



LOCALS 'APPRECIATE THE SENSE OF LUXURY'
Mercedes clinched the number one spot for overall sales in Macau, according to the brand's exclusive retailer in town

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MACAU'S COSMETIC BEAUTY QUEEN

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SHARP DECLINE IN CHINESE TOURISTS HITS SINGAPORE
New Chinese rules on outbound tours and to end illegal commissions was a major reason for the 26 pct drop in Chinese tourist arrivals

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS



EGYPT A senior Egyptian prison official and the country's official news agency say Al-Jazeera's Australian reporter Peter Greste has been freed from prison after more than a year behind bars and is on his way to Cairo airport to leave the country. Greste, Egyptian-Canadian Mohammed Fahmy, and Egyptian Mohammed Baher were sentenced to at least seven years in prison on terrorism-related charges last year in a trial that was described as a sham by rights groups.

CHINA A gauge of China's manufacturing activity fell to a 28-month low in January amid economic slowdown, according to official data, although January typically is a month of slower activities as China's factories prepare for the upcoming Lunar New Year celebrations. [More on p8](#)

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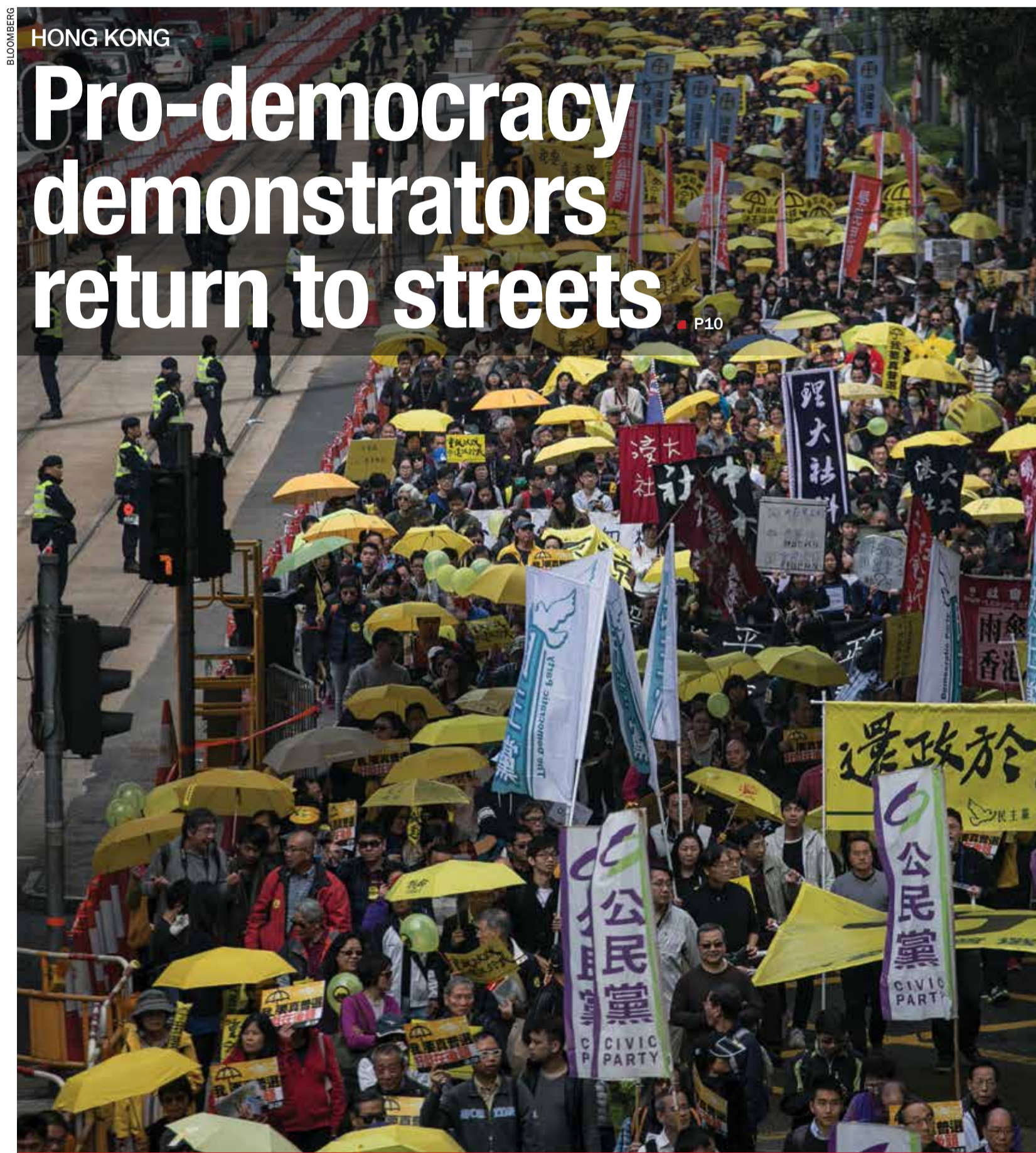
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China: Overborrowed and overbuilt

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HONG KONG

Pro-democracy demonstrators return to streets

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Cooperation enhanced, Guangdong Free Trade Zone covers Hengqin

P2 MDT REPORT

Cooperation with Guangdong over waste disposal enhanced

João Pedro Lau, Guangzhou

CHIEF Executive Chui Sai On met the Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party's Guangdong Provincial Committee Hu Chunhua on Friday, and revealed that Macau will be working closely with the province in 2015 regarding waste disposal issues.

The closed door meeting took place at the Zhudou Guest House in Guangzhou. The CE was accompanied by the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, and Raimundo do Rosário, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works. Zhu Xiaodan, the Governor of Guangdong province, was also present.

At the beginning of the meeting, when members of the press were allowed to observe for several minutes, both Mr Hu and Mr Chui gave a brief introduction on the economic condition of the province and the SAR based on 2014 conditions.

The CE thanked Hu for the support Guangdong has given Macau in the previous year. "With the signing of the Guangdong-Macau Cooperation Framework Agreement, we have rolled out the detailed tasks [relating to the framework]. We have achieved the objectives of last year," he said.

"In the upcoming year, we hope to further our work based on these well-established foundations. It is especially [so] that we are paying high attention to the Guangdong Free Trade Zone. We have been studying the related documents in the past two days [and hope that] we can strengthen our collaboration [with Guangdong]," he said.



Chui Sai On and Hu Chunhua

The CE added that the free trade zone will give Macau a great opportunity for expansion, and hopes to put it into the agenda of the Cooperation Framework Agreement's annual meeting, which he said will help both parties to decide how to further collaborate with each other.

Moreover, Chui described Macau and Guangdong's relationship as brotherly, with the

latter supporting the needs of Macau residents, such as in the supply of utilities and food.

The CE also mentioned Guangdong's support for Macau's waste disposal issues. "I am very glad that we can put several work plans into action, especially on... the handling of [Macau's] inert waste and unwanted vehicles. This will [help] the hard work by [Macau

and Guangdong] in these few years to be actualized," Chui said, adding that he would like Macau to sign more agreements with Guangdong during this year's Framework Agreement annual meeting.

After the meeting, which lasted around 30 minutes, the CE and the two secretaries met with the media briefly. He said that in the rest of the meeting, representatives from the MSAR and Guangdong province reviewed the collaboration between the two regions in 2014, and looked into furthering the cooperation. "Generally, both of us [saw] that we have achieved the objectives related to collaboration in the previous

year that are set in the Guangdong-Macau Cooperation Framework Agreement and in the Framework Agreement's annual meeting," he said.

"In forecasting future collaboration, especially the collaboration in this year, we have noticed the announcement of [the establishment of] the Guangdong Free Trade Zone and Macau will, under the Framework Agreement... expend its cooperation with Guangdong," he said.

The CE also said that, after a lengthy discussion with the mainland authorities in previous years, Macau will be working more closely with Guangdong in handling Macau's inert waste and unwanted vehicles. "We believe that we [will achieve our objectives] in this year," he said. "We are going to announce the details when the condition is [right]." The CE added that the administration will strive to make the announcement within this year.

MACAU LANDFILL LONG OVERFLOWED

AS EARLY as June 2014, the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) had already suggested that Macau's construction material landfill "[had] basically reached its full capacity." The then acting director of the bureau, Vong Man Hung, suggested that the authorities would resolve the issue through regional cooperation and the establishment of a new construction waste recycling center in the upcoming years. Although the center has not yet

been built, the bureau has already selected some "high quality construction waste" and temporarily stored it near the landfill. Macau also had to negotiate with mainland authorities in deciding the types of construction waste that could be sent to the mainland for recycling or other treatments. According to Macau Daily, DSPA has already reserved funds in its 2015 budget for the construction of an inert waste recycling facility.

Guangdong Free Trade Zone covers Hengqin

Apart of Hengqin Island, around 28 square kilometers, will be included in the Guangdong Free Trade Zone. It was revealed in a Zhuhai government meeting last week that the Free Trade Zone in Hengqin will feature trade ties with Portuguese speaking countries with the aim of creating free trade platforms with Angola, Brazil and Portugal.

It will develop a Chinese and Portuguese product exhibition and trade centre, as well as a cross border e-commerce platform. These will create a free trade corridor leading to Latin America through Brazil that specializes in agricultural products, and another two free trade corridors to Europe and Africa through Portugal and Ango-

la respectively.

The Guangdong Free Trade Zone, formally known as the Guangdong Free Trade Testing Zone, was announced in December last year alongside two Free Trade Testing Zones in Fujian province and Tianjin city. The zone has customs areas where goods stored are exempt from tariffs and value-added taxes.

New Philippine Consul-General takes office in Macau

THE fourth Philippine Consul-General, Ms Lilybeth Deapera, has been appointed to Macau and assumed her post from January 14.

