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HKD 9.50

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MacauDaily 澳門每日時報® Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Goldenhuys EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho

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CCAC REPORT

Fong blamed for faulty typhoon forecasting

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AP PHOTO



WORLD BRIEFS



SPAIN's government yesterday set in motion plans to take away Catalonia's local powers after its defiant regional president refused to give up his demands for Catalan independence. Catalan President Carles Puigdemont sent a letter to Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy (pictured) just minutes before the deadline threatening to go ahead with a unilateral proclamation of independence if the government refuses to negotiate. More on p14

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Day 2

Five months of Marawi siege reveals Philippine city in ruins

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weekend Guide
INSIDE

Cash declaration law to be implemented in November

The Control of Cross-Boundary Transport of Currency and Bearer Negotiable Instruments (CBNIs) will take effect on November 1. According to the new regulation, inbound visitors who bring with them CBNIs – such as Traveler’s cheques, drafts, payment orders or promissory notes equal to or exceeding MOP 120,000 – should use the Red Channel. They should fill out the declaration form clearly and proactively declare their CBNIs to Customs Services. Departure passengers may be subject to questioning by a customs agent upon request, or be liable to a fine of MOP 1,000 to MOP 500,000. The declaration range does not include gold and other precious metals and stones, or the transit travelers who have a layover in Macau.

UM to hold European Commission workshop tomorrow

The University of Macau, under its Jean Monnet Project, “Decision-making processes: Pedagogical simulations for university students,” will host a workshop on the European Commission tomorrow at the UM campus. The event, which marks the 60th anniversary since the Treaty of Rome, is the second workshop on the European Commission this year. The workshop will bring 28 university students in Macau together to learn more about the European Union and the decision-making processes within the European Commission. Participants will simulate a meeting of the College of Commissioners to discuss issues about Brexit. The workshop will be held at the Faculty of Law, Building E32, Room 2008, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Jean Monnet Project “Decision-making processes” is a partnership between the University of Macau and the Institute of European Studies of Macau, co-founded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

Sílvia Gonçalves wins Lusophone Journalism Award

Sílvia Gonçalves, who works for newspaper Ponto Final, has won the Lusophone Journalist Award, established by Jornal Tribuna de Macau (JTM) and the Portuguese Press Club. The journalist won the award with a feature titled “Floriram por Pessanha as rosas bravas” (roughly translated as “The wild roses bloomed for Pessanha”), an evocative article about the 150th anniversary of the birth of Camilo Pessanha, which was published on September 8. The feature beat almost 20 other works to the prize. The jury of the contest noted the “originality of the approach and construction of the story,” with the winner being chosen in full consensus. The award – EUR10,000 in prize money – will be delivered to the journalist on November 1 at the Military Club during an event to celebrate the 35th anniversary of JTM.

Social workers require accreditation

Julie Zhu

THE Executive Council finished its analysis of a bill titled “Scheme of professional accreditation and registration for social workers,” which was released to journalists yesterday at the government’s headquarters. As explained by Executive Council spokesperson Leong Heng Teng, a council called the “Social Worker Professional Committee” (CPAS) will be responsible for social workers’ accreditation, with the ultimate responsibility for registration of these workers lying with the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS).

CPAS will consist of one chairperson and ten council members.

Five of the members will be proposed by the government, of which three will be selected from the social service sector.

The remaining five can be either social workers or from higher education institutions, professional organizations or social welfare organizations.

This marks the first time the city will have such a council responsible for social workers’ accreditation.

IAS President Vong Yim Mui, when questioned by the press, said that in the future,



Leong Heng Teng and Vong Yim Mui

five IAS council members will be selected from “registered social workers.”

“We do not have any registered social workers yet [...] it is difficult to talk about the second council, when the first one has not even started [operations] yet,” explained Vong.

Regarding the selection process of these members, Vong hopes to leave the discussion to the public first.

Vong added that the council should be reselected every three years.

Applicants for accreditation should be Macau residents holding a bachelor or higher

degree, and should pass the accreditation exams. Once accredited, successful applicants can register at IAS, af-

REGULAR SOCIAL HOUSING APPLICATIONS PROPOSED

TWO DRAFT bills regarding public housing and the security forces were also announced yesterday. As introduced by Executive Council spokesperson Leong Heng Teng, a draft bill on social housing has proposed that members of the public can apply for social houses at any time of year, but has tightened

application requirements. Under the draft bill, applicants would have to be above 23 years of age; applicants are currently only required to be above 18 years of age. The other bill suggested an increase in the area of the selection of management personnel to the Customs Service’s principal officials.

EU human rights report finds Macau rule of law upheld

A report on human rights and democracy, released this week by the European Union, has found that the rights and fundamental freedoms of people in Macau continued to be respected by the government in 2016 and the rule of law was generally upheld.

The report is intended to provide a broad picture of the EU’s human rights efforts towards third countries in the calendar year of 2016. It aims to map in detail the human rights situa-

tion across the globe.

In a short three paragraphs on the Macau SAR, the EU report said that the major human rights issues in the territory include “trafficking in human beings, the lack of a framework for greater democratic participation, and the failure to enforce laws regarding collective bargaining.”

It also said “the [MSAR] government remained opposed to a suggestion by the UN Committee Against Torture (UNCAT) to es-

tablish an independent human rights body, arguing that this recommendation was not applicable to Macau as a Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China.”

Referring to a joint workshop on human trafficking held in January 2016, the report noted the EU’s eagerness to work with Macau in the future to reinforce their cooperation in this area.

Earlier versions of the EU’s annual report on human rights and de-

mocracy did not include a summary of Macau.

The findings in the latest report come in stark contrast to another report released earlier this month by the Congressional Executive Commission on China of the US government, which noted several worrying trends with regard to the rights and freedoms of the press and citizens writ large.

The more favorable EU report did not prompt the government to issue a statement as



it did earlier this month in the case of the US Congress report, where it claimed that the latter report contained “groundless and baseless claims, and made inappropriate comments about Macau’s internal affairs.”

The latest edition of the US Congress report covered approximately the last third of 2016 and the first two-thirds of this year. **DB**

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR) Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
MANAGING EDITOR Paulo Barbosa paulo.barbosa@macaudailytimes.com
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Eric Sautedé, Leanda Lee, Severo Portela

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Daniel Beitter, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Lynzy Valles, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Rodrigo de Matos (cartoonist), Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, Bloomberg, Financial Times, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua | SECRETARY Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

SECRETARY Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

CCAC REPORT

Fong blamed for faulty typhoon forecasting procedures

THE Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) yesterday issued an investigation report on the Macau Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG)'s typhoon forecasting procedures. The report states that the bureau, when making typhoon forecasts and issuing warning signals for the tropical cyclones, relied on the personal judgments and decisions of then director Fong Soi Kun.

Fong resigned following criticism from residents and lawmakers about the bureau's failure to raise appropriate typhoon warning signals prior to Typhoon Hato on August 23.

The announcement was made by chief executive, Chui Sai On, the day after the typhoon. Chui said that Fong had retired but was not exempt from investigation. Shortly after, the CCAC announced it was investigating Fong to assess whether the SMG's typhoon prediction was influenced by external parties. The results of that investigation were released yesterday.

According to the CCAC report, there was no advance discussion or explanation after the typhoons. It was also found that the bureau lacked an internal mechanism for meetings and discussions. When Signal No. 3 or 8 might be issued for a typhoon taking place during non-working hours, Fong would "stay at home and make decisions through phone calls and the internet," the CCAC stated, adding that "even the personnel of the bureau were not clear about the criteria for the issuance of typhoon warning signals."

Regarding accurate typhoon forecasting being within the SMG's area of expertise, the CCAC acknowledged that "it does not have the powers or technical capabilities to make the relevant judgments" and pointed out that "there was no evidence that the SMG's decisions on issuing tropical cyclone warning signals were subject to external factors either."

The CCAC cited Fong's replies to some written inquiries from lawmakers, where he stated that whenever a tropical cyclone warning signal needed to be raised, the leadership, the relevant chiefs and meteorological technicians would meet and make a decision after detailed discussions. However, the CCAC claims that "the SMG did not establish a mechanism for discussions and meetings on typhoon forecasting issues," relying on decision-making by Fong.



Fong Soi Kun

"The forecasters had no idea whether and when a warning signal [was] to be raised before the instructions were received from the director," the graft watchdog says.

Even the personnel of the bureau were not clear about the criteria for the issuance of typhoon warning signals.

CCAC

"When said warning signals might be issued during non-working hours or on a public holiday, the deputy director would report the situations only to the director by phone, and the latter would, after analyzing the relevant data and information on the internet at home, decide whether to raise a typhoon warning signal. He would then notify the forecasters on duty at the bureau by phone to publicize the relevant information," the report read.

"Making typhoon forecasts through 'decision[s] made at home' and 'remote instruction' were absolutely not the working methods that public departments should adopt to deal with severe natural disasters," it added.

The report also mentioned

the events of the early morning of August 23, when Typhoon Hato started to lash the city. According to the report, Fong went straight into his own office when arriving at the SMG but did not go to the Meteorological Monitoring Centre for an update on the goings-on or exchange ideas with frontline forecasters.

Questioned by the CCAC, Fong said "the forecasters were less experienced than the leaders and the chiefs and their analyses might not be on point."

Besides, he added, if they had any opinions regarding the issuance of typhoon warning signals, "they should talk to the chief of the Meteorology Division."

The CCAC disagreed with this procedure, asserting that the weather conditions during a typhoon are ever-changing.

"With only the reports by the chiefs and the use of a computer to monitor and make judgments, it was hardly possible for the former director to [remain updated] about the typhoon in a holistic and timely manner. As typhoon

forecasting necessitates the compilation and analysis of a great deal of information in a short period of time, it can by no means solely rely on the wisdom and professionalism of one or only a few people."

