yesterday they are looking into setting up a joint venture to develop and manufacture electric cars in China.

Ford's potential venture with Anhui Zotye Automobile Co. adds to the global auto industry's rising activity in electric vehicles for China, which passed the United States last year as the biggest market for them.

Chinese planners who see electric cars as a promising industry and a way to clean up smog-choked cities are pushing automakers to speed up development.

Ford previously said it plans

to offer electric versions of 70 percent of its models in China by 2025.

Privately owned Zotye Auto, headquartered in the eastern city of Huangshan, produces its own electric vehicles and said sales in the first seven months of this year rose 56 percent over the same period of 2016 to 16,000.

"This presents us with an exciting opportunity to leverage each other's strengths," Zotye chairman Jin Zheyong said in a joint statement.

Sales of pure-electric and gasoline-electric hybrids in China rose 50 percent last year over 2015 to 336,000 vehicles, or 40 percent of glo-

bal demand. U.S. sales totaled 159,620.

Beijing has supported sales with subsidies and a planned quota system that would require automakers to produce electric cars or buy credits from companies that do.

Ford said it expects China's market for all-electrics and hybrids to grow to annual sales of 6 million by 2025.

Volvo Cars announced plans this year to make electric cars in China for global sale starting in 2019. General Motors Co., Volkswagen AG, Nissan Motor Co. and others also have announced plans to make electric vehicles in China. **AP**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

ANSA via AP



Survivor. Rescuers pull out 7-month boy Pasquale from the rubble of a collapsed building in Casamicciola, on the island of Ischia, near Naples, Italy, a day after a 4.0-magnitude quake hit the Italian resort island, yesterday

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	90-120 Moderate	
High Density Residential Area	100-130 Bad	
Ambient	100-130 Bad	

SOURCE: D5SMG

WORLD BRIEFS

INDIA's top court has ruled that Muslim men can no longer instantly divorce their wives, in a closely watched case that has divided opinion in the country's 170-million strong Muslim community. **More on p14**

IRAQ Government troops yesterday reached the first urban areas of the northern town of Tal Afar on the third day of a multi-pronged operation to retake it from the Islamic State group, a military commander said.

AP PHOTO



MOROCCO has long considered itself a haven of stability in a volatile region and a key ally in the fight against Islamic extremism, but in recent months, it has found itself shaken by carnage in Europe blamed on Moroccans who moved abroad - in Paris and Brussels, and - just last week - in Spain and Finland.

FRANCE President Emmanuel Macron is pushing for tighter European rules to protect workers in France from cheaper labor stemming from the continent's east. Macron is set to raise his concerns with several leaders in Central Europe as he makes his first visit to the region this week.

AP PHOTO



US Sixty immigrants have been found in a load of ice-covered broccoli in a refrigerated trailer that was searched at a South Texas border checkpoint, federal officials said.

CHILE has granted political asylum to five Venezuelans who have been threatened by the government-stacked Supreme Court after being named to the court by the opposition-controlled congress. The country's foreign minister announced yesterday that the judges who sought refuge will be allowed to reside in Chile.