The diplomat attended a design workshop at the Center for Architecture and Urbanism yesterday, where local architects and students presented

their designs for the reconstruction of school buildings that were destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Since taking office,

Ms Deapera has met with China's Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hu Zhengyue. Her missions will focus on increasing bilateral

trade and people-to-people cultural exchanges. In addition, the Consul General revealed that the Philippine Minister of Labor will visit Ma-

cau next month, and will meet with local government to discuss protection and welfare for Filipino migrant workers in the territory. **BY**

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INTERVIEW | PAWIN SRIUSVAGOOL

Locals 'appreciate the sense of luxury and

Brook Yang

LAST year, Mercedes Benz clinched the number one spot for overall sales in Macau, according to Pawin Sriusvagool, the general manager of Zung Fu Motors (Macau) and exclusive retailer of the German carmaker in Macau.

The Times interviewee stresses that Macau is the only region in the world where Mercedes Benz was the bestselling brand. "It is quite special for a small market like Macau to achieve this kind of status," he adds.

MDT – Why do you think that Macau was the only region in the world where Mercedes ranked first?

Pawin Sriusvagool (PS) – I think it has a lot to do with the economy. Macau is considered as one of the fastest growing economies in the world and it has been like this over the last ten years. The population is wealthy, and most importantly, our Mercedes Benz brand is so strong, they are appealing to customers, to all segment groups. (...) Of course our competitors are quite strong as well, but in our products, especially in newly launched cars, we focused a lot on design and performance. For a lot of the cars, we would add the EMG element as a selling point. So by doing this, it really captured the customers' attention. We have market scale and marketing events, strengthening the brand element. But I think most importantly, we have been in the business for 22 years, and we know our customers very well. So basically we are selling cars to different generations, to the grandfather, the father, to the newlyweds and the children. It allows us to be the number one brand overall in Macau.

MDT – Which customer group is the major contributor to your sales volume?

PS – Traditionally it's the casinos. They have previously made up a large percentage of our business before, but now I would say it's everyone. Before we would focus on the luxury segment - the C, E, and S classes - as it played an important role when we first started selling cars in Macau. Right now the S Class makes up only a small fraction or portion of our sales. So right now, we have more and more working professionals [as customers], people who work inside and outside the casinos. The products are for everyone now, we have over 30 models



to choose from. The compact segment currently makes up the largest sales contribution. There's a lot of growth in the compact segment. People are switching Japanese cars for European cars. About the

People are switching from Japanese cars to European cars

proportion between European and Japanese cars on the road in 2014, European cars now comprise close to 60 percent of cars, while Japanese cars only make up 40 percent. This is because customers can afford it and there's also a change in customer preference. I think people in Macau appreciate the sense of luxury and they can afford to do so. Over the past 22 years, we made a lot of changes to the organization. Now we are dis-

playing more than ten cars in the showroom. We have also expanded into other business, such as smart cars and commercial vehicles.

MDT – Are the main customers local?

PS – Yes, the majority of our business is for local people, because cars must be licensed and driven in Macau. Most people who buy our cars are people who have stayed here for a long time.

MDT – What was Mercedes' overall growth in 2014?

PS – For Mercedes Benz, the year-on-year growth was about 27 percent. We sold over 1,500 cars last year; the previous year we sold approximately 1,200.

MDT – In spite of that growth, do you acknowledge that there's a slowdown in the local car dealer industry?

PS – Definitely, there's a slowdown in the industry. Secondly, as we are growing from a small base, it's quite difficult

to keep a high digit growth consistently every year.

MDT – But you are still confident that you will achieve double-digit growth every year?

PS – For me, it is always my target to grow at a double-digit rate. I am confident about the brand, the product, and the people I work with because our staff is highly trained, but one thing that I cannot control is the force of the market. If the

The expansion in Hengqin Island will have a positive effect on our industry

economy begins to slow down, the first thing people will cut down is the number of luxury goods they purchase, so the home will be the number one [area] where they start to save

money and not to buy. Cars will be the second item, along with jewelry and watches.

MDT – We've already seen gaming revenue plunge in the past eight months. How does that affect the industry?

PS – I think maybe this is the reason why the car market also declined 8 percent last year. But we were still lucky because we had some new products launched last year. (...) I would say the gaming industry has a spillover effect on all industries in Macau. I guess the key is that we don't want to get into a price war with any other car brands. The competition should focus on the added value, the service, the product quality and how we make sure that the customers are getting the best that they deserve. So for this year, we'll continue to focus on some of the new models that will be launched, focus on keeping our existing customers happy. But we will not engage in any kind of price competition, because by doing that, you start killing the industry in the long run.

they can afford to do so'

MDT – So for the top brands, the competition is really focusing on service?

PS – I cannot say on behalf of our competitors, but for Mercedes Benz, that probably is the case. The theme that we are focusing on more and more going forward is the best customer experience: how do we make sure that we provide the best experience for our customers, from the time they walk into our showroom, to doing a test drive, to car delivery... and make sure that they grow with our company throughout their lifetime.

MDT – What are some of the main obstacles hindering the expansion of the car business?

PS – The space limitation, the road network, is something that's going to affect us. Because traffic is becoming more and more problematic in Macau, we don't know what the situation is going to be like in future. We are very much looking forward to more opportunities to be presented by the government; for example, the expansion in Hengqin Island, which will have a positive effect on our industry as well. It's quite clear that our group is quite interested in going to Hengqin and investing – it could be in the form of another car dealership or something of that sort.

MDT – Besides the Hengqin project, an HK-Zhuhai-Macau bridge is under construction. Will that have a significant impact on car sales?

PS – Of course, when the new bridge that connects

HK and Macau is up, the situation will improve as well. Together with the opening of Hengqin Island, these are the two bright sides we are looking forward to. The new resort projects in Cotai are definitely a positive factor. This will create more jobs and

The competition should focus on the added value, the service, the product quality and how to best ensure that customers are getting the best that they deserve

people will become richer. The negative side is that it's going to be quite a challenge to hire people to work for us, because we'll have to compete with the casinos for the qualified workforce.

MDT – The younger generation wants greener transportation options instead of having cars. Will that also have an impact?

PS – That could be the future trend, because we can see this from the development in Hong Kong where people

have switched to more mass transport. I think in Macau we still have to wait and see. It's too early to say, as we don't know whether people are used to the new mode of transportation. But at the end of the day, there's still a large group of the population who still prefer convenience, luxury, and enjoy driving.

MDT – MB's global strategy is to capture the younger generation and keep them growing with the brand. How does it work in Macau?

PS – That is always the case in Macau. The compact cars allow them to become a first-time buyer. After they grow wealthier, we hope they will move to C, E or S [Class]. So it's about providing the best customer experience and securing them as customers for the entire lifespan.

MDT – Is there such brand loyalty in Macau, where we see all kinds of fancy cars in the streets?

PS – I guess the younger customers' brand loyalty is quite low, compared to the older customers. But it's all about how we treat them, making sure they are not customers but fans. Achieving the best customer experience and turning customers into fans of the brand are two things that MB is trying to work on. We hope we can use this strategy in Macau too. Basically right now for every customer event we do, it will really be targeting a different group, because we realized that customers are quite different. We are not treating them with some plain, simple decisions.



MDT – Does the leading status you achieved last year mean that MB has become a mature brand in Macau?

PS – Not really. I think there's still a lot of room for growth. There are still certain segments we haven't tapped into yet; for example, the seven-seaters [and] the van segment. There's still a lot of room for the high-performance segment to grow, and also for the luxury segment. Famous brands like Porsche, Lamborghini and Ferrari are always there. We want to put more effort into this segment. For both, there will be some new models coming out this year or next year. I think this year will be the year of the SUV [sport utility vehicle]. We have seven to eight new models lining up to come out.

MDT – Will the alternative-energy cars also be a focus of your marketing agenda?

PS – Yes, definitely, we are working on this kind of thing. We can be the leader in this sector as well, because not many people are doing this at the moment, so it's one of the strategies we are thinking of. For Mercedes, there are some cars running on electricity already, but we haven't introduced those to Macau. The brand already has this kind of technology, but for Macau I think it's only the beginning. First of all, we need more support from the government in terms of [building] the charging stations, and we

need to educate more customers about the environmental benefits of using this kind of car.

MDT – Would you suggest that the Macau government start planning now for the popularization of electric cars?

PS – Of course if you give enough incentives to people, you will see some results in the long run. More support, more charging stations, more subsidies like the tax reduction for environmentally-friendly cars, these are some of the things they can consider. But of course the government should already know what they want to do.

MDT – What do you think are the characteristics of Macau's car market compared to others?

PS – For the customers, there's a strong preference for European cars; smaller cars tend to be better in Macau because the roads are narrow. The younger generation prefers the sense of luxury, modern luxury, as well as performance. For the corporate executives, luxury is still an important element, and after-sell facility is still one of the important buying decisions. And for the casinos, the seven-seaters are still a very popular method of transport, but of course, they are always looking for some rare and special elements to please their customers, so brands like Rolls Royce and Bentley are becoming more and more popular.



Alexis Tam 'shocked' by alleged UM sexual harassment cases

THE Secretary of Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, said that he was "shocked" by the number of alleged sexual harassment cases involving faculty members of the University of Macau (UM), and has urged the UM administration to provide an explanation to the public.

"I am shocked because there is more than one [alleged sexual harassment] case. There were three in the previous year, which means there were four cases in total. I believe that the UM administration has to be quick and stringent in giving an explanation to the public, inclu-

ding and especially to their superiors, namely the Secretariat of Social Affairs and Culture," he said.

Moreover, Mr Tam stated that UM should draft a protocol for handling sexual harassment complaints, like other top ranking universities in the world. "The university needs to be on the same level as the international community. This means that if other world-renowned universities have this protocol, I believe that UM should develop one as well," he said.

Nevertheless, the secretary did not answer on whether the government would publish the

results of the investigation into the alleged UM sexual harassment cases, claiming that it depends on the victims' consent, while adding that his department needs to seek legal opinions.