The CCAC also criticized the alleged lack of clear criteria for the issuance of severe weather warning signals, stating that "the leaders and chiefs of the SMG had their own different interpretations of the definitions and standards."

Other criticism pertains to the internal management of SMG services, which were affected by "a string of problems" such as forecasters that were repeatedly redeployed to other affiliated units.

"[One] forecaster was even redeployed six times within a year. This situation affected the stability of the operations," the CCAC claims.

The CCAC also noted problems concerning the management of the SMG's equipment. For example, the internet connection failed frequently, making it impossible to collect any meteorological data during these times. The X-band meteorological radar purchased in 2009 had been non-functional since 2013 due to failure, forcing the SMG to monitor weather conditions through the S-band meteorological radar shared with Zhuhai instead.

Moreover, the SMG's LIDAR system (Light Detection and Ranging) was purchased earlier this year to monitor air pollution data. After installation, the LIDAR system's laser light source was discovered to be non-functional as well, but the system has yet to be repaired.

Furthermore, the battery of the SMG's emergency generator failed after the power outage at noon on August 23, so it did not function immediately as it should have. **PB**

DECISIONS BASED ON RELIGIOUS BELIEFS?

THE CCAC investigated whether the religious beliefs of the SMG deputy director (at the time of the facts) had some role in the bureau's decision-making. The commission says it was difficult to verify whether the rumors on the internet were true or hearsay. "Nevertheless, according to the personnel the CCAC got in touch with, the rumors were widely circulated in the bureau and everyone [had] heard of them," the report states. The CCAC ques-

tioned Fong Soi Kun on the matter. Fong stated that he had never read the posts and therefore did not try to determine if the rumors were true or not. The CCAC makes a judicious comment over Fong's allegations. "As the highest authority of the SMG, the director should not turn a blind eye to rumors that affect the operations of the bureau, as avoiding the problem will greatly undermine the professional image and credibility of the bureau."



New Portuguese minister played important roles in Macau

Eduardo Cabrita, aged 61, has been announced as the new Portuguese interior minister, replacing former minister Constança Urbano de Sousa, who resigned two days ago in the face of criticism related to the wildfires that recently hit Portugal. The final blow to the minister occurred over Sunday and Monday, when wildfires killed 42 people and injured many others. Cabrita, who is currently deputy minister, was responsible for the country's process of decentralization, which Premier António Costa considered to be one of the "main tasks". Cabrita was formerly secretary of state of Local Administration, and also played a role in the handover of Macau. In the late 1980s, he was a permanent expert of the Portuguese Representation in the Portugal-China work group on Macau, before becoming an advisor to the Macau Government as Assistant Secretary for Justice in 1988. Cabrita was also a lecturer at the University of Macau's Faculty of Law for several years.

Taxi fare increase during typhoons suggested

Transport Advisory Committee member Wong Seng Fat said that it is necessary for the government to set an additional charge for taxis during typhoons, according to a report by Macao Daily News. Once the regulations are established, Wong believes the government should crack down harshly on such taxi infractions. "When taking taxis during these typhoon occurrences, [passengers] should also not expect to be charged the usual prices." In Wong's opinion, a basic additional charge should be settled first, with additional charges added later based on distance.

Si Ka Lon says Macau transportation policy failed

Lawmaker Si Ka Lon described Macau's transportation policies as failures during his interview on a radio show. Si said because the Light Rapid Transit is still under construction, the public transportation network is unable to keep up with society's development. He also said that he does not oppose a bus fare increase, but disagrees with the government's current reasons for increasing bus fares. Si believes that when the city's bus service quality sees no obvious improvement, the public will naturally oppose any increase of bus fares.

RENATO MARQUES



Diogo Infante



João Catarre and Sara Prata

Portuguese revisit Macau in soap opera

Renato Marques

A Portuguese film crew is currently in Macau to film a part of a new Portuguese TV drama.

Produced by Plural Entertainment for the television station TVI, the soap opera stars several famous Portuguese actors and actresses. Local independent production company Inner Harbour Films is co-producing the filming in Macau.

The soap opera, “Condição Humana” (Human Condition), is expected to start being broadcast in Portugal next month. For the part filmed in Macau, the Portuguese company brought a small team of around 10 to 11 people to pair with a larger local team of around 20 to 25 people, who are in charge of most of the production work behind the scenes, which will be filmed over six days in several locations across town. The scenes will open the first episodes of the series.

Questioned on the sidelines of the shoot at MGM Macau about the challenges of filming in the region, production director Hugo de Sousa said, “First it is very far and it requires [mental adjustment] time due to time zone [differences] but then [these are] normal issues, we know about the heat, the humidity, but we are used to that from other places in the world.”

Another of the barriers encountered by de Sousa was related to the language. “The language can be a barrier because everything takes a little more time as we have people speaking Portuguese, English and Chinese [both Mandarin and Cantonese] so sometimes on the set things get a little confusing as there isn’t [unlike in normal circumstances] one voice that is of the director. In this case I’ll have to start passing information that reaches all places, and that makes it a bit more time-consuming.”

On the positive side, de Sousa said it is helpful to work with a local production team as they help with some details that are obvious to the locals, but might pass unnoticed by people coming from around the world.

The director confessed that after visiting Macau one month before shooting, they received different ideas “from the local feeling” of the city, and decided to talk to the script author. This was mainly to change some of the context in order to film more night scenes, as he believes “Macau to have a special feeling during nighttime,” namely in the central area surrounding Hotel Lisboa, which he believes has a “very strong image.”

I think most of us have fantasized about what former colonies look like.

DIOGO INFANTE

He also said he wanted to “steer away from the ‘Las Vegas’ image” of Macau. “What people haven’t seen yet is this image of the more traditional Macau, the temples, the street names in both languages [Portuguese and Chinese], the use of the Portuguese-style tiles... these are the details that enrich [the content] and the story that I have to tell.”

The Times spoke with several actors from the cast. One of the most prominent is senior actor Diogo Infante – now on his third visit to the region, after previous visits for theater plays in 2001 and 2012. Infante spoke about his role and challenges as “Manuel Wuang,” a triad leader

whose war with rivals eventually forces him to move to Portugal.

As Infante explained, “The fact that the story starts here is also an excuse to show these places where we [Portuguese] have a presence, to those that do not know it and at the same time provide a different framing and scenery from what we are used to.”

Commenting on the story, Infante said that it does not aim to portray any kind of reality, even historical, but instead aims to make use of “the poetic freedom of the fiction to adjust realities to what is convenient to the story.”

“It’s a way we actors ‘play’ to the ‘pretend to be’ that is our main role [...] I think we are in condition to do great work with the help of this amazing scenery and with the local team that has been fantastic,” he added, explaining the work he did to play this part.

“Besides [...] having to investigate a little about this reality of the triads and what they represent, and also to have some [temporary tattoos done], I mostly had to learn some Cantonese, which has been the really hard part. This is a very, very hard task. The trick we usually use is to have someone [native] that usually whispers the line in the moment before recording and I just repeat it. It is a very hard language but I’m giving [this] my best shot and trying not to fake it.”

On the topic of the developments of the city and communities since 2001, Infante said: “I’m happy that the Portuguese that stayed had the possibility to do so and to be integrated into the job market. [...] In fact, I can say I don’t feel lost here, it’s a mixed feeling, like half at home and another half in another planet.”

Above all, he said, “I feel that we are well received here and

that’s the most important part: to always try to honor that piece of history that in some way we all carry [in] our imagination at least.”

Questioned by the Times on the need to continue showing Macau to Portugal and to the rest of world, the actor said: “I think most of us [Portuguese] have fantasized about what former colonies look like and through these fictional stories, we can also give a more clear idea [of] how the places look nowadays. Of course [we] will never be able to show a correct version of the historical events.”

Also in the cast are two other well-known actors, Sara Prata and João Catarre. Visiting Macau for the first time, both said they were amazed and thrilled to be here.

Catarre echoed the “big challenge” of having to speak several times in Cantonese in order to perform his character, João Guerra, a Portuguese man that lived many years in the territory and who – together with Margarida Barbosa, played by Prata – form the lovers around which the story of encounters and mismatches revolves.

Prata noted they were pleased to discover the real Macau and to discard some of the preconceptions she had. “I was thinking that I would feel much more the pressure of an ‘overloaded’ place with a very high density of people,” she remarked, noting that this did not happen. In particular, she finds “the contrast among the narrow alleys and the tall buildings” interesting and fun.

One thing that both actors also noted was the production director’s comment on the contrast between day and night in Macau – in which all agree that the region, “at night is very different; the neon, the sign boards.”

They described it as some-

thing different and worth the experience, with Prata stating, “with the screening of the soap opera, I think some people would feel interest and would like to come and get to know Macau better.”

Soap opera debutant Luis Nascimento, a Macau-born Portuguese now living in Portugal, will play an important role as one of the archrivals of Manuel Wuang (Zhu) and is one of the “bad guys.”

Nascimento also noted the challenge of the language. “I’m probably the only person of my whole family that doesn’t speak Cantonese,” he said, but noted that he has a clear advantage when compared to the other actors as he “grew [up] listening [to] the language and I understand part of it. Besides, my mother [is] also a native speaker and she is giving me a big hand in [pronouncing] the lines.”

The actor said he often returns to the territory as he has several family members still residing in Macau, and mentioned that it was “a great surprise and an unexpected outcome to start working in TV and soap opera-style [he has been doing mostly theatre roles] precisely in Macau.”

In the six days of recording, the team will be covering many locations in the territory, including many heritage sites and buildings. They said they have received the full support of the Cultural Affairs Bureau and private entities such as Hotel Lisboa and MGM Macau, where some parts of the shooting also took place.

De Sousa said he expects the scenes being recorded to be used for episodes 1 to 65, which will run during the first three months of the TV series’ airing. The show will be aired in Portugal first, but may also be broadcast in other Portuguese-speaking countries.

