



### MACAU PLAYS ROLE IN REBUILDING PHILIPPINE SCHOOL

Local architects and students presented proposals for the reconstruction of school buildings destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan

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### SHELDON ADELSON SHARES INSIGHTS WITH LOCAL STUDENTS

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### WYNN MACAU FALLS ON EARNINGS

Wynn Macau's earnings missed estimates. The company confirmed yesterday that the opening of the Wynn Palace will be delayed

P5 GAMING

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## WORLD BRIEFS



**USA** A crowded commuter train slammed into a sport utility vehicle on the tracks at a suburban New York crossing and burst into flames, killing seven people and seriously injuring nearly a dozen, authorities said. The collision involving a Metro-North Railroad train and a Jeep Cherokee happened Tuesday evening in Valhalla, about 32 kilometers north of New York City.

**CHINA** Ten people, including four children, were killed in an accident involving a minibus in southern China yesterday, also the first day for the peak travel season centered on the Chinese New Year, the official Xinhua News Agency said. Xinhua said another three people were seriously hurt in the accident in the southern Chinese city of Meizhou.

**INDONESIA**'s government is preparing to execute eight drug smugglers, including seven foreigners, an official said Tuesday. The spokesman for the attorney general's office, Tony Tribagus Spontana, said two Australians, Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan, are among the foreigners. He did not provide the others' nationalities, but the attorney general earlier told Parliament that they are from Brazil, Nigeria, France, Ghana and the Philippines.

**THAILAND** Authorities in Thailand have issued arrest warrants for two suspects believed linked to a pair of small bomb blasts outside a luxury shopping mall in downtown Bangkok over the weekend that wounded one person.

More on backpage

# Plane crashes into river in Taiwan, killing 25

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# MSAR plays role in rebuilding school in the Philippines

Brook Yang

**FIFTEEN** months have passed since Typhoon Haiyan swept over the Philippines, yet the many buildings it destroyed are still waiting to be rebuilt, according to Ms Lilybeth Deapera, the newly appointed Philippine Consul General to Macau.

In a design workshop, concluded at the Center for Architecture and Urbanism this week, the diplomat listened to the presentation of different designs, jointly proposed by local architects and students, for the reconstruction of school buildings.

"I'm really interested to see how this project moves forward, because it will definitely help the people of the island of Capiz. And I'm really interested to know how the students and architects will devise a way by which they can improve the classroom," she told the Times.

"I was really amazed by the imagination of the students, and I'm really grateful that they volunteered to participate in this project. That means there's really an interest, and interest is not something that you can force," she said.

The two-day workshop gathered fifteen students from the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) and local high schools. They collaborated with several USJ faculties and architects from the



Architecture Sans Frontières Macau (ASF-M) to explore different ideas for a two-classroom building reconstruction plan.

"The best ideas don't always come from the most mature professionals, sometimes children or people without specific knowledge may suggest interesting ideas," explained Diogo Teixeira, senior lecture at USJ and a coordinator of the project.

The building is part of a school that serves 186 kindergarten and elementary students located in the Punta Cogon barangay of the Philippines' Capiz Island. Architects expect that it will be reconstructed with the best solution and enough funds from the support of the Macau community.

"Ideally we would like to start construction in May. This is ac-

tually a fast process, so the idea will be to probably open for the next school year in the Philippines that's starting in June or July," said Mr Teixeira.

The workshop was aimed at improving the quality of design of the school building upon the standard design that's issued by the Philippine government.

"Sometimes the standard design of a project is much concerned with economy and functionality, but people also need other elements, sometimes just a small detail can [make a difference]," he said.

The other objective, according to the coordinator, was to "integrate ethical and social values in architecture."

"That's not something that can be added later, but must be part

of the design process. We think it's important for our students to be ethically and socially concerned," he stressed, "and it's important to learn by doing. The challenge of having a real world problem to solve is much more interesting and motivating for the students; while in comparison an academic exercise will never be built."

Architectural shape, efficiency and comfort, and the idea of playfulness were respectively emphasized in the workshop presentations. Suggestions for adding in playful elements such as crawling pipelines and climbing walls also drew the audience's attention.

"They are very imaginative, creative. But I'm more on the practical side, so I hope they will be able to

combine the playfulness with the practical side like water, entrainment and safety," she told the Times. "All the questions could be addressed properly. I hope they will be able to build it."

The reconstruction project was initially proposed by a group of Christians in Macau when they saw what was happening in the Philippines after the typhoon in November 2013. Churches, hospitals and schools were among the most in need of reconstruction.

"We are part of the group and we decided that we had to do something, we cannot just cross arms and stay here waiting for someone else to do it," said Mr Teixeira. "We decided to focus on schools because that's more related with the future of the younger generation."