Meanwhile, after days of silence, UM rector Zhao Wei finally told several selected local media representatives in a meeting on Thursday that there have been a total of four sexual harassment allegations filed against UM faculty members since he took office in 2008. According to Macau Daily, three of the four cases emerged in the second half of last year and da-



ted back to around two to three years ago. Zhao said that the three new cases were still in the preliminary stages of investigation, and that he would decide whether to form an independent disciplinary and investigation committee or to organize a public hearing, depending on

the seriousness of the cases.

As Secretary Alexis Tam's suggestion that government officials should keep in close contact with the media, Zhao said that he would try hard to coordinate with the media, but stressed the need for him to consider his own schedule as well. **JPL**

USJ new campus to open next year

THE University of Saint Joseph's new campus located in the Ilha Verde will be ready by next school year, rector Peter Stilwell revealed.

"We should have the campus finished by June or July," he told TDM News. Mr Stilwell added that students and academic staff should be able to move to the new campus by next year's first semester.

"After that, there are licenses which are required, which may take several months. So we are not counting on actually being given ownership of the campus before the end of September or October. So that means that we would be using the first semester to fit in and decide where we're going to go and so on. Then if everything goes well, we



would move in [during] the second semester," he clarified at the university's Open Day held on Saturday.

About 500 students took part in USJ's Open Day, the university said in a press release. 313 of those students have already applied for enrollment over the next school year.

Visitors were welcomed by USJ students, who invited them to visit the different booths providing information

on USJ academic programs.

The Open Day's program included language corners, a mock admissions interview corner, radio practice, and sports competitions, among others.

Prospective students also learned that USJ has updated its fees, reducing the costs for local students. USJ courses are taught in English, and the university has students and faculty members of nearly 60 nationalities.

Altira condemns demonstration outside its premises

ALTIIRA Macau released a statement on Friday, expressing its regrets and condemning a demonstration organized by the Bar-Bending Labor Association at its entrance early that day.

According to eyewitness accounts, the protestors carried a Chinese-style coffin, with the words "Altira the murderer" engraved on it. The protest was allegedly related to an industrial accident that occurred in April last year, which resulted in a worker becoming permanently disabled. The worker also alleged that the hotel had refused to communicate with him or follow up on the incident.

In the statement, Altira Macau said that it is "well aware of the unfortunate accident which occurred last year that we deeply regret." "At that time, the case was immediately reported to Macau authorities and to insurers, and all necessary support was provided to the investigations at all times. As a result, it was confirmed that Altira Macau should not be held liable for the unfortunate accident," the statement said.

Altira described the demonstration on Friday as putting "unlawful pressure" on the hotel, which it said is "not admissible and will not be tolerated."

"We will report the occurrence to Macau police and reserve our rights to take legal action against the responsible parties," the hotel stated.

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Dr Dalila, Macau's cosmetic beauty queen

Vanessa Moore

IMAGINE an ice cube on your forehead. Now imagine that the center of the ice heats up while the outside remains agreeably cold. This is the somewhat curious feeling experienced while having a Thermage radio wave frequency facial, one of the many state-of-the-art treatments offered by Dr Dalila Gomes at her downtown clinical dermatology practice, Dali Clinic.

The brainchild of Dr Dalila, Dali Clinic operates in the fields of dermatology, aesthetic and cosmetic treatments. As chief doctor and co-founder, she built the practice on the concepts of health, beauty and elegance, aiming to provide a professional yet enjoyable experience for her clients.

The clinic provides premium medical services, combining state-of-the-art equipment with a pioneering clinical concept. Treatments offered include dermatological facials, chemical peels, laser hair removal, skin rejuvenation, laser vein treatment, and cellulite and fat reduction.

“Our treatments are all clinical, even the facials”, says Dr Dalila. “We use medical products – we don’t use beauty salon products. That’s the difference”. All of the procedures are non-invasive, completely surgery-free and require minimal recovery time, and many of them can even be done within a lunch break.

Dr Dalila has lived in Macau since childhood and then went to study abroad, giving her the advantage of having both local and international knowledge. She has a Medical degree from Oporto Medical University (Portugal), a Dermatology Diploma from Cardiff University (UK) and is Board Certified by the American Academy of Aesthetics Medicine (AAAM).

“We abide by recognized international safety standards

Our treatments are all clinical, even the facials. We use medical products – we don’t use beauty salon products. That’s the difference

DR DALILA



Dr Dalila Gomes

and we have all the certifications for the machines by the companies themselves – they are all from the USA. We had to undergo exams to be able to be certified”, she says.

“Our CV also marks us out. I try to always keep updated and I did my courses abroad, so that is important”, she explains. “I keep updated by going to conferences and now I’m also doing a refresher course in Hong Kong”.

One of Dr Dalila’s most effective treatments is Thermage, a non-invasive technology to treat wrinkles that can be done on the face, eyes, or the body. The unique radio frequency procedure can help improve the appearance of sagging or loose skin, giving a smoother, sleeker and younger look and feel. Thermage works in just one treatment with little downtime – its main advantage over surgery.

“Patients come to do a lot of anti-aging treatments like facial rejuvenation. We can use rejuvenating facials and lasers, Thermage, clinical peeling, micro-needles. People are very concerned with the face and not getting old; these are the main concerns”, she states.

However another of their most popular services is laser hair removal. “Mostly clients come for laser hair removal because our machine is state of the art and the results are very good”, Dr Dalila says. “It’s not painful; you feel a little pricking, but it’s very fast zaps”. Patients come more or less every 5 to 6 weeks for a series of 5 or 6 sessions, depending on the area of the body and the amount of hair to be removed. “Our laser has two wavelengths; one wavelength for white skin, and another for dark skin. So this laser can treat everyone – without risks”, she clarifies.

Another therapy Dr Dalila

specially offers is Cool Sculpting, a treatment that uses controlled cooling to freeze and eliminate unwanted fat cells without surgery or downtime. The technology, which feels as if a vacuum cleaner containing frozen air is sucking on your skin, non-invasively gets rid of targeted fat around your waistline (abdomen and love handles) and thighs. The treated fat cells are crystallized and frozen under the skin, so surrounding tissue is left undamaged. Over time, the body naturally processes the fat and eliminates these dead cells. Dali Clinic is the only place in Macau that currently offers the procedure.

As with many of the treatments, some form of pain is involved. However it is never to an intolerable level, so taking painkillers is unnecessary. During Cool Sculpting for example, the sucking action for the first ten minutes of the procedure borders on painful, but after this initial period, the rest of the hour-long treatment is

■ The brainchild of Dr Dalila, Dali Clinic operates in the fields of dermatology, aesthetic and cosmetic treatments

basically painless. “Some people compare the pain to a heavy workout at the gym. Some people say it’s not even painful. So there are different types of feelings in different types of patients”, says Dr Dalila. And it also depends on the area of the body, with the legs being more painful than the tummy. “But it’s tolerable”, says the doctor.

What must be emphasized once again, however, is that every treatment is non-invasive and no stitches or recovery time is necessary. “This is all non-in-

vasive and there are no side effects of the general anesthesia, no suchers [stitches], no scars, nothing. Just bruises”, Dr Dalila describes. When it comes to the result, the doctor is certain of one thing: “They are happy”.

As well as Dali Clinic’s specialist treatments, clients also like the architecture of the clinic, the setup, and the central downtown location. They similarly benefit from an exceptionally high level of service in all areas. “We try to add on some nice details to our services”, explains Dr Dalila. “For example, there’s this laser that we do – Clear & Brilliant – it’s a very simple treatment; however with this treatment we offer patients a facial massage with serums done by the therapist, and to finalize, a facial mask for additional hydration. So we try to offer a full service”.

“Most of the patients really love to come here. On our Facebook page some of them write a review after they come and they are really happy”, she says. “We try to be professionals; we aim to make everything work perfectly. I’m always on time with patient bookings, she explains. “In a private clinic this is quality service”.

Dr Dalila is also ably assisted by her team of three staff members who help her with the daily operations and treatments. “They help me with all the treatments mostly; they do all the set up and prepare the patients. Then when I come I just do the consultation and the treatment itself”, Dr Dalila explains. “We work as a team and that’s paramount for success. Alone I couldn’t do it”.

Equally, for the clinical dermatologist, patient interaction is likewise extremely important. “I love my job”, Dr Dalila says simply. “I love medicine and always wanted to be a doctor. I’m always happy as long as I’m working!”



Dali Clinic's reception area

corporate bits

MANDARIN ORIENTAL HONOURED AS "LUXURY HOTEL IN MACAU STAR PERFORMER"



The Hurun Report "Best of the Best Awards" ceremony was held on 29 January in Shanghai. Mandarin Oriental, Macau was honored as "Luxury Hotel in Macau Star Performer", with Mandarin Oriental Pudong, Shanghai and Mandarin Oriental, Guangzhou receiving the "Luxury Hotel in Shanghai Star Performer" and "Art Lifestyle Luxury Hotel in Guangzhou Star Performer" awards, respectively. Michael Hobson, Chief Marketing Officer for Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, attended the event and received the Group's "Luxury Hotel Brand Star Performer" award.

According to a Mandarin Oriental press release, the Hotel Group has a "reputation for excellence" in the hospitality industry and has established hotels around the world that "offer creative design and architecture, innovative dining and holistic spas, all underpinned by its renowned legendary service". In 2013, the Group opened two new luxury hotels on the mainland, in Guangzhou and Shanghai, and in 2014, opened a hotel in Taipei, Taiwan, thus extending its brand to guests across the Greater China region. The Group has also announced hotel projects in Shenzhen, Chengdu and Chongqing, all of which will open in the next few years.

"We are delighted to have received this prestigious award," said Mr Hobson. "This recognition shows that Mandarin Oriental's renowned brand of luxury hospitality combined with oriental charm has set an industry benchmark in the Chinese market."

China factory gauge sinks to first contraction in two years

A Chinese manufacturing gauge contracted in January for the first time in more than two years, adding pressure on the central bank to stimulate a faltering economy.