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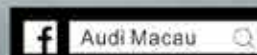
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MIF

Angola seeking investors for its primary sector resources

Lynzy Valles

THE growing trade of China with Angola has significantly increased in the first seven months of this year, amounting to USD10 billion – a 50 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

With the 22nd Macao International Trade Fair (MIF) now underway, Angola is eyeing investors for the country's primary sector commodities.

Angola is the partner country of MIF this year, while Guangdong is the partner province.

The "Angola, Guangdong and Macao Trade and Investment Forum" has invited representatives of governments and enterprises of the three regions to showcase the most up-to-date economic and trade environment and investment policies of the respective country and region.

The forum also analyzed existing co-operation between Portuguese-speaking countries,



Francisco Viana

mainland China and Macau with a view to assisting entrepreneurs and investors to explore business opportunities.

Speaking to the Times at the MIF's Angola Pavillion, one of its delegates, Francisco Viana, chairman of Forum dos Empresários de Língua Portuguesa - FELP expressed a need to shift his country's focus away from a dependence on primary sector commerce.

Viana cited Chinese President Xi Jinping's vow to cooperate with the industrialization of Africa.

"So we are ready to receive this kind of investment to add value to our products in agriculture, mining, among other [areas]" said the delegate.

"We [China and Africa] have many opportunities to [conduct] business together. Macau is a platform for us to know many

delegations and to enhance this cooperation."

Questioned whether there was a need for such investment expansion, the delegate expressed that the African country is keen to offer quality products in a bid to add value to the country's goods.

"We need to [develop manufacturing] production, otherwise we are only going to sell raw materials and buy industrial goods and this is not a good business for us," he argued.

According to him, such a move is a win-win situation for both China and Angola, adding that the two countries can share each other's market.

Viana considers MIF a significant platform for business growth in China and Portuguese-speaking countries - particularly African countries - as he noted that Macau business partners have no interest in investing in Africa.

"Macau businessmen do not have the will to invest in Africa [so] here in Macau, we can orga-

nize a platform and we can invite others from mainland [China] that have this will," said Viana.

Further, the delegate expressed that there is a need to mobilize vendors and buyers in the tradeshow as the first day of the event did not attract a sufficient number of visitors.

Viana suggested that such events would have to further involve the Macao Chamber of Commerce to allow the mobilization of interested buyers, along with the participation of foreign business associations.

Macau is a platform for us.

FRANCISCO VIANA

"There are a very few people here in the fair; it's very slow. [...] We need to have a fair with many people so there's a lot of [organizing] jobs to do," the delegate said.

According to the Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), more than 1,000 enterprises and organizations from over 50 countries and regions are participating in the current MIF.

The 22nd MIF and 2017 PLPEX kicked off yesterday and will continue until tomorrow at The Venetian Macao.

FOOD SAFETY

Flood-soaked milk powder supplier under investigation

Julie Zhu

A milk powder supplier is currently under investigation for having supplied milk powder bottles which had been soaked during the flooding that occurred during Typhoon Hato.

News of the investigation was revealed to the media on Wednesday by a member of the Administration Committee of the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM), Ung Sau Hong, while attending a food safety seminar.

In September, a pharmacy in Taipa was reported to have sold flood-soaked milk powder.

Later, IACM carried out an investigation and reported that the milk powder had been sold in Farmácia Alwen, in Taipa, and confirmed that it had been the pharmacy's milk powder supplier who was responsible for this.

The milk supplier is a firm called Vang Vai, which happens to be the pa-

rent company of Farmácia Alwen.

"We have already confiscated the affected milk powder bottles. [...] That batch [...] has stopped being sold in the market," informed Ung, adding that IACM is still investigating the case.

The milk powder supplier, according to Ung, confirmed that the bottles had been soaked by floodwaters.

However, whether the supplier was aware that the milk powder had been soaked and still decided to supply the shipment to the pharmacy remains unclear, as the investigation is still undergoing.

"Regarding whether they committed crimes, and which crimes they have committed, the investigation is still being carried out, therefore it is inappropriate [for me] to announce results," said Ung.

A total of 1,500 bottles of milk powder were soaked, all of which have now been destroyed.

The firm, Vang Vai, supplied the batch of milk powder to six of its subsidiary pharmacies, including two located in Taipa and four located in Macau.

When talking about food safety cases that occurred recently, Ung disagreed with allegations that IACM has been lax in its enforcement and policy.

"Actually, I don't think IACM carried out a lax policy. It might be [because of] human negligence," said Ung.

The IACM member also remarked that the bureau hopes to raise the public's food safety awareness through advertisements and seminars organized by IACM.

"Like the [today's] seminar, we carry out this seminar every year and invite experts in food safety to share their experience on food safety management," said Ung.

Tuesday marked the first day of Food Safety Week 2017.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Sands China receives multiple recruitment awards

SANDS China earned multiple awards for its recruitment practices in the Greater China region in 2017, the company said in a statement this week.

In April 2017, Human Resources Magazine's ASIA Recruitment Awards 2017 gave Sands China a Gold Award for Best Recruitment Innovation by a Corporate HR Team for its efficient recruitment process at the large-scale French-themed recruitment fairs for The Parisian Macao.

The magazine also gave the company a Silver Award for Best Candidate Experience by a Corporate HR Team, in recognition of its efforts to create a convenient job-seeking experience for external local candidates at The Parisian Macao's recruitment fair.

In July 2017, Sands China was again recognized for The Parisian Macao's recruitment



fair, with the company named as one of the Best Recruitment Project Award recipients at the 2017 Employer Branding Creativity Award in Greater China. The event also saw Sands China named as one of the recipients of the Best Employee Experience Award for its 'Because We Care' Team Member Awards.

Other award recipients at the event were internationally renowned companies such as Tencent, Baidu, GE, H&M, SAP, Marriott International, and IHG.

"Sands China is honored to receive these awards," said Antonio Ramirez, senior vice president of human resources for Sands China Ltd. "We consider our team members to be our most valuable asset, so we take great pride in our efforts to provide them with ample opportunities for career development and advancement. We aim to be Macau's employer of choice, and are pleased at the recognition for our efforts on team member recruitment and development."

REAL ESTATE MATTERS

Property Tax And An Uncertain Future ?

Juliet Risdon is a Director of JML Property and a property investor.

Having been established in 1994, JML Property offers investment property & homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.

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JULIET RISDON

The Macau Property Tax system is quite possibly just about to burst!

We will get to the details of the tax system shortly. In the meantime, if you register your property as being rented out and pay the tax you owe on the rental income, the registration and stamping of that document will take between three and four months.

Why does it take so long to calculate the tax and issue a bill that should in theory be an instant calculation based on an algorithm?

One of the factors could be the amount of people responsible for making the calculations in the process. We are informed by a reliable but un-named source that this totals two people for the whole of Macau.

The new laws that become effective in February 2018 are designed in part to encourage landlords to pay tax in accordance with the law.

If the new laws are successful, Macau may have a major problem on its hands.

If the number of submissions grow by just 10% in a system that is already failing, the pressure will build exponentially. Why? Because 10% growth in the submissions may represent a much larger

number in 'cases waiting'. Let's hypothesize;

If the number of current submissions is 1,000 per month and the tax team are handling 800 of them, they are falling behind by 200 submission per month. Thus a 10% increase in submissions will result in 100 extra cases, taking the number of delayed cases from 200 to 300, an increase of a whopping 50%.

What happens if the increase in submissions is closer to 30% or 50%? You can probably see where the system would be headed.

Should the delay reach 12 months, a downward spiral would be created where the tax would become due faster than the system could advise the taxpayers of the bill amount and the bill could be paid. This in turn would create ever increasing delays in payment in a system that would crash itself. Hopefully the government will review and upgrade the system prior to the implementation of the new law.

In the following parts of this article we discuss the questions we are most often asked on Property and Land tax, so let's take a closer look at the system through some 'question and answers'

1. What is land tax ? ('Renda' in Portuguese)

Land Tax is the annual 'rent' for the land on which the property stands. It is shared amongst the owners that have a property on that land and is usually a nominal sum. The land tax bill issued this year is for the current year's tax, and bills are usually issued and payable in May.

2. What is property tax? ('Contribuicao predial' in Portuguese)

Property Tax is the annual tax levied on the actual living space.

If the property is being used as a home, then the tax estimated by the government and based on what they believe to be a fair 'rental' rate for the property. If the property is rented out, the tax is calculated as 10% of the rental income for the year or is based on the most recent submitted Rental Agreement. Unlike the land tax, the property tax bill issued this year is for the previous year and bills are usually issued in June, July & August.

That concludes this week's article. Please feel free to email any questions and we will be happy to answer you.

Next Week: Part Two



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Doug Feinberg

LAS Vegas is getting a WNBA franchise. The San Antonio Stars are moving to the gambling mecca after being bought by MGM Resorts International, the league said this week.

"Las Vegas has been on our radar screen for some time," WNBA President Lisa Borders said in a phone interview. "We've had conversations with the MGM family, executive team. They are bringing live sports to Las Vegas."

The Stars will become the second professional team in Las Vegas, joining the NHL's Vegas Golden Knights — with the NFL soon to follow — when they begin play next season with home games at the Mandalay Bay Events Center. Bill Laimbeer will be the team's president of basketball operations and coach.

"He'll run the basketball side of the business," Borders said. "The MGM team and the league will work to staff the business side. The folks that will run business, sales, social, digital, all the functions to run the business."

The move has been in the works since the Stars ownership group told the league they were interested in selling the team. Borders said she approached MGM about purchasing the team.

"I've been working on this for so long, it's been a few months for

San Antonio Stars moving to Las Vegas, bought by MGM Resorts

sure," Borders said. "[San Antonio] has run the team for 15 years and it's their business decision. Our responsibility is that our teams are all doing well. We have a responsibility to the players and fans that the league is healthy, finding a great spot for that team to land. That's what we've done in Las Vegas."