"We think it will reach more of the population and more communities, since schools are the base of all development of a country," added Sergio Spencer, an architect from the non-profit organization ASF-M. According to Spencer, the cost for the reconstruction plan is estimated to be between MOP400,000 and MOP500,000. As a next step, some fundraising activities may be put on the agenda.

Reconstruction of the chosen school is regarded as a pilot project, said Mr Spencer, as they intend to extend support to other schools, and "eventually to other countries."

"It's also for promoting competence for people in Macau to provide humanitarian aid," he added, "because usually Macau is generous - but just sending the money for other parties to take the action."

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW IN TOMORROW'S MDT

## Take the risk, says Adelson

**SHELDON** Adelson, Chairman and CEO of Las Vegas Sands Corp., is currently making a visit to Macau before becoming Sands China CEO. In an exclusive interview with MDT/Macau Inc, Adelson lays out his view for the future of Macau, which, he says, should do more of what it is already doing - diversifying into non-gaming industries such as MICE, shopping and entertainment - which is what his company has

been doing since the first day he set foot in Macau.

The challenge, Adelson says, is for the other concessionaires to follow his lead and invest more into the diversification of the economy. "We originated non-gaming development," he says in the interview, which will be published in full in tomorrow's MDT. "Less than 3% of our floorspace is devoted to gaming. We built a meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions industry

here. We built a 15,000-seat arena when no one else would. We put Macau on the map as a shopping destination. Now, everyone else needs to do more. Going forward, no one should be allowed to have more than 5% of their floorspace for gaming."

Having just released impressive fourth-quarter and annual results, with Ebitda up more than 11% in 2014 - despite the slowdown in gaming revenues in the second half - one



might expect Adelson to be gloating about the contribution of non-gaming revenues to the bottom line. But it's not about vindication, he says. It's about doing what is right. It's

about taking care of employees, customers, and the community. And it's about doing business in a moral way - which includes focusing on strengthening regulatory compliance.

When Sands China is finished building out The Parisian in 2016, as well as the St Regis Tower at Sands Cotai Central, the company will have put around USD13bn into the ground here in Macau. The point is not, however, how much that is, but what it has been spent on, Adelson says. "We don't believe the tourism industry is going to stop here. We believe the cycle will turn, and the business will come back. It's all about how much risk one is prepared to take [on that assumption]. Some people don't like to take risk. I do. I took the risk back when Cotai was nothing." **AL**

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## GAMING | SHELDON ADELSON

# High rollers 'below the radar' until corruption 'witch-hunt' levels off

Catarina Pinto

**V**IP and premium players are staying "below the radar" until the Chinese government levels off its current crackdown on corruption, according to Sheldon Adelson, chairman and CEO of Las Vegas Sands Corp.

"They're staying below the radar until the Chinese government says 'we are not hunting down potentially corrupt people,' because high rollers... they say they will stay low and won't be conspicuous in their spending habits until the witch hunt – whatever it's called – until the crackdown on corruption levels off," Mr Adelson told an audience of students at the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) yesterday.

IFT invited Mr Adelson to share his insights into the hospitality and tourism industries, and to provide a glimpse into his own experience of turning his company into a leading global developer of destination properties.

Asked to comment on the decline in Macau's casino revenue and how it could potentially harm the city's economy, the Las Vegas Sands chairman recalled that the most popular explanation for Macau's gaming revenue slowdown has been the Chinese government's anti-graft campaign.

"People blame it on the crackdown on corruption in mainland China. Depends who you talk to. Steve Wynn, my friend and competitor, says that the VIP players jumped into their foxholes and I say that they stayed below the visibility radar because, whether [or not] they're legitimate business people that are making millions of dollars, they don't want to come in and be ostentatious," he stated.

Mr Adelson recalled that visitation to Macau has not declined over the past months. But it doesn't mean "every person that came in is what we call here a VIP player that could spend a large amount of money in each visit."

It's not just VIP players who have been avoiding spending large sums of money in Macau, according to the Las Vegas Sands chairman. Premium mass players – who Mr Adelson says can usually bet between USD5,000 to USD100,000 – have not been spending as much as they did



before. "A lot of those people are laying low as well, because they don't want the government seeing them spending what they think are large sums of money," he recalled.

Nevertheless, Mr Adelson is confident that Macau's gaming revenue will see brighter days in the near future: "Everything in life is cyclical. Night follows day, day follows night; and recession follows expansion, expansion follows recession...this too will pass, and this too is cyclical."

Macau's casino revenue slumped for the eighth consecutive month in January – the longest losing streak on record. The city's total gross gaming revenue fell 17.4 percent to MOP23.7 billion last

month, according to the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau. Analysts are forecasting weaker takings over the Chinese New Year holiday this month, Bloomberg reported.