The government's Purchasing Managers' Index fell to 49.8 last month from 50.1 in December, according to data released yesterday by the statistics bureau and the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing in Beijing. That missed the median estimate of 50.2 in a Bloomberg News survey of analysts and for the first time since September 2012 fell below the 50 level that separates expansion and contraction.

China's fiscal revenue increased the least since 1991 last year due to a property slump and declining factory profits, curbing scope to boost growth with government spending. That may leave the onus on monetary policy to spur the economy.

"We expect such data will weaken further and push the government to take further easing actions," said Zhang Zhiwei, chief China economist at Deutsche Bank AG in Hong Kong.

Seasonal reasons, falling commodity prices, and weak domestic and international demand caused the



A worker walks past an assembly line at a General Motors joint venture in Wuhan in central China's Hubei province

decline in manufacturing PMI, Zhao Qinghe, senior statistician at NBS, said in a statement on the bureau's website.

Most sub-indexes fell, including new orders and new export orders. The sub-index of raw material purchasing prices decreased to 41.9, the lowest in at least a year, on the decline in commodity prices.

"China's manufacturing sector is still facing de-leveraging pressure," said Liu Li-Gang, head of Greater China economics at Australia & New Zealand Banking Group Ltd. in Hong Kong. "Deflation in the manufacturing sector continues and

the destocking process has not yet completed."

The non-manufacturing PMI fell to 53.7 in January from the previous month's 54.1, according to a separate report from the NBS and the CFLP. Services made up 48.2 percent of the economy in 2014, up 1.3 percentage points from a year earlier.

"Taken together, the early signs for January point to a continued moderate deterioration in growth," Bloomberg economist Tom Orlik wrote in a report yesterday. "With the equity market rally also losing steam, that should set the scene for further easing by the central bank. We continue to expect a further rate cut in the first quarter."

The central bank lowered benchmark interest rates in November for the first time in two years, helping spur stock prices. The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index fell for a fourth day on Friday, capping its biggest weekly decline in a year on concern of regulatory scrutiny of margin lending.

The Chinese economy grew 7.4 percent last year and 7.3 percent last quarter, according to an NBS release last month. **Bloomberg**

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HONG KONG

Thousands march for democracy in first rally since December

THOUSANDS of pro-democracy demonstrators marched through Hong Kong's streets yesterday in the first major rally since mass protests ended last year. Chanting "No fake universal suffrage. I want genuine universal suffrage," the demonstrators held yellow umbrellas, which became a symbol of the earlier protests when the activists wielded them as a defense against police using pepper spray.

The march appeared orderly and peaceful throughout the day. The annual event usually is held on Jan. 1 but was delayed for a month this year to coincide with the government's consultations on electoral reform.

Police raised no objection to



Thousands of pro-democracy activists take part in a democracy march to Central, demanding for universal suffrage in Hong Kong

the march, though the formal notice the department issued last weekend stressed that organizers should ensure none of the marchers tried to occupy streets as happened during the mass protests.

The demonstrators oppose the Chinese government's decision that candidates in the 2017 election for Hong Kong chief executive will be vetted by a largely Beijing-controlled nominating committee. The Chinese and Hong Kong governments refused to make any concessions and the final demonstrators were cleared by police from the last site in Causeway Bay on Dec. 15.

The final election plan must be approved by a two-thirds majority in Hong Kong's Legislati-

ve Council before submitting to authorities in Beijing. But pro-democracy legislators, who hold 40 percent of the seats, have said they would veto the screening proposal.

"The Umbrella Movement started a new chapter for Hong Kong," said Daisy Chan of Civil Human Rights Front, who organized the rally, referring to the name given to protesters last year after they used umbrellas to protect themselves against pepper spray. "We have one simple demand today: we don't want fake democracy," she said at the rally yesterday.

"This is pseudo universal suffrage, we do not have the rights to elect who we want," said protester Julia Choi. **AP/Bloomberg**

Education minister demands rejection of Western values

CHINA'S education minister has issued a stern warning against threats to communist ideological purity in higher education, saying Western values must never be permitted to infiltrate the classroom.

Yuan Guiren reiterated the need for strict ruling Communist Party control over education and said educators must ensure that teaching materials do not criticize the party's leadership or the socialist system, the official Xinhua News Agency said in a report late Thursday.

Professors must "not complain, vent personal grievances or convey negative emotions to their students," Xinhua quoted Yuan as saying. It said he demanded teachers maintain a firm bottom line in politics, law and morality, but offered no specifics.

Yuan's remarks at an academic conference on Thursday come amid tightening political restraints under party leader Xi Jinping, who has moved quickly to enforce communist orthodoxy since taking charge in 2013, despite maintaining the country's economic openness.

An internal party document leaked in 2013 warned against Western values such as constitutionalism, respect



Chinese President Xi Jinping has issued guidelines requiring universities to strengthen ideological controls in classrooms and telling professors to champion Marxism, traditional culture and socialist core values

for civil society and press freedom, and state media outlets have lashed out at professors who take critical stances.

"As the top education administrator, Yuan has humiliated and threatened college professors openly with a hostile and intimidating tone," said Zhang Xuezhong, who was expelled as a law professor from a Shanghai university in 2013 over his call for constitutional rule. "He has declared to the world that China's university teachers not only have no academic and teaching freedom but also have no dignity."

Like Zhang, academics who fail to toe the line have seen

their careers and even personal freedoms come under threat. At least three Beijing-based professors have been fired or otherwise disciplined for their teachings about sensitive topics, such as the Arab Spring uprisings and constitutionalism in China.

Economics professor Ilham Tohti was sentenced to life in prison in September on separatism charges in part for championing the rights of the country's Muslim Uighur minority during his lectures at Minzu University in Beijing. Seven of his students, all from ethnic minorities, were sentenced to three to eight years on separatism charges. **AP**

TIBET

Authorities offer up to USD50K in cash for terror tips

CHINESE authorities are offering up to 300,000 yuan (USD50,000) for tips on terrorism activities in the Himalayan region of Tibet, the official Xinhua News Agency said Saturday.

China's recent efforts to fight terrorism has largely involved the neighboring region of Xinjiang, where violent attacks blamed on Muslim separatists have left hundreds of people dead in the past two years.

There has been little public knowledge of terrorism in recent years in Tibet, although more than 130 Tibetan Buddhist monks and laypeople have set themselves on fire since 2009 in protest of Beijing's strict controls over the region and their religion, according to overseas international human rights groups. The protesters also have called for the return of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, whom Beijing believes to be intent on splitting Tibet from China, a charge he denies.

Xinhua said the new rules by the Tibetan Autonomous Region's police department encourage member of the public to report any suspected terror activity, such as plotting attacks, promoting religious extremism, and transporting controlled weapons, for cash rewards.

It's unclear from the new rules if Chinese authorities are treating self-immolation as a form of terrorism or if violence inside Tibet has escalated. With journalists' access to Tibet tightly restricted, all information from the region is extremely difficult to confirm.



A Tibetan child plays with a soccer ball in front of a portrait of his spiritual leader the Dalai Lama

Occasionally, there have been unconfirmed reports of clashes between state security and unarmed Tibetan demonstrators.

Earlier last week, Chinese investigators announced findings that 15 Communist Party officials in Tibet joined underground Tibetan independence organizations, provided intelligence to the Dalai Lama and his supporters, or participated in activities deemed harmful to China's security.

The report was highly unusual and suggested continuing unrest in Tibet, which has had a heavy security presence since a wave of riots and protests against Chinese rule in 2008.

A discipline investigator, Ye Dongsong, was quoted in state media as saying that the Tibetan regional government should focus on neutralizing separatists and maintaining social stability. **AP**

TERRORISM

Horror in Japan as Islamic State group beheads journalist

Elaine Kurtenbach and
Yuri Kageyama, Tokyo

APPALLED and saddened by news yesterday of journalist Kenji Goto's beheading, apparently by Islamic State extremists, Japan ordered heightened security precautions, but vowed not to give in to terrorism.

The failure to save Goto raised fears for the life of a Jordanian fighter pilot also held hostage. Unlike some earlier messages, there was no mention of the pilot in an online video purporting to show an Islamic State group militant beheading Goto, circulated via social media late Saturday by militant sympathizers.

The slaying of Goto, a freelancer whose work focused on refugees, children and other victims of war, shocked this country, which until now had not become directly embroiled in the fight against the militants.

"I feel indignation over this immoral and heinous act of terrorism," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters after convening an emergency Cabinet meeting.

"When I think of the grief of his family, I am left speechless," he said. "We are filled with deep regret."

Threats from the Islamic State group prompted an order for tighter security at airports and at Japanese facilities overseas, such as embassies and schools, government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said.

He said it would be "inappropriate" to comment on the status of the Jordanian pilot, Muath al-Kaseasbeh. He was captured in December when his F-16



This image made from a video released by Islamic State militants on Saturday purports to show a militant standing next to Japanese journalist Kenji Goto before his beheading

crashed near the de facto capital of the Islamic State group, which controls about a third of both Syria and neighboring Iraq in a self-declared caliphate.

Jordan's government spokesman, Mohammed al-Momani, also declined comment. Earlier this week, Jordan offered to free an al-Qaida prisoner for the pilot, but demanded and said it never got proof he was still alive.

With no updates for days, al-Kaseasbeh's family appealed to the government for information on his situation. But for Goto's family and friends, the beheading shattered any hopes for his rescue.

"Kenji has died, and my heart is broken. Facing such a tragic death, I'm just speechless," Go-

to's mother Junko Ishido told reporters.

"I was hoping Kenji might be able to come home," said Goto's brother, Junichi Goto, in a separate interview. "I was hoping he would return and thank everyone for his rescue, but that's impossible, and I'm bitterly disappointed."

According to his friends and family, Goto traveled to Syria in late October to try to save Haruna Yukawa, 42, who was taken hostage in August and who was shown as purportedly killed in an earlier video.