The Stars will become the second professional team in Las Vegas, joining the NHL's Vegas Golden Knights

MGM is not the first company with casino holdings to own a WNBA team. The Mohegan Sun owns the team in Connecticut.

This will be the first professional basketball team in Las Vegas, which has become a coveted tar-

get for sports franchises over the past few years.

The expansion Golden Knights began their first NHL season this month. In March, the NFL formally approved the Oakland Raiders' relocation to Las Vegas by the 2020 season to occupy a proposed new stadium on the Las Vegas Strip, although the deal wasn't approved until casino mogul Sheldon Adelson pulled out of the financing plan.

The Golden Knights play at MGM's T-Mobile Arena, but the casino doesn't own the team.

"This is the first pro sports team that MGM resorts owns and it's a great alignment frankly with the DNA of our company," said Lillian Tomovich, MGM's Chief Experience and Marketing Officer.

Neither Borders nor Tomovich wanted to say if bringing a women's basketball team to Las Vegas was the prelude to an NBA franchise moving there.

"You know you'll have to ask Adam [Silver] about that," Borders said. "The WNBA is part of the NBA enterprise and portfolio."

This is the second move for the



WNBA President Lisa Borders

franchise. It came to San Antonio from Utah in 2003. Led by Becky Hammon, the Stars reached the WNBA Finals in 2008. The team has finished with the league's worst record each of the past three seasons. San Antonio has a talented young nucleus with Kayla McBride, Moriah Jefferson and Kelsey Plum.

The team also has the top chance to get the No. 1 pick in next

year's WNBA draft.

Plum was excited for the move to Las Vegas, which is closer to Southern California, where she grew up.

"My family and friends can get to more games," Plum said in a phone interview on Sunday. "Getting to Texas wasn't the easiest thing for them. Now it's a short flight or drive for them to come watch." **AP**

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19TH PARTY CONGRESS

Conflicted goals: Freer markets, more party control

Joe McDonald

CHINA'S ruling Communist Party is expanding its role in business even as it promises freer markets and support for entrepreneurs on the eve of President Xi Jinping's second five-year term as leader.

Party officials are tightening their control over state-owned enterprises and want a voice in how some foreign companies are run. State companies that dominate energy and other fields are being made even bigger through mergers. Some are forming ties with private sector success stories such as tech giants Alibaba and Tencent to draw on their skills.

Beijing's conflicting goals are raising concerns that leaders might put off changes needed to reinvigorate a cooling economy that faces surging debt and trade tensions with Washington and Europe.

"There is no grand vision. There are parallel goals that are competing with each other," said Andrew Polk, an economist at Trivium/China, a research firm in Beijing. "We are not sure which ones are going to win out at a given moment."

No major policy changes are expected out of the twice-a-decade party congress that is due to re-appoint Xi as general secretary. The party also will name a Standing Committee, the country's ruling inner circle of power, in preparation for installing a new government in early 2018.

The impact of those choices, by creating jobs and business opportunities or dragging on economic activity, will take time to filter down to ordinary Chinese.

At the opening of the congress Wednesday, Xi repeated official promises to support entrepreneurs and give market forces a "decisive role" but affirmed the dominance of state-owned industry.

"There must be no irresolution about working to consolidate and develop the public sector," said Xi in a nationally televised address.

Data released yesterday showed economic growth stayed relatively stable in the quarter ending in September, buoyed by strength in consumer spending and exports. Output rose 6.8 percent, down marginally from the previous quarter's 6.9 percent.

Investors are watching the congress for signs of where the party wants to go and how fast. A



key indicator will be which posts go to Xi allies seen as reformers with the personal authority to overcome opposition from party or state industry factions that might lose influence.

One closely watched figure is Wang Qishan, a vice premier and respected problem-solver who oversaw China's response to SARS and at age 69 is obliged by party tradition to leave the seven-person Standing Committee. If he stays in a leadership post, analysts say that would suggest Xi wants his help to carry out painful changes.

Reform advocates complain that since Xi took power in 2012, the leadership has dragged its feet on fulfilling promises to tackle debt that has soared to dangerous levels, curb the dominance of state industry and give a bigger role to entrepreneurs who create China's new jobs and wealth.

Instead, Xi focused on an anti-corruption campaign and tightened political control, detained activist lawyers and stepped up internet censorship.

Foreign industry groups complain China is moving too slowly on promises to shrink state-owned steel and aluminum producers they accuse of threatening jobs by flooding global markets with low-cost exports.

"Generally speaking, there has been no major progress in economic reform," said Sheng Hong, director of the Unirule Institute, an independent economic research group in Beijing.

Regulators closed Unirule's website and social media accounts in a crackdown in January on liberal voices.

The party's internal conflict is reflected in a 2013 declaration that promised for the first time to give market forces the "decisive role" but also vowed the party would intensify its control of state industry. Private sector analysts say this appears to be aimed at rooting out corruption and waste.

This year, some foreign companies say the party, which already has cells in all enterprises and controls agencies that regulate them, is trying to expand its authority further by asking for a formal voice in commercial decisions.

Some 32 mainland companies with shares traded in Hong Kong have proposed changes to their legal structure to make the party an adviser to their board. Financial commentators complain this might hurt shareholders. "This is potentially a huge problem," said the German ambassador to China, Michael Clauss. "Many foreign companies are very alarmed."

Foreign companies already are frustrated by rules that give them little access to industries such as finance and technology, plans they say might limit their role in promising fields such as electric cars. That pessimism helped lead to a 1.2 percent decline in investment into China in the first seven months of this year, breaking

a series of annual double-digit gains.

A business leader in Wenzhou, a southeastern city known as a hotbed of private sector activity, welcomed Xi's pledge to do more to help entrepreneurs.

"If private enterprises succeed, China's economy succeeds," said Zhou Dewen, president of the city's Association for Promotion of Development of Small and Medium-sized Companies.

Beijing is pushing entrepreneurs to support state-owned enterprises, or SOEs.

The party pledged in a Sept. 25 declaration to promote "entrepreneurial spirit" while also urging entrepreneurs to learn "socialist core values."

In August, one of the country's three major state-owned phone carriers, China Unicom Ltd., sold an USD11.7 billion stake to private investors including Alibaba Group, the biggest global e-commerce company by sales volume; Tencent Holdings Ltd.,

which operates the popular WeChat social media platform, and internet search giant Baidu Inc. There was no indication they would get any voice in management.

In September, Tencent paid \$366 million for 5 percent of state-owned investment bank China International Capital Corp. CICC gets access to Tencent's marketing and other skills, but the private company gained no management control.

Other state companies have announced similar plans to bring in private shareholders.

Meanwhile, authorities are discussing taking a direct state ownership stake in Alibaba and Tencent, The Wall Street Journal reported this month, citing unidentified sources.

Many foreign companies are very alarmed.

MICHAEL CLAUSS
GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO CHINA.

"Supposed reforms in state-owned companies such as 'mixed ownership' can never be called a reform," said Sheng. "Setting up party committees in companies not only is not a reform, but is a step backward."

In August, the government announced the merger of Shenhua Group, the world's biggest coal producer, and Guodian Group, a major power supplier, to form the world's biggest utility by assets.

"They are being quite clear that they want bigger, bolder, better SOEs, with not just state but party leadership," said Polk.

The pressure for action is building.

Economic growth has been propped up this year by a lending boom and government stimulus, but that sets back official efforts to build a consumer-driven economy.

Forecasters expect growth to cool as regulators tighten lending controls to rein in debt that has risen to the equivalent of 260 percent of annual economic output — unusually high for a developing country.

"Strains within the country's banking sector are already glaringly evident," the Economist Intelligence Unit said in a report. AP

70PCT FOREIGN COMPANIES WITH PARTY CELLS

CHINA'S COMMUNIST Party aims to increase the number of companies with active party organizations, including those in foreign firms. Some 70 percent of the 106,000 foreign companies operating in China already have one, Qi Yu, vice minister of the Organization Department, said at a briefing in Beijing on

yesterday during the 19th Party Congress. Among China's 147,000 state-owned enterprises, 93.2 percent have a party organization, while among its 2.7 million private companies, 67.9 percent have one, according to the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the country's top graft-fighting body.



China's steel boom stutters

Jasmine Ng

STEEL output in China sank from a record, sliding to the lowest level in at least six months, as the anti-pollution drive touted in President Xi Jinping's landmark policy address this week began to make its mark.

Output fell to 71.83 million metric tons in September from 74.59 million tons the month before, according to the statistics bureau yesterday, a day after Xi's speech to the Communist Party congress reaffirmed his commitment to rolling back environmental abuse. Over nine months, production was still higher than in 2016, rising 6.3 percent to 639 million tons, the figures showed.

China's concerted drive to cut pollution from its old-industry factories, especially over winter, is roiling metals markets, and Xi referenced the policy in his address to the twice-a-decade Communist Party congress. In steel, China's output has proved resilient in the past year as although officials have shuttered some mills that fell short of standards, remaining producers boosted supplies in the run-up to wintertime curbs that have yet to fully kick in.

"We expect strict enforcement of the winter supply-cut policies in order to guarantee planned reductions in pollution," Citigroup Inc. analysts including Tracy Liao said in a report received yesterday. The bank estimates total production losses of

as much as 37 million tons
from the winter shutdowns.

The bureau's figures also showed a drop in production from China's vast aluminum industry, which is facing winter cuts too. Output was 2.61 million tons last month, 5.6 percent less than a year ago, the bureau said. Citigroup has forecast supply cuts of 1 million to 1.5 million tons. China is the top producer of steel and aluminum.

The production data came with figures that showed gross domestic product was 6.8 percent in the third quarter, matching the estimate in Bloomberg survey. In his marathon speech, Xi mapped out a strategy for development to 2050 that emphasized the quality of growth over quantity or pace of expansion.