When asked about the development of Macau's hospitality industry, Mr Adelson spoke of his experience in the MICE business, which he said can help hotels to increase their occupancy rate during the week and over weekends.

The Las Vegas Sands CEO acknowledged that he favors the integrated resort model, which combines a number of facilities and different purposes. "I like the idea of an integrated resort because all my life I've been changing the

status quo. First of all I've got to identify what the status quo in the industry is; if the status quo is only to target and address business travellers and you have no other way to fill up the weekends... my approach to it – because I was in that business – is what's called MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions)," he reiterated.

"I rely upon the MICE business because I was in the MICE business and I realized the synergies with the hospitality industry," he added.

Mr Adelson said he's been an entrepreneur since he was 12 years old, having developed dozens of businesses throughout his life. "I'm probably stuck with an attention deficit

disorder; I lose my patience very quickly and I want to go into something else. Entrepreneurs want to accomplish things; it's not just about making money," he said.

He has been in the convention and exhibition business since the 1970s. Looking to build a convention and exhibition center, he bought The Sands Hotel in Las Vegas in the 1980s. "I wanted the hotel to have synergies with the exhibition business," he told IFT students, adding that later on he "tore down The Sands to put up a property called The Venetian."

Today, Las Vegas Sands Corp operates various casino resorts and convention centers in the U.S., Singapore, and Macau, through its subsidiary Sands China Ltd. About 250 students and faculty members attended yesterday's session with Mr Adelson, IFT reported in a press release.

## SANDS CHINA PAYS BONUS TO TEAM MEMBERS

**ON FEBRUARY 16**, Sands China Ltd. will pay a bonus to eligible full-time team members, "rewarding their contributions toward the company's ongoing success and achievements." Over 27,000 employees, who have each completed at least one year of full service, will be granted a bonus worth at least one month's salary, said the operator in a press release. "The company has earned nearly 100 awards and accolades in 2014 and the success is directly attributable to our dedicated staff, who are key in our Era of Excellence," said Edward Tracy, president and CEO of Sands China Ltd.

## Promotions at Sands based on 'talent and ability to manage'

**C**HAIRMAN and CEO of Las Vegas Sands Corp., Sheldon Adelson, promises that his company, through subsidiary Sands China Ltd., remains committed to hiring locals for their Macau properties. At a sharing session with students from the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) yesterday, Mr Adelson also recalled that promotions to managerial posts will only be granted to those who show talent and ability to manage other people.

"We want to promote local people but you have to bring the talent and the expertise to be able to manage other people," he said, stressing that those wishing to be promo-

ted to higher posts within the company need "to learn how to be a good manager."

Asked by an IFT student about the number of locals his company recruits, Sheldon Adelson said that 72 percent of team members are from Macau. However, he recalled how difficult it is to hire professionals from different fields in Macau, due to its low unemployment rate.

"The problem is there's a 1.7 percent unemployment rate here. There's nobody to hire. We are looking for people for construction and operation for the Parisian. We need thousands more," he stressed.

Asked about what kind of attributes one

should have to build success, Mr Adelson said promptly: "willingness to take a risk." He concluded by saying, "one is the ability to manage other people and get other people to follow you. I want to encourage my employees to take chances because without taking a chance and without embracing risk, you won't make progress. That's how you become a good manager: you set the example of doing something right."

The gaming tycoon will take over as Sands China Ltd. chief executive officer on March 6, the company announced last month. He will succeed current CEO Edward Tracy, who recently announced his retirement.

# US judge rules evidence tainted by FBI ruse in Vegas case

Ken Ritter, Las Vegas

FEDERAL investigators already knew about a wealthy Malaysian businessman when his USD48 million Gulfstream jet touched down in neon-lit Las Vegas last June, days after his arrest and release in Macau on allegations he headed an operation that took illegal bets on World Cup soccer games.

FBI and Nevada Gaming Control Board agents believed Wei Seng "Paul" Phua was a high-ranking member of an organized crime syndicate called the 14K Triad, according to an FBI case agent's testimony.

They thought Phua was moving his illegal Internet bet-taking operation from the Chinese gambling enclave 40 miles from Hong Kong to high-roller guest suites at Caesars Palace on the Las Vegas Strip. But investigators couldn't get inside the layers of security in a part of Caesars Palace usually reserved for presidents and celebrities.

Federal prosecutors in Las Ve-



Wei Seng Phua walks into federal court in Las Vegas

gas say they think the operation handled about USD13 million in illegal bets before Phua, 50, his son, Darren Wai Kit Phua, 23, and six other people were arrested July 13.

But a judge ruled Monday that evidence seized in the case should be thrown out because it was obtained through deception — a first-of-its-kind ruse to disrupt Internet service during satellite feeds of soccer matches, then have agents pose as repair technicians to get inside.