"He was kind and he was brave," said Yukawa's father Shoiichi. "He tried to save my son."

"It's utterly heartbreaking," he said, crying and shaking. "People killing other people — it's

so deplorable. How can this be happening?"

Abe vowed not to give in to terrorism and said Japan will continue to provide humanitarian aid to countries fighting the Islamic State extremists.

But the government spokesman, Suga, said Abe would not link the hostage crisis to his efforts to expand Japan's military role in "collective self-defense" with the U.S. and other allies.

The White House released a statement in which President Barack Obama also condemned "the heinous murder" and praised Goto's reporting, saying he "courageously sought to convey the plight of the Syrian people to the outside world."

The White House said that while it isn't confirming the

■ Abe vowed not to give in to terrorism and said Japan will continue to provide humanitarian aid to countries fighting the Islamic State

authenticity of the video itself, it has confirmed that Goto has been slain.

Japan's defense minister, Gen Nakatani, said the police agency deemed the video of Goto's killing "highly likely to be authentic."

Highlighted by militant sympathizers on social media sites, the video bore the symbol of the Islamic State group's al-Furqan media arm.

Though it could not be immediately independently verified by The Associated Press, it conformed to other beheading videos released by the extremists, who now control about a third of both Syria and neighboring Iraq in a self-declared caliphate.

A few dozen people, bundled up against a biting wind, gathered in front of Abe's official residence in downtown Tokyo yesterday afternoon to show their sympathy for the hostages.

"I feel so sad and angry," said Mayuko Tamura, 31, a pediatrician who came with her husband and their 8-month-old baby. Why didn't the government rescue Kenji?" AP

Yuri Kageyama, Tokyo

WHETHER in tsunami-stricken northeastern Japan or conflict-ridden Sierra Leone, the stories of the vulnerable, the children and the poor drove the work of journalist Kenji Goto.

The news of his purported killing by Islamic State militants sent Japan into shock and mourning early Sunday morning, days after his plight as a hostage in Syria united many people in praying for his release.

"I want to cuddle with the people. That's the

Country mourns Kenji Goto as caring and courageous reporter

best way to express my approach," Goto, 47, said about his work. "By cuddling with them, I can talk with the people. I can hear their views — their pain and their hopes."

A pony-tailed man with a friendly, carefree laugh, Goto was a veteran freelance reporter, working often with other filmmakers and Japanese TV producers. His

comments were sometimes featured on Japanese mainstream media.

The 2005 book he wrote about the suffering of children in Sierra Leone was titled "We Want Peace, Not Diamonds."

But Goto had always stressed he was not a war reporter. He had insisted he was instead devoted to telling the story of regular people, one step

removed from the war zone.

That took him to refugee camps and orphanages. He told the stories of children suffering violence, hunger and nightmares.

In a testament to his charm and integrity, people responded with an outpouring of support to try to win his release.

A Facebook page, set up immediately after

the first video released by militants last month, quickly drew tens of thousands of "Likes" and photo postings that showed people, from not just Japan but around the world, holding up hand-written signs that said: "I am Kenji."

Those who knew Goto said he was a gentle and honest man. On the streets of Tokyo yester-

day, many people were clutching the Yomiuri newspaper extra with the latest news, expressing disbelief that his captors went as far as to kill a reporter. U.S. reporter James Foley and American-Israeli journalist Steven Sotloff were among several Westerners who had been killed by the militants last year.

"Kenji has left us on a journey," said Junko Ishido, 78, Goto's mother. "It is my only hope that we can carry on with Kenji's mission to save the children from war and poverty." AP

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NEW Chinese rules on outbound tours and to end illegal commissions was a major reason for the 26% drop in Chinese tourist arrivals from January to November 2014, according to a Saturday article by Travel and Tour World.

"The Chinese law hit everyone hard, the law was not a bad thing in itself," the tourism website quoted Chong as stating during a media briefing. "The tourism receipts were steady, even if arrivals were down."

"[The] first 11 months showed the Chinese who visited spent more, stayed longer... we reached out to top-tier cities with promotions. Length of stay for the current crop of Chinese visitors increased from 2.2 to 4.4 days."

According to the article, Inside no1 STB released details of its tourism performance for January to November 2014. The figures showed the city-state earned SGD11.8 billion. There was a decline of 3.4% in tourist arrivals that tallied 13.7 million, January to November.

Top visitor source markets were Hong Kong, South Korea, Vietnam and China.

Travel from China declined despite heavy promotions including a "New Discoveries" campaign and a micro movie that topped 10.4 million views

SINGAPORE

New rules prevent Chinese tourists from visiting



BLOOMBERG

in just two months on Youku.

According to Travel and Tour World, Chong ceded there was no feedback on booking materialization from the views.

"We are not able to track bookings on these campaigns... we are looking for a long-term impact, building awareness," the website quoted him

as saying.

Chong confirmed the F1 Grand Prix is now a firm fixture on Singapore's calendar. It attracted 200,000 international visitors in 2014 and generated 430 million viewers, on worldwide TV.

"Do we make money out of sports? It is not just about

hosting or the 100 million a year in receipts at the F1... it goes beyond to exposure and publicity," he explained.

"People know the F1 race, it helps to portray Singapore positively and being associated with such an exciting event is valuable... it's a partnership that will last for quite a while."

There are other events that have strong value such as hosting the World Tennis Association finals, an annual food festival (11 to 20 July), the monthly Pedestrian Night on Orchard road and the new Chinatown food-street that has free Wi-Fi to encourage social media posts and photos.

Despite having 57,000 rooms in the market, rates are high at an average SGD258 and occupancy averages 86% across the board, suggesting there is not much spare room capacity. Four new hotels are due to open in 2015: Patina, Genting, a property under the Park Group and South Beach.

A new build pipeline has 10,000 rooms, with 4,000 due to come online, this year. Around 3,000 rooms were added in 2014.

"We are looking at new areas for hotels...we have to look, but it involves some hard choices," said Chong.

Singapore celebrates its 50th anniversary and one of the projects to mark its birth is a heritage and arts showcase that will visit Beijing, London and New York between April and November. The exhibition will be on display in Singapore in December. **MDT**

Michael Kohn

MONGOLIA

PM asks voters to text a choice: Austerity or investment

PRIME Minister Saikhanbileg Chimed wants a text message from Mongolia's 3 million citizens about how to rescue the economy.

Two months after winning office, Saikhanbileg, 46, took to national television on Wednesday to tell viewers they have a choice. He explained the economy is slumping along with foreign investment, so they have to decide if belt-tightening is the way forward or should the country invest its way out of trouble?

The prime minister - a weight lifter who bench-presses 175 kilograms - invited citizens to send text messages over four days starting Saturday on what they prefer to do. Choice A: Forge ahead with multibillion dollar mining projects. Choice B: Cut spending and scale back.

"The two choices cut to the chase, prosperity or austerity? Citizens



BLOOMBERG

globally rarely, if ever, choose austerity," Nick Cousyn, chief operating officer for BDSec, Mongolia's largest brokerage,

said by e-mail. Mongolia's economy, which is dependent on mineral exports such as copper and coal, slowed

from a record 17.5 percent in 2011 to around 7 percent last year.

Much of the slowdown is due to a collapse in

investment, highlighted by a dispute with Rio Tinto Group, the country's biggest foreign investor, over financing for the USD6.6 billion Oyu Tolgoi mine, one of the world's largest copper and gold deposits. The currency, the tugrik, has fallen 42 percent against the dollar over the past three years.

Saikhanbileg's approach of democracy-by-text-message is an attempt to end an impasse in the country that has pitted politicians who claim foreigners are pillaging the nation's mineral wealth against those who say overseas investment is needed for growth.

"The Mongolian people need to decide whether they want foreign direct

investment or not," said Dale Choi, head of Independent Mongolian Metals & Mining Research.

The Prime Minister is acknowledging he needs the public mandate to break the current stalemate, which is caused by a large group of decision makers, Choi said.

"I give him credit for going to the public because the one thing that all these people will listen to is the public opinion."

Cousyn called the move "unconventional" while adding that it is an "excellent way to bring closure to the process."

The dispute between the government and Rio Tinto has dragged on for two years as the two sides bicker over terms of a \$4.2 billion project finance package to fund the underground development of the mine.

"This is a democratic way to remove the political liabilities associated with the controversy of large projects like OT," said Cousyn. **Bloomberg**

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Karin Laub, Amman

JORDAN

Gov't renews swap offer to free pilot held by Islamic State

JORDAN renewed an offer yesterday to swap an al-Qaida prisoner for a fighter pilot held captive by the Islamic State group, a day after a video purportedly showed the militants beheading a Japanese hostage.

The fates of the pilot, Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh, and Japanese journalist Kenji Goto previously had been linked. The video of the beheading made no mention of the pilot, raising fears for the lieutenant's life.

Islamic State group last week demanded the release of Sajida al-Rishawi, an al-Qaida prisoner who faces death by hanging for her role in triple hotel bombings in Jordan in 2005.

Jordan offered last week to release her for the pilot, but the militants didn't say at the time if they were considering such a deal. An audio message last week, purportedly from the Islamic State group, only said the pilot would be killed if al-Rishawi was not released Thursday.

The deadline passed after Jordan said it cannot free her without proof the pilot is alive. Late Saturday, the video purportedly showing Goto's beheading was released.

Government spokesman



Members of Al-Kaseasbeh, the tribe of Jordanian pilot, Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh, who is held by the Islamic State group militants, light candles by posters with his picture and Arabic that reads, "We are all Muath"

Mohammed al-Momani told The Associated Press yesterday that "we are still ready to hand over" al-Rishawi in return for

the pilot.

Earlier, the state-run Petra news agency quoted him as saying Jordan is working to

confirm the pilot "is still alive and ensure his release and return to Jordan."

Al-Momani also said his

country spared no effort to free Goto.