Steel dropped with iron ore yesterday. Futures for reinforcing bar, a product used in construction, lost 2.2 percent on the Shanghai Futures Exchange as hot-rolled coil also fell. In Singapore, SGX AsiaClear iron futures were 2.5 percent lower at USD60.15 a ton. Spot iron ore in Qingdao was at \$60.88 a dry ton, down from almost \$80 in August, according to Metal Bulletin Ltd.

Further declines in steel output may come in October, according to a survey from S&P Global Platts. "Market participants expected crude steel production to slow in the month ahead," Platts said as the overall reading sank to 33.6 from 61. A figure below 50 indicates expectations for a decrease or contraction. **Bloomberg**

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Oct. 20–21 Walk on Water Runway Shoes at Shoppes at Venetian

The Grand Canal transforms into a catwalk, featuring the latest ready-to-wear collections available from a range of stores at Shoppes at Venetian

Schedule

Day 1 (20 Oct): 12:00-12:30, 15:00-15:30, 17:00-17:30, 19:00-19:30

Day 2 (21 Oct): 12:00-12:30, 14:00-14:30, 16:00-16:30, 18:00-18:30

Oct. 20–21 Boutique Shows at Shoppes at Parisian

Runway shows bring The Parisian Macao's Avenue des Champs Elysees to life, showcasing the season's newest looks and trends available from a selection of stores at Shoppes at Parisian.

Schedule

Day 1 (20 Oct): 13:30-14:00, 16:00-16:30, 18:00-18:30, 20:00-20:30

Day 2 (21 Oct): 13:00-13:30, 15:00-15:30, 17:00-17:30, 20:00-20:30 (Local Designers Showcase)

Oct. 20–24 Exhibitions at Shoppes at Four Seasons

An exquisite display throughout Shoppes at Four Seasons of the season's latest outfits from luxury fashion houses.

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AP PHOTO



PHILIPPINES

Five months of Marawi siege reveals city in ruins

Jim Gomez

SMOKE wafted from the smoldering carcasses of buildings and houses, with the dome of a mosque blasted out with holes, as Philippine troops battled yesterday to defeat a final stand by the last dozens of pro-Islamic State group militants in a southern city.

The desolate war scene, which was witnessed by Associated Press journalists on board a navy patrol gunboat in Lake Lanao, could herald what the government hopes will be the end of a nearly five-month siege by the militants in Marawi city.

Filipino troops killed 13 more suspected militants Wednesday night, including one believed to be a top Malaysian terror suspect although his body hasn't been recovered yet, military officials said.

"Our troops are continuing their

assault," army Col. Romeo Brawner said after his news conference in Marawi was disrupted by loud explosions reverberating from the final area of battle, about 20 kilometers away. About 20 to 30 militants continue to fight back, he said.

While troops pressed their assault with artillery and gunfire, officers used loudspeakers to ask the militants, many of them positioned in a bullet-pocked two-story building, to surrender. The building stands on a pier by the lake near a huge gunfire-scarred welcome sign that says "I (love) Marawi."

Sporadic fighting continued even after President Rodrigo Duterte visited the Islamic city on Tuesday and announced its liberation, sparking hopes that hundreds of thousands of residents could begin returning home. The speed of their return, however,

will depend on how quickly the city is declared safe of militants and rebuilt.

The surprise occupation of the city and the involvement of foreign fighters set off alarms in Southeast Asia

Volunteers and displaced residents have begun a government-led cleanup in neighborhoods that were declared safe. Power has been restored in more than half of the lakeside city, along with water supply, officials said.

On Monday, the defense secretary and military chief of staff

announced that two of the last leaders of the siege — Isnilon Hapilon, who is one of the FBI's most-wanted terror suspects, and Omarkhayam Maute — were killed in a gunbattle.

Their deaths were the turning point that partly convinced the president he could declare Marawi liberated from the gunmen, Brawner told the AP.

Military spokesman Maj. Gen. Restituto Padilla said Malaysian Mahmud bin Ahmad was believed among 13 militants killed overnight and another seven in the morning. Six soldiers were slightly wounded in the fighting.

Two civilian hostages — a mother and her teenage daughter — were also rescued, Padilla said.

The information about Mahmud was based on what the rescued mother and daughter told the military, Padilla said.

Mahmud, who uses nom de

guerre Abu Handzalah, is a close associate of Hapilon. Military officials said he had linked up Hapilon with the Islamic State group and provided funding to bankroll the siege of Marawi.

Padilla said troops discovered that there may be more militant fighters remaining in a small battle area than earlier estimated.

Marawi, a mosque-studded center of Islamic faith in the predominantly Roman Catholic Philippines, has been devastated by the siege by the militants who waved IS-style black flags and hung them on buildings they had occupied in Marawi's business district and outlying areas, according to the military.

The insurrection prompted the military to launch a ground offensive and airstrikes, with the United States and Australia later backing the troops by deploying surveillance aircraft. Duterte declared martial law across the south, the homeland of minority Muslims and the scene of a decades-old separatist rebellion, to deal with the uprising and prevent other insurgents from waging attacks elsewhere and reinforcing the fighters in Marawi.

The surprise occupation of the city and the involvement of foreign fighters set off alarms in Southeast Asia. Analysts said parts of the southern Philippines were at risk of becoming a new base for IS as it lost territory to international forces in Iraq and Syria.

Some of the residents who returned to Marawi for the cleanup yesterday became emotional after seeing their devastated city and homes. Esnairah Macabunaw saw weeds growing around her two-story house but became more stunned when she went inside and realized her home had been ransacked.

"Everything was stolen in my house," she said. "I am still shaken because I cannot accept what happened, my whole life savings are gone." AP

MYANMAR

Fire rips through luxury hotel, one body recovered

A fire gutted a luxury teakwood hotel popular with foreigners in Myanmar's biggest city of Yangon before dawn yesterday, causing one death.

Firefighters who carried a body out of the Kandawgyi Palace Hotel said the victim was male.

Macau's Tourism Crisis Management Office (GGCT) reported a woman from Macau was hospitalized in critical condition, following an injury to her waist while escaping the hotel fire. The resident, female in her forties, is currently conscious with no threat to her life, but unable to move, the GGCT said

Photos and video posted online show the spectacular blaze racing through the traditional Burmese-style building.

Smoke was still rising from the remains of the lakeside hotel hours after daybreak and dozens of firefighters were at the site.

"I'll never forget looking up and seeing the night sky turned red," said American David Powers, who escaped the blaze with his wife, 4-year-old daughter and their passports, phones and wallets.

"The embers floating through the sky looked like hellish snowflakes," he said. "Once we got across

the street we could really see how bad the fire was."

Powers, who works in Bangkok and is from South Carolina, said there was no alarm and he initially thought the sounds of shouting and footsteps outside the family's room were drunken hotel guests.

A woman from Macau remains hospitalized in serious condition

Firefighter Kyaw Kyaw said the blaze started about 3 a.m. and may have been caused by an electrical fault. Exploding gas cylinders hastened its spread, he said.

Kyaw Kyaw said one firefighter suffered from smoke inhalation.

The teak upper floors of the hotel were destroyed and the blaze also appeared to have swept through the cement bottom two floors.

The hotel was built in the early 1990s, incorporating a colonial era British rowing club. It is currently owned by the Htoo Group, a conglomerate



rate controlled by Tay Za, a businessman who prospered under Myanmar's former military government.

Adrienne Frilot, a tourist from California, told local news site Frontier that she initially thought the hotel staff who knocked

on her door for minutes were drunken guests.

"We realized that something was wrong and opened the door and we smelled the smoke and then evacuated immediately," she told the publication.

"The staff were so helpful," she said. AP/MDT

Tillerson seeks stronger ties with India, chides China

SECRETARY of State Rex Tillerson called Wednesday for the U.S. and India to expand strategic ties. He also pointedly criticized China, which he accused of challenging international norms needed for global stability.

Tillerson's remarks on relations between the world's two largest democracies, ahead of his first trip to South Asia as secretary of state, risked endearing Washington to one Asian power while alienating another.

Tillerson said the world needed the U.S. and India to have a strong partnership. He said the two nations share goals of security, free navigation, free trade and fighting terrorism in the Indo-Pacific, and serve as "the eastern and western beacons" for an international rules-based order which is increasingly under strain.

Both India and China had benefited from that order, but Tillerson said India had done so while respecting rules and norms, while China had "at times"

AP PHOTO



Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

undermined them. To make his point, he alluded to China's island building and expansive territorial claims in seas where Beijing has long-running disputes with Southeast Asian neighbors.

"China's provocative actions in the South China Sea directly

challenge the international law and norms that the United States and India both stand for," Tillerson said in an address at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank.

He also accused China of eco-

nomie activities and financing that saddles developing countries in the region with enormous debt.

Tillerson's remarks risk endearing Washington to one Asian power while alienating another

China responded with a statement saying it "contributes to and defends the rules-based world order" and seeks to advance international cooperation through the United Nations. It also hopes for a "healthy and sound" China-U.S. relationship.

"We will never seek hegemony or engage in expansion, never pursue development at the ex-

pense of others' interests," said the statement issued by the Chinese embassy in Washington.

A senior State Department official told reporters that the speech was intended to map out a strategy for U.S.-India relations for the next century, in which the region's leading democracies — also including Japan and Australia — blunt China's growing influence and challenges to the rules-based order. The official was not authorized to speak by name and requested anonymity.

Tillerson said the U.S. seeks constructive relations with China but "won't shrink" from the challenges it poses when it "subverts the sovereignty of neighboring countries, and disadvantages the U.S. and our friends."

While President Donald Trump has looked to deepen cooperation with China on addressing the nuclear threat from North Korea, he's sought a much closer relationship with India, which also shares U.S. worries on Islamic extremism.

"In this period of uncertainty and angst, India needs a reliable partner on the world stage. I want to make clear: with our shared values and vision for global stability, peace and prosperity, the United States is that partner," Tillerson said. **MDT/AP**

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Spain ready to revoke Catalan autonomy

SPAIN'S government yesterday immediately rejected a threat by Catalonia's leader to declare independence unless talks are held, calling a special Cabinet session for the weekend to activate measures to take control of the region's semi-autonomous powers.