"This case raises the difficult question of how far law enforce-

ment may go in engaging in deceptive conduct to gather evidence of criminal activity in places where citizens have a reasonable expectation of privacy," U.S. Magistrate Judge Peggy Leen wrote in one of two rulings.

The agents knew several people they believed were associated with the Phuas had asked to add dedicated high-speed Internet service, additional computer equipment and extra TV monitors in the posh 8,000-square-foot villas, according to testimony.

State Gaming Control Agent

Ricardo Lopez said he was sure it was an international Internet gambling boiler room. The agents later reported to a judge that they saw Paul Phua receive a computer message saying "good luck on the hedge bet" from an illegal Asian online wagering website.

They said Darren Phua quickly switched his laptop screen from a log-in screen for an illegal sports wagering site to Google when he noticed someone was looking. But FBI Agent Minh Pham should have reported that the reason agents knew that was because of the ruse used to get inside, the judge said.

Leen said the investigators violated the occupants' Constitutional rights when they disregarded a butler's instructions to remain in a service pantry while delivering a laptop computer and entered other parts of the suite.

Her 32-page report, dated Friday, said the trial judge should throw out evidence obtained by deceiving the federal magistrate judge who issued the search warrant.

Leen's other recommendation, dated Monday, was more nuanced. It said investigators didn't violate the Phuas' right to be free from unreasonable search, because the Phuas consented to having someone come in their hotel suite to fix an Internet outage.

Leen acknowledged that the Phuas and others in the room didn't know the two "technicians" were FBI and Gaming Control agents wearing lapel cameras.

But, she said, "the Phuas surrendered their privacy to what they exposed to the view" of the two men invited to work in the suite.

Defense attorneys have suggested that references to the ruse were deliberately scrubbed from investigative files and FBI reports turned over to the defense. It came to light when the defense was given the lapel camera video.

The Phuas have pleaded not guilty to charges of transmission of wagering information and operating an illegal gambling business, which, combined, carry the possibility of up to 14 years in prison.

Defense attorney David Chesnoff said Monday that the entire case should be dismissed. "This is a complete repudiation of law enforcement officers not following the Constitution and fully informing judges of their activities," he said. **AP**

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# Wynn Macau falls on earnings, delayed opening of Cotai resort

Stephanie Wong and Christopher Palmeri

**W**YNN Macau Ltd. dropped in Hong Kong trading yesterday after the company's earnings missed estimates and said its new casino resort in the city would be delayed.

The Macau casino operator fell 1.2 percent to HKD21.55. The decline came after shares of its parent, Wynn Resorts Ltd., dropped as much as 5.6 percent to USD147.05 in extended trading after results were announced. The stock had gained 6.1 percent to \$155.80 at the close yesterday in New York.

Wynn Macau reported fourth-quarter adjusted property earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization fell 36 percent to \$241.2 million from a year earlier. That compared with the \$249 million median estimate of

## Wynn Palace won't be finished in time for the Lunar New Year in Feb 2016 because of the timing of permits

nine analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News.

Casino operators in Macau, the world's largest gambling market, have seen a sharp decline in play by high rollers in recent months. Chinese President Xi Jinping has been cracking down on corruption on the mainland, a move that has caused the wealthy there to hold back on conspicuous consumption.

"We think negative earnings

revision will continue; management sounded downbeat on near-term outlook for Macau," Morgan Stanley analysts led by Praveen Choudhary wrote in a note yesterday. The resort's delay was also a concern, they said.

Wynn Resorts - the company founded by billionaire Steve Wynn - is building a \$4.1 billion resort on Macau's Cotai Strip. The company was told this week by its construction contractor that the project won't be finished in time for the Lunar New Year in February 2016 because of the timing of permits. Wynn said the company hasn't been able to hire all the construction workers it wanted.

"I do believe that for all of Chinese businessmen, there is at the moment a bit of uncertainty as to what the future will hold, because so much of everything in China depends upon the policy of the central government," Wynn, the company's chairman and chief executive officer, said on a con-

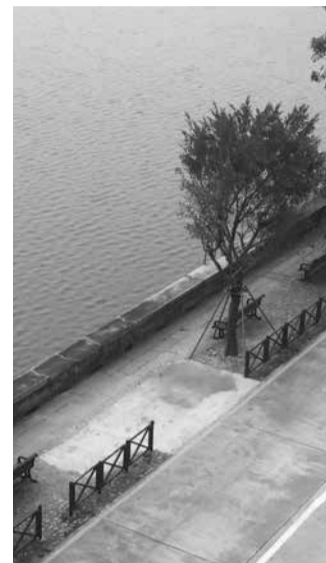
ference call after the earnings announcement.

Wynn Resorts reported fourth-quarter profit and sales that missed analysts' estimates as revenue in Macau declined. The Macau unit contributed two-thirds of the group's revenue in the fourth quarter.