Relatives of the pilot, meanwhile, said they want the government to be more open with them about efforts to free him.

"We want the government to tell us the truth," said Yassin Rawashda, an uncle of the pilot. He said the family is not demanding a full briefing, but wants to hear if release efforts are headed "in a positive direction or not."

The pilot's father, Safi al-Kaseasbeh, said he is worried, but still is putting his faith in the government.

"Of course, I'm concerned," he said by telephone. "This is my son. I'm always concerned about him and any development makes me more concerned."

Jordan is reportedly conducting indirect, behind-the-scenes negotiations through tribal leaders in neighboring Iraq. **AP**

GREECE

Tsipras tamps down rhetoric, vows to pay off debts

A day after Greece appeared on a collision course with its creditors, new radical left Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has tamped down the rhetoric by vowing to pay off debts and not act unilaterally.

Tsipras sought to repair relations with Greece's creditors ahead of a diplomatic push to win support for his economic program, as euro area officials said they're looking for concessions from the new government.

Greece will repay its debts to the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund and reach a deal "soon" with the euro-area nations that funded most of the country's financial rescue, Tsipras said in a statement e-mailed to Bloomberg News on Saturday.

"The deliberation with our European partners has just begun," he said. "Despite the fact that there are differences in perspective, I am absolutely confident that we will soon manage to reach a mutually beneficial agreement, both for Greece and for Europe as a whole."

Bond yields surged on Friday after Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis said the new



The shadow of Eurogroup chairman Jeroen Dijsselbloem is cast on a wall as Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras waits to greet him during their meeting in Athens

government will turn its back on the rescue program that allowed Greece to pay pensions and public wages for the past five years in exchange for a punishing regime of spending cuts that wiped out 25 percent of its economy.

Jeroen Dijsselbloem, chairman of the euro area finance ministers' group, said he welcomed the prime minister's comments. Their divisions had been laid bare during a meeting in Athens on Friday.

"It is now up to the Greek government to determine its position on how to move forward," Dijsselbloem said in a text message. "Further decisions will be taken jointly in the Eurogroup in the coming weeks."

The danger for Tsipras, who took won power in a

Jan. 25 election, is that both the country's banks and the government could be left without funding. Ending the bailout program could see Greek banks effectively excluded from ECB liquidity operations and the government is still shut out of international markets. Former Prime Minister Antonis Samaras said last month the government may run short of financing as early as March.

"Europe will continue to show solidarity with Greece, as well as other countries particularly affected by the crisis, if these countries undertake their own reforms and savings efforts," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in an interview with Hamburger Abendblatt. **AP/Bloomberg**

NIGERIA

Islamic extremists launch new attack on Maiduguri

Haruna Umar, Maiduguri

ISLAMIC extremists attacked Maiduguri, the biggest city in northeast Nigeria from four fronts overnight with the crescendo of warfare — booming cannon and whooshing rockets — continuing yesterday, witnesses said.

The third attack in a week on Maiduguri comes amid unconfirmed reports that a Chadian jet fighter helped bomb the extremists out of Gamboru on Nigeria's northeast border with Cameroon. Boko Haram insurgents had held the trading center since August.

Chadian forces on Thursday liberated Malumfatori, another border town that was under the sway of Boko Haram for months.

African leaders at a summit Saturday authorized the creation of a 7,500-strong force from Nigeria and its four neighbors to confront the spreading Islamic uprising by Nigeria's home-grown Boko Haram group.

Trapped residents in Maiduguri said they could not sleep for the noise from cannon, rockets and submachine gunfire that began Saturday night.

A senior army officer said the militants were "everywhere," attacking from all four roads and were within 15 kilometers of the city of 2 million. The officer spoke on con-

dition of anonymity because he is not allowed to give information to reporters.

All exits are blocked and Maiduguri's international airport has been closed since the insurgents launched a major attack in December 2013 and destroyed five aircraft at a neighboring air force base.

Maiduguri is the birthplace of the extremist movement.

Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in May 2013 when he admitted Boko Haram had taken control of dozens of northeastern villages and towns.

Troops quickly drove the insurgents out but since then, ill-equipped and demoralized, have been losing ground.

In August, Boko Haram declared an Islamic caliphate and now holds about 130 towns and villages, according to Amnesty International.

The extremists have increased the tempo and ferocity of attacks. About 10,000 died in the past year compared to about 2,000 in the first four years of the uprising, according to the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations.

Jonathan is running for re-election in a tightly contested Feb. 14 vote. Boko Haram denounces democracy as a corrupt Western invention. **AP**

what's ON

EXHIBITION OF OIL PAINTINGS & COLLAGES
BY MARCO SZETO
TIME: 10am-7pm
UNTIL: February 18, 2015
VENUE: Dare to Dream flagship store
and art gallery, Calçada da Barra No.16 A,
Edifício San Chak, Macau
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2830 2012

HENGQIN TODAY PHOTOS AND VIDEOS
CREATIVE EXHIBITION
TIME: 12pm-7pm (Closed on Tuesdays)
UNTIL: February 8, 2015
VENUE: Ox Warehouse,
corner of Avenida Do Coronel Mesquita
and Avenida Do Almirante Lacerda
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2853 0026

MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE
TIME: 10am-6pm (Closed on Thursdays)
ADDRESS: Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen
ADMISSION: Exhibition Centre: MOP25
Planetarium (Dome/Sky Shows): MOP50
Planetarium (3D Dome/3D Sky Shows): MOP65
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0822

KOREAN ART EXHIBITION
OH YOUNG SOOK AND KIM YEON OK
TIME: 11am-7pm
UNTIL: February 15, 2015
VENUE: IAOHIN Gallery, Rua da Tercena no. 39a
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2892 1908

Offbeat

DINOSAUR NO MORE: UK MUSEUM'S
DIPPY TO BE RETIRED IN 2017

Dippy the dinosaur is being retired from London's Natural History Museum — and his fans aren't happy.

The museum announced Thursday that the 26-meter plaster skeleton, which has been on display for more than a century, will be replaced in the main hall by the

skeleton of a blue whale. Dippy is a plaster replica of a diplodocus, a dinosaur that lived in North America 150 million years ago.

The original was unearthed in Wyoming in 1899 and is housed at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie gave Britain the plaster copy in 1905 after a request from King Edward VII.

Dippy will remain on display until 2017, when a real 25-meter whale skeleton will replace it. Natural History Museum director Michael Dixon said the change was part of a 10-year overhaul of the museum, "focusing on the real and authentic."

"Much loved as Dippy is, he's a plaster cast replica of a diplodocus, and one of a number around the world," Dixon said. The news drew protest from Britons who recalled childhood visits to the museum. Some expressed outrage on Twitter using the hashtag #savedippy, and an online petition called for the dinosaur to be spared.

"Nothing can quite capture the imagination of children in the same way that dinosaurs do," said children's author James Mayhew, whose book "Katie and the Dinosaurs" was inspired by a visit to the museum.

"I would like to think there's a chance that they might reconsider" the skeleton's fate, he said. "It's a London landmark." The museum said it was looking into the possibility of sending Dippy on tour.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
17:35	Brazil Avenue (Repeat)
18:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sports
22:10	Brazil Avenue
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Documentary Serie
00:40	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

cinema

CINETEATRO

29 JAN - 4 FEB



BLACKHAT

ROOM 1

2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.45 pm

Director: Michael Mann

Starring: Chris Hemsworth, Viola Davis, Wei Tang

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 133min



NIGHTCRAWLER

ROOM 2

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Dan Gilroy

Starring: Jake Gyllenhaal, Rene Russo, Riz Ahmed, Bill Paxton

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 117min



AMERICAN SNIPER

ROOM 3

2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.45 pm

Director: Clint Eastwood

Starring: Bradley Cooper, Sienna Miller, Kyle Gallner

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 132min

MACAU TOWER

29 JAN - 4 FEB

BLACKHAT

2.30, 4.30, 7.00, 9.30 pm

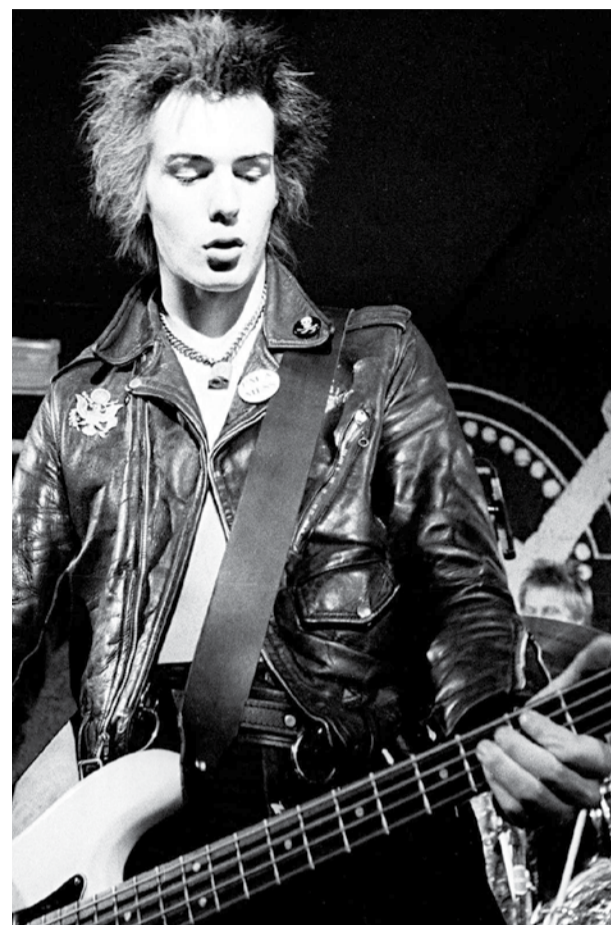
Director: Michael Mann

Starring: Chris Hemsworth, Viola Davis, Wei Tang

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 133min

this day in history

1979 Sid VICIOUS DIES
FROM DRUGS OVERDOSE

Sex Pistols' bass player Sid Vicious has died of a heroin overdose in New York. His mother, Anne Beverley, found him dead in bed with his sleeping girlfriend in an apartment in Greenwich Village this morning.