Catalan president Carles Puigdemont's warning came in a letter to Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy with minutes to spare before the expiration of a deadline set by the central government for him to backtrack on his calls for secession.

"If the central government persists in impeding dialogue and continuing its repression, Catalonia's parliament may proceed [...] with a vote to formally declare independence," Puigdemont's letter said.

Spain's government quickly responded with a statement saying it was calling a special Cabinet session for Saturday in which it would trigger the process to activate Article 155 of Spain's 1978 Constitution. It allows for central authorities to take over the semi-autonomous powers of any of the country's 17 regions, including Catalonia.

The Cabinet meeting will "approve the measures that will be sent to the Senate to protect the general interest of all Spaniards," the statement said.

The constitutional law has never been used in the four decades since democracy was restored at the end of Gen. Francisco Franco's



Demonstrators protest against the Catalan government's push for secession from the rest of Spain

dictatorship.

Spain's government needs to outline what are the exact measures it wants to apply in Catalonia and submit them for a vote in Spain's Senate.

The ruling Popular Party's majority in the top chamber would be enough to approve the measure, but Rajoy has held discussions with opposition leaders to rally further support.

The government was meeting yesterday morning with members of the leading opposition Socialist party to decide what measures to take under Article 155.

Puigdemont addressed the regional parliament on Oct. 10, saying he had the mandate under a banned Oct. 1 referendum to declare independence from Spain. But he immediately suspended the implementation of the seces-

sion proclamation and called for talks with Spain and international mediators.

But Spain's government responded by setting two deadlines for Puigdemont — a Monday one for him to say a simple "yes" or "no" to whether he indeed had declared independence or not, and a second one for yesterday for him to fall in line with Spain's laws.

Spain's government says that Puigdemont hasn't offered any clarity in his replies.

Catalans would consider the application of Article 155 an "invasion" of the region's self-government, while Spain's central authorities have portrayed it as an undesired move, yet a necessary one, to restore legality after Puigdemont's government pushed ahead with a banned referendum that violated the country's constitution.

More than 40 percent of Catalonia's 5.5 million eligible voters cast ballots in the illegal Oct. 1 referendum as police used violence to try to enforce a court order to stop it from going ahead. Opponents boycotted the vote.

Catalan officials say that hundreds of people were injured in police violence, while Spanish authorities say hundreds of police officers were also hurt and the use of force was proportional to the resistance they met.

The separatists declared an overwhelming victory despite the boycott by opponents, who said it was illegal and lacked basic guarantees such as an independent electoral board.

Spain's government had said it would be willing to hold off on applying Article 155 if the Catalan separatist leader were to call

a snap regional election. But Catalan officials have ruled that out.

The Catalan government's international affairs director, Raul Romeva, told reporters in Brussels on Wednesday that Catalonia's banned secession referendum gave the region's separatist government a mandate to declare independence from Spain.

Andrew Dowling, an expert in Catalan history at Cardiff University in Wales, said that any declaration of independence in the Catalan parliament would be symbolic without border and institutional control and no international support.

Such a declaration "will see the fracture between hardliners and the pragmatic people in Catalonia who are already seeing an economic fallout," Dowling said.

More than 700 companies, including Catalan banks, multinationals and mid-size businesses, have moved their registered addresses out of the troubled region because of concerns about the region's legal status, according to Spain's Association of Commercial Registers. While it doesn't affect jobs, the firms could delay investments if the standoff continues.

Civil society groups who have drawn hundreds of thousands to the streets in peaceful pro-independence demonstrations over the past few years are calling for new protests at the gates of the central government's office in Barcelona and a bigger march later this week. **AP**

Letters from young Obama show a man trying to find his way

A young Barack Obama questioned his place in the world and his racial identity, agonized over whether he'd make enough money as a community organizer, and lamented his incompatibility with his ex-girlfriend in 30 pages of letters he wrote to her that are now being archived by Emory University in Atlanta.

The nine full letters, sent by Obama to his college girlfriend, Alexandra McNear, are being made public to researchers through Emory University's Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library. The university has had the letters since 2014 but could only make them public now, officials said.

Written in the 1980s, the letters give a peek into Obama's psyche as he

sought out the path that would eventually land him in the White House as the United States' first black president, Emory University officials said Wednesday.

"My ideas aren't as crystallized as they were while in school, but they have an immediacy and weight that may be more useful if and when I'm less observer and more participant," Obama wrote in 1984 to McNear, who was a student at a California college attended by Obama before he moved to Columbia.

The "very lyrical, very poetic" letters will be useful to researchers trying to craft a picture of Obama the college student and recent graduate, Emory officials said. Parts of the letters from Obama have already appeared in books

about Obama over the last few years.

"They tell the journey of a young man who is seeking meaning and purpose in life and direction," said Rosemary Magee, the Rose Library director. Obama is "trying to find what his distinctive place would be both in that time and going forward."

The letters span 1982 to 1984. During that time, Obama was at Columbia University in New York City, in Indonesia, and finally working at Business International Corporation, "with everyone slapping my back," in a job for which he had no passion. Obama wrote for the newsletter Business International Money Report.

"Salaries in the community organizations are too low to survive on

right now, so I hope to work in some more conventional capacity for a year, allowing me to store up enough nuts to pursue those interests next," Obama wrote in 1983.

The future president's letters were penned in a combination of careful cursive and "Dear Alex" in print. He wrote them on stationery as well as ripped-out yellow and white, college-ruled notebook paper. At least one was sent in Business International Money Report envelopes with the business's address crossed out and "Barack Obama" written above it.

Emory University professor Andra Gillispie, director of Emory's James Weldon Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference, is using the letters in an upcoming book



about Obama. She said the letters are not overly romantic as they span the end of the pair's relationship.

"I think of you often, though I stay confused about my feelings," Obama wrote to McNear in 1983. "It seems we will ever want what we cannot have; that's what binds us; that's what keeps us apart."

But the letters aren't all angst, Gillispie said. Obama — "clearly a person of the mind," she said, — once ripped out a New York Times book review

of Rachel M. Brownstein's book, "Becoming a Heroine" and sent it McNear, something that amused the professor.

"This is part of his courtship strategy. Okay [...] Who rips out book reviews to send to their girlfriend?" Gillispie laughed. "I think it is a sign of his proto-feminism but it is -more of a 'Wow, this is really cerebral relationship' but I personally like the idea of a cerebral relationship. I'm a nerd too, so the nerd in me was like, 'That was real cool.'" **AP**

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FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:20	Zig Zag
16:35	European League: Braga x Razgrad (Repeated)
18:20	Champions League - Highlights (Repeated)
18:45	Brazilian Mini Serie (Repeated)
19:10	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:45	Non-daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:50	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:20	Portuguese Serie
22:10	Brazilian Mini Serie
22:40	Miscellaneous
23:00	TDM News
23:30	European League - Highlights
01:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
02:20	RTPi Live

SATURDAY

10:30	Comedy
11:45	Miscellaneous
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
14:50	Soap Opera (PT)
17:20	Miscellaneous
18:15	Miscellaneous
19:10	European League - Highlights (Repeated)
19:30	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Drama (PT)
21:40	Miscellaneous
22:30	Documentary Serie
23:00	TDM News
00:35	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:10	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:30	Comedy
11:00	Sunday Mass
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
14:50	Zig Zag
16:15	Pop Lusa
17:15	Brainstorm
18:00	Miscellaneous
19:30	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Non-daily Portuguese News
22:00	Miscellaneous
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Documentary (Repeated)
00:40	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:15	RTPi Live

Offbeat

SOME FLOWERS CREATE BLUE HALO TO SAY HELLO TO FORAGING BEES

Some flowers have found a nifty way to get the blues. They create a blue halo, apparently to attract the bees they need for pollination, scientists reported Wednesday. Bees are drawn to the color blue, but it's hard for flowers to make that color in their petals.

Instead, some flowers use a trick of physics. They produce a blue halo when sunlight strikes a series of tiny ridges in their thin waxy surfaces. The ridges alter how the light bounces back, which affects the color that one sees.

The halos appear over pigmented areas of a flower, and people can see them over darkly colored areas if they look from certain angles.

The halo trick is uncommon among flowers. But many tulip species, along with some kinds of daisy and peony, are among those that can do it, said Edwige Moyroud of Cambridge University in England.

In a study published Wednesday by the journal Nature, Moyroud and others analyze the flower surfaces and used artificial flowers to show that bumblebees can see the halos.

An accompanying commentary said the paper shows how flowers that aren't blue can still use that color to attract bees. Further work should see whether the halo also attracts other insects, wrote Dimitri Deheyn of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California.

cinema



CINETEATRO

19 - 25 Oct



GEOSTORM

ROOM 1

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

Director: Dean Devlin

Starring: Gerard Butler, Jim Sturgess, Abbie Cornish, Daniel Wu

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 109 min



SKY HUNTER

ROOM 2

2:30, 6:45, 7:30pm

Director: Chen Li

Starring: Chen Li, Bingbing Fan, Qianyuan Wang, Jiahang Li

Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)

Duration: 115min



WIND RIVER

ROOM 2

9:45pm

ROOM 3

4:00, 7:45pm

Director: Taylor Sheridan

Starring: Jeremy Renner, Elizabeth Olsen

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 107 min

this day in history



1973 DALAI LAMA MAKES FIRST UK VISIT

The spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists, the Dalai Lama, has arrived in Britain for the start of a 10-day tour during which he will "administer vows to people who want them".

It is the first time he has been to the UK. The visit is part of a European tour that started with a meeting between the spiritual leader and Pope Paul V at the Vatican in Rome.

It was the first time the two had met and the Pope said he hoped the tour would be an occasion for spiritual satisfaction.