Table games turnover in the VIP segment dropped 40 percent year on year to \$20.7 billion for the fourth quarter, according to a statement yesterday. Mass-table win - or revenue from mass-market gamblers - fell 15 percent to \$249 million in the quarter. The company's January mass business in Macau rose 26 percent year on year, Wynn said.

"The changes in China have had a negative effect on all of the top-end business, whether that means retail top-end like Rolex and Louis Vuitton or whether we're talking about the high-end gaming and junkets in the VIP section," Wynn said. **Bloomberg**

## Sai Van cobblestone road to be repaired



The Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) told TDM that the bureau did not lay cement on a segment of cobblestone road on the bank of Sai Van Lake. IACM acknowledged that some stones did come off from the road and promised to reinstate the cobblestones as soon as possible. The bank of the Sai Van Lake is a protected area and has been included on the heritage protection list.

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Brook Yang

MACAU PRISON

# Unknown schedule for new prison's completion

**M**ACAU Prison (EPM) has been suffering a bed space shortage, as the expected completion time for a new prison is repeatedly being postponed year after year – and now the schedule is still up in the air.

The new facility, located in Ka Ho – which will expand the current prison's capacity of 1,500 inmates up to over 2,700 – started construction in August 2010, and was initially expected to open last year.

According to EPM's senior technical consultant Lei Ka Nang, the first of the project's four stages, originally scheduled for completion two years ago, is now almost finished and undergoing an inspection and verification process.

"We expect to open bidding for the second stage within the first quarter of this year, and finish it within this year. The construction will start immediately, once we finish bidding," he added.

Construction in the first stage was delayed severely last year, as reflected in the low execution rate of the project's 2013 budget, which was under 17 percent.

"If it wasn't [for] that delay, it would be completed this year, but we never know what can occur in construction," Lei said, adding that the cause of the delay – a problem in laying the foundation – has been solved.

Nevertheless, when asked for the new prison's completion or inauguration date, or regarding EPM's requests for



a timetable, the officer kept repeating that they wish it to be "as soon as possible" without revealing anything further. The project is being handled by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT).

According to Ng Ioi On, the department head for prison affairs, EPM housed 1,211 convicted and remand prisoners, including 217 women,

at the end of last month. This total means an occupation rate of over 80 percent of the beds, which has already reached breaking point for the prison's living capacity.

Ng explained that rather than simply filling the bed spaces, inmates may need to be separated in different types of cells, under circumstances such as being convicted as felons or having sui-

dal tendencies.

Besides the shortage of bed space, a shortage of rooms to organize activities and recreation for the inmates is also driving EPM's desire to move into the yet-to-be completed facility.

Yesterday, the prison's annual Chinese New Year Party for inmates kicked off at the playground inside the Male Detention Zone. The inmates performed a talent show for guests from the Secretary for Security and media representatives, with acts such as a lion dance and magic tricks. According to Ng Ioi On, the event will span five sessions over three days, so that over 1,200 inmates can participate.

Facing an increasing number of inmates every year, the prison's shortage of manpower is recognized as a long-standing issue that has not been solved either. "There's a staff turnover every year, after all there are a lot of opportunities outside [EPM]. We have some 600 positions, but even [if we opened] the recruitment every year, there would remain a number of vacancies to fill," said the department head.

## ILLEGAL RE-ENTRY JUMPS TO NUMBER-THREE CRIME IN PRISON

**ILLEGAL RE-ENTRY** into the territory has taken the number three spot in the list of crimes committed by inmates at Macao Prison, according to data released at the end of last year. The crime has newly appeared in the prison's top ten crimes list,

accounting for 8 percent of the total 143 rankings. Meanwhile, among the prisoners' 31 nationalities, mainland Chinese make up the majority at nearly 42 percent; while those from Macau accounted for 34.4 percent of prisoners.

ENVIRONMENT

## Residents told power station emission levels meet guidelines

**C**OMPANHIA de Electricidade de Macau (CEM) says that the black smoke emissions seen at their Coloane power station by local residents are within government guidelines.

People living in the neighborhood have been raising concerns about the black smoke being discharged by CEM's Coloane A Power Station. The residents worry about the effect of the pollutants being released, but the electricity operator stresses that it is working on a new eco-friendly option. CEM representatives told journalists yesterday that emission levels meet



both EU and Macau SAR guidelines.

TDM cited Garrick Yuen, a senior engineer at Coloane A Power Station, who explained that the station's generation units run on heavy fuel oil and, as a result of the combustion process, exhaust emissions are inevitably produced but

only every time engines are turned on and off (a process that lasts for around 15 minutes).

"Once again I emphasize here that the black smoke from the diesel unit will only happen during the engines' start and stop. In normal running conditions the emission level is still un-

der the required limit. But CEM is always open to [reducing] environmental problems and we are proactively looking for a solution to minimize the impact for the environment", Garrick Yuen said.