There had been a party in the flat to celebrate Mr Vicious' release on USD50,000 bail yesterday pending his trial for the murder of his former girlfriend, Nancy Spungen, last October.

The precise details of his death are unknown but party guests say Sid Vicious - real name John Simon Ritchie - took some heroin at midnight. His mother, once a registered addict, said: "He knew the smack was pure and strong and took a lot less than usual." Shortly after taking the drug Mr Vicious, 21, collapsed, went into seizure and displayed the symptoms of overdose. He revived 40 minutes later and went to bed with his girlfriend, Michelle Robinson, at about 0300 local time.

The first police officer on the scene later in the morning was Robert Zink who discovered "a syringe, a spoon and what is probably residue near the body."

The troubled punk musician - renowned for his violent behavior - had been on a detoxification, methadone program in prison, but he had developed a £40 a day habit since meeting Miss Spungen last year.

It was the second time Virgin Records - the Sex Pistols' label - had to bail out Sid Vicious. He was re-arrested after his initial bail for assaulting Patti Smith's brother, Todd, in a New York disco and had just served another 55 days in prison.

A spokesman for Virgin boss Richard Branson said: "In retrospect he was obviously far safer in jail where the temptations that ultimately killed him were not present."

Sex Pistols' manager Malcolm McClaren - who was planning a comeback for the band - also blames the person who gave him the heroin at the party.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The autopsy confirmed Sid Vicious died from an accumulation of fluid on the lungs, characteristic of heroin abuse. Anne Beverley and Malcolm McClaren were involved in a wrangle over where Vicious should be buried.

Mr McClaren thought he should be buried in London, his home town, but Vicious' wish was to be buried with Nancy Spungen in Philadelphia.

Ms Beverley scattered her son's ashes in the Jewish graveyard where Ms Spungen had been interred, without seeking the family's permission.

The Sex Pistols re-formed for their 20th anniversary in 1996 with original bassist Glen Matlock taking the place of Sid Vicious.

YOUR STARS

Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Check in with your parents — or those older adults you turn to most frequently. Your energy isn't quite right for making moves on your own, but a little advice should set you straight.

Taurus

April 20-May 20

You've got a smile on your face — or maybe just in your head, depending on your circumstances. One way or another you're happier than others think you have the right to be. What do they know?

Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

You feel a wave of thriftiness wash over you — so it may not be a great time for a date or some other time when you need to show off what you've got. A night at home on the couch isn't so bad.

Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Your energy level is off the charts today — so make sure that you're using it wisely! You may feel an urgent need to skip out of work or to find a new job, so do what feels right.

Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Your warmth is a real asset today — someone new needs to know you mean business! It's a good time for you to indulge in genuine communication with those around you. Open up!

Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Check in with that one friend you've been worrying about — your energy is exactly right to help them with what they need. You may be surprised to learn what's really going on, but it's not the end of the world.

Libra

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You need to keep your head down today — otherwise, things are sure to get difficult. It's a really good time for you to focus on just one major project, either at home or at work.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Dive deep into conversation with that one friend or colleague who always seems to know what time it is. Their energy works well with yours for now, and you can easily reach a new understanding.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You've got to show off how flexible you can be — and not just in yoga class! Give a little in negotiations, let others speak in meetings and make sure your sweetie calls the shots tonight.

Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

A new idea strikes you as well worth pursuing — and you may find it easier than ever to keep it up. Try not to worry too much about whether or not you're making progress quite yet.

Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Your routines are comforting today — even though you typically like to change them around a little each day. Try to stick to your schedule as much as you can so you can use that mental energy on other things.

Pisces

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

A wave of creative energy passes through you — so make the most of it! Whatever problem you've been facing is easier to deal with now that you can see it with fresh eyes. Go for it!

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

WEATHER

CHINA

Table of weather conditions for various Chinese cities including Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.

WORLD

Table of weather conditions for various world cities including Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, etc.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Chadic language; 5- Sesamum indicum; 10- Pond organism; 14- Hgt.; 15- Crazy as ___; 16- Posted; 17- Actress Sofer; 18- During the recent past; 20- Scores; 22- Contend; 23- Extreme; 24- Higher; 26- Grounded bird; 27- Inhabitant of Patras, Greece; 30- Abdomen; 34- Orifice of a volcano; 35- Wedding cake feature; 36- Feather scarf; 37- Horse hair; 38- It's human; 40- "Ol' Man River" composer; 41- Brian of Roxy Music; 42- South American Indian; 43- Arrested; 45- Frying pan; 47- Oakland outfit; 48- Atmosphere; 49- Hawks; 50- Brazilian dance; 53- Animal pouch; 54- Beer mug; 58- Journey; 61- Human bone, located in the arm; 62- Genuine; 63- Gymnast Comaneci; 64- Turn over; 65- Exclamation to express sorrow; 66- Toothbrush brand; 67- Destiny;

DOWN: 1- Glacier's "calf"; 2- Bread spread; 3- Singer Horne; 4- Appraise; 5- Sea arm; 6- Cricket team; 7- Polite refusal; 8- Short letter; 9- Wind dir.; 10- Institution for mentally ill; 11- Internet writing system that popularized "pwn3d" and "n00b"; 12- Growl; 13- Gillette brand; 19- Gossip; 21- Graf ___; 25- Associate; 26- Endless; 27- High points; 28- Turn; 29- Capital of Vietnam; 30- Title of a knight; 31- White-barked poplar tree; 32- Kitchen gadget; 33- Clock pointers; 35- Some like it hot; 39- Fall mo.; 40- Appropriate only for children; 42- Greek epic poem; 44- Has a bug; 46- Tabs; 47- Shrink back; 49- You ___ mouthfull; 50- Lab fluids; 51- Jump on the ice; 52- Movie-rating org.; 53- The closest one to us is the sun; 55- First name in scat; 56- What's ___ for me?; 57- Back of the neck; 59- Daughter of Cadmus; 60- Arrest



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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
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IACM 28 387 333
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Beijing Winter Olympics bid highlights skiing, hockey growth

Christopher Bodeen, Chongli

CLAD in neon-green from head to toe, Chinese snowboarder He Qiang is part of a growing cohort of middle-class enthusiasts in a country with little tradition of winter sports but that is now seeking to host the 2022 Winter Olympics.

The 28-year-old escapes his office job in the Chinese capital for the skiing mecca of Chongli, nestled in mountains near the Great Wall where Beijing hopes to stage Nordic skiing and other events in its bid to become the first city to hold both winter and summer Olympics.

"Snowboarding is just such an awesome feeling," He said, as a rare snow storm swirled around him and frigid wind gusts whistled along the edges of his ski lift's wind shield. "I can only imagine how much faster that will grow if we win the Winter Olympics."

He says more friends are joining him on the three-hour bus ride to the sprawling Genting Resort with its 70 kilometers of trails is one of three key sites proposed to hold the games. Work has already begun on a high-speed rail line that will reduce travel time from Beijing's northern suburbs to just 50 minutes.

Victory for Beijing would mean overcoming early concerns over the region's general lack of natural snow and its chronic air pollution. Once considered an outlier as host, Beijing now appears to be the front-runner following the withdrawal of other contenders and a thoroughly well prepared bid effort.

Almaty, Kazakhstan, is the only remaining contender after cities in Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Norway and other countries dropped out.

"I believe the International Olympic Committee is looking for a safe, reliable and risk-free city. I think this city of Beijing meets those conditions," said Zhang Jiandong, Beijing's vice mayor and vice president of the bid committee.

Beijing's success in the 2008 Summer Olympics, strong government and public support and its pre-existing infrastructure make it ideal, Zhang said.

Olympic inspectors will visit in March to survey the city's three clusters of facilities, each with their own athletes' village and media center.

Beijing says its bid closely aligns with the International Olympic Council's 2020 goals for a more frugal, more athlete-oriented games whose legacy



A snowboarder walks past migrant workers near a hotel under construction next to a ski slope at the Chongli ski resort in Hebei province where Nordic skiing, ski jumping, and other outdoor Olympic events are proposed to be held for Beijing's 2022 bid

Victory for Beijing would mean overcoming early concerns over the region's general lack of natural snow and its chronic air pollution

will live on with robust sports programs and continuing use of venues. In all, the city plans to spend USD3.9 billion on infrastructure and operations, while Zhang said substantial private sector investment and sponsorships will allay further costs.

That's a tiny fraction of the \$51 billion Russia spent on the Sochi games and much closer to the \$3.5 billion to \$7.5 billion budgeted for the 2018 Winter Olympics in the South Korean resort city of Pyeongchang.

Originally, Beijing had been considered a long shot for hosting the games because both Pyeongchang and Tokyo, which is hosting the 2020 Summer games, are in Asia. But all that changed when several European bids dropped out over cost concerns or after voters rejected them in referendums.

The IOC will announce the winner at its July meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Holding the games would provide greater impetus for reducing Beijing's notorious air pollution, said Fang Li, vice director of the city's environmental protection bureau.

By 2022, Beijing plans to reduce its annual coal consumption from 19 million to just 5 million tons, while stricter standards have already reduced automobile emissions by almost a quarter, despite the addition of 2.6 million cars since the 2008 games, Fang said.

"Preparing for the games can only accelerate these efforts," Fang said.

While winter sports are relatively new to China, the country has been making up for lost time. Already a top medal earner in the summer games, China won its first Winter Olympic medals in 1992, and has racked up a total of 12 golds in skating and freestyle skiing. It's now set its sights on ice hockey, with Beijing counting 1,500 players in its 97 youth teams.

Among those participants is 12-year-old goalie Gao Yuhong, whose parents introduced him to hockey five years ago to help toughen him up.