During his stay the 38-year-old is expected to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Michael Ramsey, and address many of his followers including a group at Sutton Courtenay Abbey.

The Buddhist leader said he wanted to meet people on his trip who were "thinking deeply about the problems of mankind" and said his message to British Buddhists was that "they must develop compassion".

Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, has insisted his visit is not for political gains.

He has been living in exile in India since 1959. He left his home country following a failed uprising against the Chinese in Tibet.

Asked on his arrival if he was looking forward to returning to Tibet after 14 years of exile in India he said: "My trip is of a non-political nature".

"I have developed respect for my former enemies. In my autobiography I comment on Chairman Mao. I like him and admire him very much," he added.

In 1972 India announced that China should decide the fate of Tibet and not the people of Tibet. This was put down to improved China-Indian relations.

A Tibetan diplomat is currently discussing the possibility of the Dalai Lama returning to Tibet. He would be stripped of all political powers but retain his spiritual leadership of Buddhists.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

During his European tour the Dalai Lama visited Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, West Germany and Austria.

When the Dalai Lama left Tibet in 1959 he was followed by up to 100,000 Tibetans to India.

In 1989 the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The committee said he was awarded it because throughout his attempts to liberate Tibet he advocated peaceful solutions based on tolerance and mutual respect.

The Dalai Lama and other Tibetans have still not returned to what was once their country. It remains under the control of China.

YOUR STARS

Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

ince you're a veritable magnet for fiery action, you can expect that you, above all others around you, should be prepared for business - but you might also want to warn your loved ones to get ready themselves.

Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

You have to go out at some point today, no matter what. Of course, if you're still fighting the urge to stay in and entertain yourself on your own terms, you need to build up some discipline.

Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Are you ready for a day that's perfect, for no other reason than because you're simply happy to be you? It's coming, so do what you've got to do. We're all entitled to that kind of magical day now and then.

Libra

Sep.23-Oct. 22

If you take the day off today (and why not?), then you're probably not alone. Lots of people are feeling the urge to just stay in and snuggle up today, and if you can do the same, go for it!

Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

All's well that ends well, right? Keep that in mind if your day feels less than stellar, and especially if the person who's responsible for that keeps appearing directly in your line of fire.

Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You just need to put yourself in the right place at the right time, so find the place where your kindred spirits gather. Only you know where that might be, but it's definitely not a bar (this time).

Taurus

April 20-May 20

Complaining is off-limits today! Everyone is entitled to a place in the spotlight every now and then, and it's now officially your turn. Enjoy your newfound celebrity! If you really must have some privacy.

Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

It's definitely time for you to get back to work in some big way. You can tell because you've got the morning blues - and you've had them since last week! You're fully in charge of your day.

Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

If you are still not in the mood to get to work, don't. As dutiful as you are most of the time, even just thinking along those lines sends a chill down your responsible little spine.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Everyone around you is quite pleased with the way things have turned out recently. Unfortunately, you've got this nagging feeling that something is deeply wrong - or that it will be soon.

Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Some of your coworkers and friends seem to be kind of stumbling through the day, looking as if they can't quite figure out what to do to make things right. Try your very best to be sympathetic.

Pisces

Feb.19-Mar. 20

If you need to take some time off today, go for it without a second thought. Last week was probably a roller-coaster ride, to say the least, and you need some time to calm down.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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Medium

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Hard

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WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
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CHINA

Beijing	9	20	clear
Harbin	-1	14	smoggy/shower
Tianjin	12	21	clear
Urumqi	5	14	shower/clear
Xi'an	10	20	cloudy/clear
Lhasa	4	22	clear
Chengdu	14	19	overcast
Chongqing	18	23	overcast/cloudy
Kunming	15	24	cloudy
Nanjing	13	20	cloudy/overcast
Shanghai	18	23	cloudy
Wuhan	13	22	cloudy
Hangzhou	15	21	overcast
Taipei	23	27	drizzle
Guangzhou	21	28	cloudy
Hong Kong	23	29	cloudy

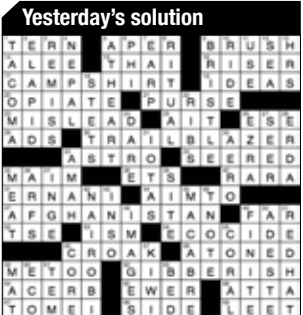
WORLD

Moscow	1	7	drizzle
Frankfurt	12	20	cloudy
Paris	13	20	clear/cloudy
London	12	16	moderate rain/cloudy
New York	14	21	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Pertaining to the small intestine; 6- Lay to rest; 11- Scot's cap; 14- Salk's conquest; 15- Audacity; 16- Lode load; 17- Conceit; 19- "Michael Collins" actor; 20- Common Market abbr.; 21- "The Time Machine" people; 22- Tropical American crocodilian; 24- Scandinavian capital; 25- Favorable termination of endeavors; 26- Remove chlorine from; 30- Fragrance; 31- Rat-a-___; 32- Go downhill fast?; 36- Decay, waste away; 37- Talk softly; 41- "___ tu" (Verdi aria); 42- Some digits; 44- PIN requester; 45- Sporting blades; 47- Member of the clergy; 51- Bulrush; 54- Hey!; 55- Discomfort; 56- Tins; 57- ___ canto; 60- Tear; 61- Regrettable; 64- Opposite of NNW; 65- "Farewell!"; 66- Right-hand page; 67- Wide shoe width; 68- Starbucks order; 69- Patriot Allen;

DOWN: 1- ___ dixit; 2- Actor Rob; 3- Util. bill; 4- Afflict; 5- Cabbage salad; 6- Not alfresco; 7- "M*A*S*H" soft drink; 8- Quattro minus uno; 9- Leave empty; 10- Edit; 11- Leader of the Mel-Tones; 12- Regions; 13- Averages; 18- London greeting; 23- Frozen treats; 24- Resistance unit; 25- Ginger cookie; 26- Pub missile; 27- Switch ending; 28- Sheep shelter; 29- "Who's there?" response; 33- Internet writing system that popularized "pwn3d" and "n00b"; 34- ___ saw Elba; 35- Kind of jockey; 38- Large landed estate; 39- ___ never work!; 40- Restore confidence; 43- ___ precedent; 46- L.A. clock setting; 48- Offhand; 49- Few and far between; 50- "___ She Lovely?"; 51- Swearword; 52- Licorice flavoring; 53- Conical shelter; 56- Codger; 57- German composer; 58- James of jazz; 59- Boxer Spinks; 62- In shape; 63- After taxes;



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Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
Commission Against	
Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300	
IACM 28 387 333	
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HKD 7,380sq ft

Perfect Family or Executive Home

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One Grantai, Unit Y

Taipa

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Beautiful Green Views

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Ref: 1505508

Manhattan

Taipa

3 Bedrooms Apartment

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AP PHOTO



Chelsea's David Luiz celebrates after scoring



Barcelona's Lionel Messi

FOOTBALL

What to watch on the weekend

WHAT to watch in the leading football leagues in Europe this weekend:

ENGLAND

Back-to-back losses in the Premier League to Manchester City and Crystal Palace have put the brakes on Chelsea's title defense. On top of that, Antonio Conte's side chucked away a two-goal advantage in drawing with Roma in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Next up on Saturday is an unlikely tricky trip north of London to face an unusually elevated Watford side sitting two points above the fifth-placed champions.

Watford is seven points behind Manchester City, which on Saturday hosts another side enjoying an unexpectedly strong start to the season: Seventh-placed Burnley.

Burnley is even ahead of Liverpool, on goal difference. Juergen Klopp's side travels on Sunday to Wembley Stadium to take on third-placed Tottenham, which has been buoyed by a draw with Real Madrid in the Champions League.

Second-placed Manchester United, whose ultra-defensive display in a draw at Liverpool

last weekend sparked a wave of criticism, makes the trip across northwest England to Huddersfield on Saturday.

SPAIN

Barcelona endured a difficult draw against Atletico Madrid in the last round. Now the Spanish leader gets one of the easiest matchups possible when it hosts last-placed Malaga, which has lost seven of its eight matches.

Malaga's only point came in a 3-3 home draw against Athletic Bilbao last month, while Barcelona had opened the league campaign with seven wins before drawing with Atletico.

Barcelona has a four-point lead over surprising Valencia, which will put its unbeaten streak to the test when it hosts fifth-placed Sevilla on Saturday.

Fourth-placed Atletico, winless in four consecutive matches in all competitions, is at Celta Vigo on Sunday. Second-placed Real Madrid hosts Eibar later in the day. The defending champion was held by Tottenham in the Champions League on Tuesday, but it has won three in a row in La Liga.

GERMANY

Cologne hosts Werder Bremen on Sunday in

a meeting of sides who are winless after eight rounds of the Bundesliga and have scored only three goals each.

"It's difficult psychologically, but we won't end the season with just a point," says Cologne coach Peter Stoecker, whose side has drawn only one of its games.

Cologne misses the contribution of French forward Anthony Modeste, last season's top-scorer who was sold in the offseason to Tianjin Quanjian in China.

Bundesliga leader Borussia Dortmund hopes to get over its recent dip in form with a win at Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday, while Bayern Munich aims to continue its morale-building recovery under Jupp Heynckes at favorite victim Hamburger SV.

Hamburg, poor again this season, hasn't beaten Bayern in 15 games, while it has conceded a remarkable 55 goals in the last 13 meetings between the two.

ITALY

Leader Napoli faces another stern test of its title credentials when it hosts second-placed Inter Milan on Saturday.

Napoli won at title rival Roma 1-0 last weekend to remain the only side in Serie A with a perfect record, having won all eight of its ma-

tches, scoring 26 goals in the process. Napoli has a two-point lead over Inter, which beat AC Milan 3-2 in the last round and is the only other unbeaten side.

But Inter has not won at Napoli in 20 years.

Six-time defending champion Juventus is five points behind Napoli following a draw and a defeat in its past two league matches and it will be looking to bounce back at Udinese on Sunday.