The company also stated that it is looking to decrease the duration and occurrence of emission levels by replacing the power station's outdated diesel generators for natural gas ones. More technologically advanced engines will be working 24 hours a day, therefore improving efficiency and lowering pollutant emissions, CEM stated.

## Firefighters rescue illegal immigrant from Canal dos Patos

**A** man who allegedly attempted an illegal crossing from Zhuhai into Macau on Tuesday night has been rescued by firefighters from the Canal dos Patos (the Duck Canal).

Information from the Fire Services Bureau (CB) said that they received a report around 9 p.m. from a passerby, who claimed a man in his 30s was lying in a section of the canal outside Edificio Cheng Chong, a public housing project in Ilha Verde, screaming for help.

Upon arriving at the scene, firefighters found that the man was suffering from a waist injury. The Macau Customs Service and the Public Security Police also dispatched personnel to the scene.

CB said that the man did not have any identification documents with him. It is alleged that he was trying to cross the border into Macau illegally, and accidentally fell into the canal.

Due to the rough terrain and a fence erected on the bank of the canal, firefighters had to spend time transferring the man to a stretcher before moving him to a gate around 100 meters from the scene. He was then transported to the hospital by an ambulance.

# Chinese tycoon in deal to buy Waldorf says 'ni hao' at Harvard

**W**U Xiaohui, the head of the Chinese firm buying New York's Waldorf Astoria Hotel, told Harvard University students of his friendship with Blackstone Group LP chief executive officer Steve Schwarzman, his plans for deals around the globe - and the value of knowing how to say "ni hao."

Little known before last year's deal for the landmark property, Anbang Insurance Group Co. has transactions pending in Europe, Asia, Oceania and Africa, Chairman and Chief Executive Wu said in a question-and-answer session at a Jan. 31 Harvard recruitment event, according to a transcript posted on the People's Daily website in China yesterday. Staff members hunting for investments have "accumulated enough mileage to travel to the moon twice," Wu said.

The businessman described Schwarzman as "a good friend," citing the Blackstone head's involvement in financially supporting an institute at Beijing's Tsinghua University that has also received money from Anbang. The Blackstone-owned Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc. is selling the Waldorf to Anbang for USD1.95 billion, a deal that received U.S. regulatory approval this month.

Anbang has attracted attention for accumulating shares in companies including China Minsheng Bank Corp., whose president resigned after a media report that he was under investigation. The Beijing-based Anbang is planning an initial public offering that could raise about \$2 billion, people familiar with the matter said in November.

The businessman's talk at Harvard



spanned topics from his wish for Anbang employees around the world to speak some Chinese - at least "ni hao," the usual Chinese greeting - to his ambitions for the company to within a decade have its own firms on every continent, with listings in many nations. In pursuing deals, Anbang seeks to pay below book value for companies that generate a return on equity of more than 10 percent, Wu said, according to the transcript.

He contrasted the Waldorf purchase favorably with the cost of property in Beijing's financial district.

Anbang was founded in 2004 with shareholders including state-owned enterprises SAIC Motor Corp. and China Petroleum & Chemical Corp., known as Sinopec. The company is one of China's "largest insurance conglomerates," with assets of more than 700 billion yuan (\$112 billion) and in excess of 30,000 employees and 3,000 outlets, ac-

ording to its website.

Adding to interest in the company, Wu "has been known for his deep connection with the children of China's revolutionary veterans and leaders," the state-run China Daily reported Feb. 3. Chen Xiaolu, a son of revolutionary leader Chen Yi, describes himself as a consultant to Anbang, Caixin magazine reported in January. A spokeswoman for Anbang said she wasn't available to comment on the China Daily report and calls to the company's office weren't answered.

Anbang's buying spree has included acquiring Belgian insurer Fidea NV and Belgian banking operations of Delta Lloyd NV. In China, the firm's stakes have spanned property companies China Vanke Co. and Gemdale Corp.; China Merchants Bank Co.; and Financial Street Holdings Co., a developer of financial-district properties in Beijing. **Bloomberg**

## Toyota agrees to pay USD200m to China dealers, group says

**T**OYOTA Motor Corp. has agreed to pay 1.24 billion yuan (USD200 million) to distributors for one of its Chinese joint ventures, according to the state-backed auto dealers group.

The payments to dealers for FAW-Toyota will be made in three installments, according to Song Tao, a deputy secretary general of the China Automobile Dealers Association. The payout represents about half the 2.2 billion yuan in subsidies that the dealer's group had sought from the automaker in December to help meet costs resulting from excess inventory.