"I really love this sport," Gao says after a practice at the city's Capital Gymnasium Rink featuring aspiring players as young as 6. "I find it really hard to take when I'm not able to play. If at

all possible, I want to play in the NHL someday."

China's rising middle and upper classes have also taken to skiing with a vengeance, with more than two dozen ski resorts within driving range of Beijing receiving up to 4 million visitors annually, according to official figures. The resorts employ thousands and generate tens of millions of dollars in hotel accommodation, lift tickets and equipment sales each season.

As it did with the Summer Games, China plans to make use of foreign expertise, by sending aspiring skiers to Austria, New Zealand and the United States, said Ma Shi, who heads the Flower Ski School, located inside Chongli's Winter Olympics

Almaty, Kazakhstan, is the only remaining contender after cities in Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Norway and other countries dropped out

museum.

"We're not there yet, but a lot of effort will be expended in the next four years," Ma said.

A major concern for Beijing's bid is the lack of natural snow in the mountains outside Beijing, which receives a meter or less per season.

To compensate, existing resorts use an estimated 1 million tons of water per year to make snow, and games organizers say rivers and reservoirs will provide adequate supplies.

Organizers claim upward of 95 percent of the Chinese support holding the games and conversations with residents of Chongli and Yanqing seem to bear out those numbers.

Politically, Beijing's 2022 bid stands to be far less contentious than the one for 2008, when complaints were lobbed over everything from relocation of city residents to China's policies in Tibet. That's largely a result of the lower profile of the winter event, as well as a sense of been-there, done-that, said Brownell.

"I think that a 2022 Winter Games would have less of a domestic and international impact than the 2008 Games did," said Susan Brownell, a visiting professor at Heidelberg University and author of a book on the 2008 Olympics.

"China already had its Olympic coming-out party," she said, "and is now seen as a member of the world community in a way that it wasn't previously." AP

opinion

Insight
 Paulo Barbosa



THE MALDIVES IS HERE

Reading a feature story about the rising number of Chinese tourists in the Maldives (a group of atolls in the Indian Ocean, south-southwest of India) reminded me of the song "Haiti" and its curious refrain: "O Haiti é aqui/O Haiti não é aqui" (Portuguese original, translatable into English as "Haiti is here/Haiti is not here").

Created by the prodigious Brazilian musicians Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil for their album *Tropicália 2* (1993), it was intended to show that racism, poverty, indiscriminate violence and high crime rates were common features to the Caribbean nation island and to Brazil. So, in a way, Haiti was just around the corner from Brazil, or at least from some parts of it.

Bringing the metaphor closer to home, I would say that the Maldives is here. According to the Maldives Ministry of Tourism, 400,000-plus Chinese are expected to visit the tiny country (298 square kilometers, ten times the size of Macau) this year. In 2014 around 363,000 Chinese visited the Maldives, 9.7 per cent more than in 2013 and 24 times more than a decade earlier. Chinese tourists benefit from direct flights and free visas on arrival.

As a result, the nation's tourism industry is struggling to cater to Chinese customers who, according to a South China Morning Post report, "have developed a reputation as unusual tourists, avoiding the sun and spending little during their stays."

American entrepreneur George Weinmann pointed out to the SCMP that he predicts many more Chinese visitors to the Maldives in the coming years. "The Maldives now has 1.2 million tourists in total. Imagine when we will have 1.2 million Chinese coming here [per year]," he said. "The question then will be how to deal with those numbers."

A similar set of questions applies to Macau: How do we deal with the rising number of visitors while maintaining the quality of their experience? How to avoid making residents feel like their city is being hijacked during certain festive seasons? And how do we prevent Macau from losing its special character, recognized by UNESCO as world heritage?

The Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) predicts a five percent growth in the number of tourists visiting town during Chinese New Year. The same percentage growth was announced for 2015, following the 31.5 million visitors in 2014.

The strategy to deal with the growth of tourists seems to be off the cuff, with little evidence of a long term plan.

In a recent conference to review the tourism sector's performance and announce plans for this year, MGTO said that it will be launching four new walking tour routes shortly before CNY, revamping the Tourism Activities Centre, and developing other tourism facilities. Does anyone believe that any of these measures will reduce the pressure caused by excessive numbers of visitors?

The authorities sure don't. The police, cooperating with MGTO, announced "crowd management" measures in the central area during CNY, perhaps scared by the fatal stampede that occurred in Shanghai shortly before the New Year's countdown.

It's good that the MGTO director Helena de Senna Fernandes has announced that a master plan for tourism development will be commissioned to a private institution following a public tender (at least 10 local and overseas companies have purchased the bidding document), but I would like to see the authorities taking concrete steps to control the flow of tourists. Macau is much smaller than the Maldives and has around thirty times more visitors. There's a physical limit for everything. Authorities (the question largely surpasses MGTO's powers to answer) should be concerned with quality, instead of numbers.

Going back to the song "Haiti", I paraphrase: "Think of the Maldives. Pray for the Maldives. The Maldives is here."

THE BUZZ SUMPTUOUS SEASIDE HOTEL SELLS FOR RECORD-SHATTERING USD360M

An exceedingly opulent seaside resort in Southern California has sold for an eye-popping USD360 million. That price tag for the Montage Laguna Beach — which comes to \$1.4 million per room — "shattered the price barrier for California hotels by a wide margin," hotel consultant Alan Reay of Atlas Hospitality told the Los Angeles Times (<http://lat.ms/1LrB4t2>) on Friday.

Only the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai in Hawaii and the Waldorf Astoria in New York sold for more per room in the U.S. The historic Hotel Coronado in San Diego County sold for more than \$1 million per room. Chicago real estate investment trust Strategic Hotels and Resorts Inc. bought the Montage from Ohana Real Estate Investors of Redwood City. Montage Hotels & Resorts will stay on as operator.

TENNIS

Djokovic beats Murray to win 5th Australian Open title



Danielle Rossingh

NOVAK Djokovic beat Andy Murray in the Australian Open final to move within one title of the men's record six championships at the season-opening tennis event.

The top-ranked Serb defeated Britain's Murray, 7-6 (7-5), 6-7 (4-7), 6-3, 6-0 at Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne. He's now one shy of Roy Emerson, the holder of a men's record six Australian championships.

Djokovic's eighth major victory ties him with Andre Agassi, Jimmy Connors, Ivan Lendl, Fred Perry and

Ken Rosewall. The only Grand Slam that remains missing on Djokovic's resume is the French Open.

Murray has now lost four Australian Open finals,

three to Djokovic and one to Roger Federer. Djokovic has 16 wins in 24 meetings with the sixth-seeded Murray. The 27-year-olds are a week apart in age, and their rivalry dates back to their junior days. They first played at an event in France where they were 11, with Murray winning.

Murray will move to No. 4 in the rankings of the ATP World Tour tomorrow, while Djokovic keeps his hold on the post of the world's best male tennis player. With Federer at No. 2 and Rafael Nadal at No. 3 when the rankings are published tomorrow, that means the men dubbed the "Big Four" are back at the top of rankings.

With Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland winning in Australia last year, and Croatia's Marin Cilic taking the U.S. Open title, a changing of the guard at the top of men's tennis had seemed imminent.

The victory in Australia is Djokovic's second major title under the guidance of three-time Wimbledon champion Boris Becker. Djokovic also won Wimbledon, edging Federer. **Bloomberg**

SERENA WILLIAMS DEFEATS SHARAPOVA

SERENA WILLIAMS battled through illness to beat Maria Sharapova in the finals of the Australian Open to win her 19th major singles tennis title. Williams, struggling with a virus, defeated Sharapova, 6-3, 7-6 (7-5) at Rod Laver Arena in the first women's final between the No. 1 and

No. 2 seeds in Melbourne since 2004. It's her sixth title at the season's opening Grand Slam. "Growing up, I wasn't the richest but I had a rich family in spirit and support," Williams told the crowd after she received her sixth Australian Open trophy from former winner Martina Navratilova.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Xinhua/Wang Jianwei



Tourists pose for photos in front of a snow sculpture at the Sun Island International Snow Sculpture Art Expo in Harbin, capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, Jan. 31.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	80-110 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	80-110 Moderate
Ambient	70-100 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

USA-HK A Hong Kong businessman is charged with breaking into a northwestern Montana home after getting drunk at a wedding and causing extensive damage in a case a judge says "reads like a 'Hangover' movie." Sheriff's deputies responding to a report of a naked intruder at a residence found food strewn across the kitchen, a frying pan heating "some sort of wretched, mysterious substance" on the stove, urine-soaked formalwear in the living room and flooding from a damaged water line. Guneet Banga was found naked and asleep in the bedroom early on Sept. Investigators learned that Banga had attended a wedding a few houses away and apparently, while intoxicated, mistakenly broke into someone else's house to get some sleep.

SYRIA The Islamic State group acknowledges for the first time that its fighters have been defeated in the Syrian town of Kobani and vows to attack the town again. An Associated Press video from inside the town shows widespread destruction, streets littered with debris and abandoned neighborhoods.

IRAQ When Islamic State militants invaded the Central Library of Mosul this month, they loaded about 2,000 books — children's stories, poetry, philosophy and volumes on sports, health, culture and science — into pickup trucks. Only Islamic texts were left behind. The rest? "They will be burned," a militant told residents.

VATICAN CITY A new Vatican outreach initiative to women hit a sour note before it even got off the ground: The sexy blonde on its Internet promo video came under such ridicule that it was quickly taken down. But the program is going ahead, and an inaugural meeting this week will study women's issues in ways that are utterly new for the Holy See.

USA-TIBET President Barack Obama and the Dalai Lama will be at the National Prayer Breakfast this week in Washington, the first time the two men have been together in nearly a year. While the president and the Tibetan spiritual leader could have a chance encounter at the event Thursday, the White House played down any official engagement between the two. Obama has met three times with the Dalai Lama. In each case, the meetings prompted objections from the Chinese government, which has branded the Dalai Lama an anti-Chinese separatist.