Lazio, which handed Juventus that defeat, is level on points with the Bianconeri and hosts Cagliari. It will be Diego Lopez's first match back in charge of Cagliari after he replaced the fired Massimo Rastelli on Wednesday.

FRANCE

Unbeaten Paris Saint-Germain will be heavy favorite when it travels to play bitter rival Marseille on Sunday.

There was a time when

a trip to the hostile Stade Velodrome, and the seething anti-Parisian vitriol that awaits there, was a daunting trip. Now Marseille, with its leaky defense, has the worrying to do against a side that has scored 29 goals in nine games.

Defending champion Monaco was the pacesetter last season, scoring 107 in the league and more than 150 overall. But coach Leonardo Jardim's current side is a pale imitation and already trails PSG by six points.

Without Radamel Falcao's league-leading 12 goals, Monaco would be truly struggling. However, a home match against Caen on Saturday is a good opportunity to get some confidence back.

Meanwhile, third-placed Saint-Etienne faces a difficult match against resilient Montpellier, which has drawn against PSG and Monaco this season. **AP**

OLYMPICS

Beijing forms 'snow affairs work team' for 2022

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

BEIJING, host of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, has a snow problem: Hardly any of the white stuff falls on the Chinese capital despite freezing temperatures.

Taking the matter in hand, the games organizing committee has formed a "snow affairs work team" and invited experts from Finland, Canada and other nations to help out, according to the official "2017 Beijing Fact File" produced by the city government.

The work team would "expedite research on key technologies for making and preserving snow, and start to formulate a work plan to ensure suitable snow resources," the publication said.

Also yesterday, Beijing Vice Mayor Zhang Jiandong said all venues and transport links for the games would be completed by the end of 2019, allowing Beijing to begin staging test events the next year.

"Progress on all these projects has been moving ahead smoothly," Zhang said at a briefing on the sidelines of the twice-a-decade congress of China's ruling Communist Party.

Beijing was awarded the games in 2015, defeating Almaty, Kazakhstan, in the voting to become the first city to have been awarded both the Summer and Winter Olympics.

Beijing's urban center will host indoor events such as ice hockey and figure skating, largely in venues left over from the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. However, a lack of mountains and natural snow requires that ski events be held at sports clusters in Chongli as well as Beijing's rural Yanqing county, both of which will be connected to the city center by a high-speed rail line. **AP**

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EVERYTHING MUST CHANGE...

In *The Leopard*, the beautiful novel by Lampedusa set in slow-changing Sicily, Trancedi's famous assertion that "everything must change for everything to remain the same" holds a particular truth for Macao, especially so when considering the latest urge by the Chief Executive's family to widen its hold on power in the SAR.

When learning last week about the scheme to promote Mr Chui Sai Cheong, the Chief Executive's brother, to the "elected" position of Vice President of the Legislative Assembly, my first reaction was one of disbelief. I had been under the impression that since May 2014, when 20,000 people took to the street against the extravagant preferential treatment senior officials were conferring to themselves, that some kind of attempt at greater adequacy between the people's expectations and the priorities of the government — not only in speeches — would be the new normal in Macao.

One can easily perceive the lingering danger of deception: years of maladministration and substandard urban development coupled with the inept management of a tragedy that ultimately claimed 10 lives can in large part explain the remarkable results of the pan-democrats in the September 17th legislative elections. The New Macau Association-affiliated legislators made history by totaling more than 30,000 votes, and if José Pereira Coutinho and Agnes Lam are added, we are talking about a sizeable 55,000 votes and more than 40% of the elected seats. Moreover, the youngest ever elected legislator, 26-year old Sulu Sou, officially representing NMA, happens to have been the main organizer of the May 2014 protest!

Choosing a handful of academics as appointees could also be seen as a wise move on the part of the Chief Executive, and at the very least paying lip-service to the grand plan of "scientific policy-making". Why then cast a shadow on the resolve to engage in "sunshine government"?

As reported in the press, there was quite a bit of lobbying in order to ensure the "election" of Chui Sai Cheong prior to the vote last Monday. In a way, this is re-assuring as it seems to indicate that not everybody was convinced this was the best of options. If we leave aside the merits, the question of seniority does not hold as President Ho Iat Seng has himself been a member of the LA only since 2009, whereas the longest serving legislator is Ng Kuok Cheong, a democrat. Then, if custom is to be considered, we now have two business-related legislators at the helm of the LA, a first since the handover as these two positions have traditionally been split between labor and business pro-establishment camps. But if reticences there were, they apparently cleared out over the week-end: Mr Chui Sai Cheong received 29 votes out of 33 during the first plenary session!

Clearly, this is not illegal for Mr Chui-the-brother to become Vice President of the LA, but this is not a matter of legality — although it should be if one considers that the independence of powers is enshrined in the Basic Law, or is it really? In case of absence of the President, the Vice President presides over meetings, decides on the dates and convenes special and emergency sessions: how would that look? And the argument of smallness of Macao does not hold, as smaller cities in the world manage to extend the circles of trust beyond the family bonds. Even the Kaczyński brothers — twins! — in Poland kept their act only on the side of the executive branch.

As we are reminded by the OECD, a conflict of interest can be defined as "a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgment or actions regarding a primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest," and this in turn is "considered an indicator, a precursor and a result of corruption." Quite a treacherous line to walk at the time of the 19th Congress further north.

THE BUZZ INVESTIGATORS APPEAL FOR INFORMATION ABOUT BUK PHOTO

An international team investigating the 2014 downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine appealed yesterday for information about a photograph which prosecutors believe features the Buk rocket that blew the passenger jet out of the sky, killing all 298 on board.

The photo of the missile, which investigators believe was likely taken in the Ukrainian town of Makeevka on the day the flight was shot

down, was recently received via a website to which members of the public can anonymously post evidence, said Elsbeth Kleibeuker, a spokeswoman for the Dutch National Prosecution Office.

The photo shows what appears to be a missile partially draped in camouflage netting on a mobile launcher. The vehicle is partially obscured by a dark van and the rear of a car.

LAS VEGAS SHOOTING

Guard describes getting shot before massacre

THE gunman who unleashed the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history first wounded an unsuspecting hotel security guard in a hallway who promptly radioed for help, according to a TV interview broadcast Wednesday with the guard and a hotel building engineer whose life he is credited with saving.

In his only public recounting of the Oct. 1 shooting that killed 58 people and wounded more than 500, guard Jesus Campos told Ellen DeGeneres on her talk show that he was heading down the hall after calling for a maintenance worker when he heard "rapid fire" gunshots through the nearby doors of Stephen Paddock's suite in the Mandalay Bay.

"At first, I took cover. I felt a burning sensation. I went to go lift my pant leg up, and I saw the blood," Campos said. "That's when I called it in on my radio that shots had been fired." He didn't say what time that was.

The hotel engineer, Stephen Schuck, who was sent to check a fire exit door that Campos found bolted shut, told DeGeneres that he didn't hear gunfire when he reached the opposite end of the 32nd floor hallway. Then, he heard what he thought was the sound of construction.

"I didn't know it was shooting. I thought it was a jackhammer," Schuck said. "And, you know as an en-



Stephen Schuck (left) and Jesus Campos appear with host Ellen DeGeneres

gineer, I'm like, 'We're not working up here this late at night.' We wouldn't be doing that."

"It was, I believe, outside," he said, referring to gunfire that authorities say Paddock rained down from broken windows into a crowd of 22,000 at a country music festival. "It wasn't in the hallway yet."

Schuck said Campos leaned out from a door entrance and yelled for him to take cover.

"Within milliseconds, if he didn't say that, I would have got hit," Schuck said, describing bullets whizzing past his head.

Police later said more than 200 shots were fired into the hallway.

Campos, who walked into the interview with a cane, is recovering from a leg wound. Schuck wasn't injured. Both are on paid leave from their jobs, according to officials at MGM Resorts International, which owns the hotel.

Campos drew intense attention when police hailed him as a hero just after the shooting, saying he unwittingly stopped the massacre by

arriving in the hallway.

The police timeline changed dramatically a week later, when authorities said Campos reported being wounded at 9:59 p.m. — six minutes before people in the concert crowd reported shots.

The timeline of the massacre changed again last Friday, when Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo said Campos had been dispatched to the 32nd floor at 9:59 p.m. and was wounded in the hallway less than a minute before the massacre started at 10:05 p.m.

Schuck's account in the DeGeneres interview seemed to support that chronology.

He told Campos in the interview that the guard saved Schuck's life, and DeGeneres credited Campos with also warning a woman who started to come out of her room to get back inside.

"Shortly after that is when Stephen [Schuck] was approaching, and I told him to stay back and get cover, and that's when more rounds were dispersed," Campos said. AP

times square by rodrigo



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

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

MYANMAR A fire gutted a luxury teakwood hotel popular with foreigners in Myanmar's biggest city of Yangon before dawn yesterday, causing one death. A woman from Macau was hospitalized in critical condition. [More on p12](#)



NEW ZEALAND Jacinda Ardern will be New Zealand's next prime minister and hopes to take the country on a more liberal path following nine years of rule by the conservatives.



INDIA's famed monument of love, the white marble Taj Mahal, is finding itself at the heart of a political storm, with some members of the country's ruling Hindu right-wing party claiming that the mausoleum built by a Muslim emperor does not reflect Indian culture.



TURKEY-NIGERIA Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pledged cooperation with Nigeria in its fight against Boko Haram but said he expected the African nation's support against a movement led by U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen whom Ankara accuses of orchestrating last year's failed coup.

MALTA The sons of slain investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia have called on the Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat to resign, saying he should take political responsibility for "failing to uphold our fundamental freedoms."

VENEZUELA's opposition boycotted a swearing-in ceremony Wednesday for governors held by the all-powerful, pro-government constitutional assembly following disputed elections largely won by ruling party candidates.