"The dealers are satisfied with the funding and so is the association and the automaker," Song said in a mobile-phone text message. Toyota China spokesman Niu Yu declined to comment and referred questions to the joint venture company, FAW-Toyota. Phone calls to FAW-Toyota's offices went unanswered.

Retailers are banding together under the dealer group to demand lower sales targets and a bigger share of profit from vehicle sales from foreign automakers including Toyota, Renault SA and Bayerische Motoren Werke AG. The protests also form part of a broader push by China's auto retailers to gain more autonomy from manufacturers, which currently dictate the number and type of cars they sell.

Toyota is contending with weaker-than-forecast deliveries in China, where it's falling further behind Volkswagen and GM. Last year, Toyota missed its goal for 1.1 million vehicle sales in the country. **Bloomberg**



### corporate bits

#### CEM INVITES MEDIA TO VISIT COLOANE POWER STATION REGARDING RECENT SMOKE APPEARANCE

In response to recent media enquiries on the appearance of black smoke at the Coloane A Power Station (CCA), CEM invited the media to visit the Power Station yesterday and provided detailed information on the root cause and relevant solutions to address the issue.

During the visit, to give an overview of the smoke causes, Garrick Yuen, Senior Engineer at CEM's Generation Department at Coloane A Power Station, introduced the generators installed in CCA and

the relevant combustion process during power generation. Garrick explained that during the combustion process, unavoidably there are exhaust emissions, especially when the engine is at start up stage, and brown or black smoke will be emitted for around 15 minutes. The occurrence and duration can be decreased with certain technology and equipment, and CEM has prepared a proposal, ready to be submitted to the Government for approval.

#### GEG CELEBRATES UPCOMING CNY BY OFFERING HAIRCUTS TO THE ELDERLY



In celebration of the upcoming Chinese New Year, Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) joined with Toni&Guy in organizing complimentary haircuts for the elderly. Five professional hairdressers volunteered their time at Galaxy Macau on Monday, with twenty-three elderly members of Macau Tung Sin Tong Charitable Society receiving free haircuts.

The Tung Sin Tong representatives who accompanied the elderly were greatly appreciative and said, "This hair-cutting event was very meaningful to us not only because our elderly [members] received new haircuts, but more importantly because they were able to feel the care and respect from the community during this festive season."

#### FOURTEEN SANDS CHINA TEAM MEMBERS AWARDED TOP VOLUNTEER AWARDS



Fourteen Sands China team members were honored with awards on International Volunteer Day 2014 for their work volunteering in the local community last December. President and Chief Executive Officer of Sands China Ltd. Edward Tracy and other top executives met with the recipients on Friday. The 14 team members received F&B vouchers as a token of appreciation from the company.

"I am proud that our team members are not only striving for the highest standard at work, but also have a strong commitment to the community," said Edward Tracy. Antonio Ramirez, Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Winnie Wong, Vice President and Assistant General Manager of Sands Cotai Central, were also in attendance to congratulate the winners.



# IMF questions sustainability of Portuguese public debt

**T**HE International Monetary Fund (IMF) questioned the sustainability of Portuguese public debt, in the face of economic weakening and relaxation of the deficit in the first post-program monitoring report, issued Friday.

The IMF forecasts the debt ratio as a percentage of GDP, despite the fact it is falling, will be 125.7 percent, whilst the government expects 123.7 percent, at a time when the economy is weakening (growth of 1.2 percent in 2015 instead of 1.5 percent) and the budget deficit will be 3.4 percent and not 2.7 percent as stated by the government.



A woman jogs by the Tagus riverbank next to the April 25th bridge in Lisbon on a foggy morning

**The IMF insists on shock treatment for public expenditure on salaries and pensions**

“Debt sustainability is based on more structural reforms to enhance external competitiveness and boost potential growth in the medium term,” but the International Monetary Fund (IMF) feels that “impending elections” are reducing the government’s ambition, but also sees a weakening of political consensus on reforms.

In the report, the IMF indicates that the Portuguese public defi-

cit will neither be 2.7 percent, as Brussels expects, or 3.3 percent, as forecast by the European Commission, but rather 3.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

The IMF insists on shock treatment for public expenditure on salaries and pensions, with the reduction or even elimination of salary supplements and recommends more layoffs and sending more staff for retraining. **MDT/Macauhub**

## ANGOLA

### Urban renewal process in two Luanda neighborhoods starts

**T**HE government of Angola will start a special program for the conversion and urban renewal of the neighbourhoods of Sambizanga and Operário in the center of Luanda, which will require the relocation of 25,000 families, the governor of Luanda Province announced Tuesday.

After a meeting of the economic committee of the Council of Ministers, Governor Graciano Domingos said that the project is intended to create better living conditions through urban renewal, giving a new image to the area by installing social and economic facilities.

The project, he added, would involve resettlement of 22,000 families from the Sambizanga area and another 3,000 from the Operário area, renewing places where “people live in precarious conditions,” and relocating them “especially out of town.”

Domingos said that the relocated families “will be given social houses that can then be finished to their own liking.” The province of Luanda has a population of 6.5 million people, according to data from the population census held in May 2014 in Angola. **MDT/Macauhub**

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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

# Beijing tightens rules on Internet use, online comments

Joe McDonald  
Business Writer, Beijing

CHINA announced yesterday that users of blogs and chat rooms will be required to register their names with operators and promise in writing to avoid challenging the communist political system, further tightening control over Internet use.

The announcement follows what technology companies say are official efforts in recent weeks to block virtual private networks that are used to circumvent China's extensive Internet filters. China has the world's biggest population of Internet users with 649 million people online but increasing censorship has chilled the popularity of social media.

Beijing has required Internet

■ **The latest announcement extends that 'real name' registration requirement to blogs, microblog services and website comment sections**



Computer users sit near a monitor display with a message from the Chinese police on the proper use of the Internet at an Internet cafe in Beijing

companies since 2012 to obtain real names of some users. But compliance was uneven and the rules failed to specify what services were covered.

The latest announcement extends that "real name" registration requirement to blogs, microblog services such as the popular Sina Weibo and website comment sections. Such settings offer many Chinese their only opportunity to express themselves in public in a society in which all media are controlled by the ruling Communist Party.

The rules also require Internet services for the first time to have users sign a contract that includes a pledge to refrain from "illegal and unhealthy" activity.

Yesterday's announcement

affirmed an earlier prohibition against posting material deemed a threat to state power or national security — terms the ruling party uses to describe opposition to communist rule. It said operators will be required to deactivate accounts of violators.

The ruling party encourages Internet use for business and education but tries to block material deemed subversive or obscene. Beijing regularly launches new censorship initiatives to respond to changes such as the growing popularity of social media.

The Cyberspace Administration of China said the latest rules are needed to combat "username chaos." In a statement, the agency said users took inappropriate online names

such as Putin and Obama, promoted "vulgar culture," committed fraud by pretending to be Communist Party officials or agitated for separatist causes.

Operators will be required to assign an employee to review and keep track of user details to ensure they comply, the agency said.

The government of President Xi Jinping has been calling on Internet companies since last year to "spread positive energy" online.

In May, Sina Corp., which operates one of China's most popular Internet platforms, said it was penalized for allowing "unhealthy and indecent content" online. Sina was fined USD815,000 and stripped of two of its licenses for Internet publication and online

transmission of audio-visual programs.

In a statement on its own Sina Weibo microblog account, Sina said it "firmly supports" the new measures. It posted instructions for users to alert censors to possible violators.

China operates the world's most extensive system of Internet monitoring and filters. It blocks access to websites abroad run by human rights and other activists groups, as well as popular services such as the Google search engine and Facebook.

Until recently, users of virtual private network, or VPN, services were able to skirt those restrictions to reach business tools operated by Google and other blocked sites. But in recent weeks, some companies that operate VPNs, which encrypt traffic to prevent censors from reading it, say tighter controls have disrupted their services.

The government has not confirmed it was responsible for the blockage. But an official of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, responding to a question about it at a Jan. 27 news conference, said, "harmful information should be managed according to Chinese laws."

Censorship also has eroded the popularity of social media such as Sina Weibo, which freelance journalists and independent commentators used to distribute news reports and essays. The number of users has declined since Beijing tightened control in 2013 over how such services could be used.

The number of microblog users as of the end of last year declined to 249 million, some 7.1 percent, or 32 million people, below 2013, according to a state-authorized research body, the China Internet Network Information Center. AP

## Gov't moves to boost lending, reverse slowdown

Joe McDonald  
Business Writer, Beijing

CHINA yesterday cut the minimum level of reserves its banks are required to hold in a new move to reverse a deepening economic slowdown.

The reduction will make more money available for lending and support small and rural enterprises, construction projects and other activity, the central bank announced.

The amount of their deposits that China's commercial lenders will be required to hold in reserve will be reduced by

at least 0.5 percent, the People's Bank of China said. The reduction for rural banks will be bigger.

Analysts expected new stimulus measures after last year's economic growth slumped to a 24-year low of 7.4 percent.

The People's Bank gave no indication how much additional money would be available for lending.

Much of China's slowdown over the past three years has been intentional and the result of the ruling Communist Party's efforts to nurture more self-sustaining growth based on domestic consumption instead

of exports and investment.

Chinese leaders have launched a series of targeted measures to prop up individual industries through higher spending on railway construction and other projects while trying to avoid a repeat of 2008's across-the-board stimulus which relied heavily on debt.

Manufacturing weakened in January, according to surveys by HSBC Corp. and a Chinese industry group. The China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing said its purchasing managers' index fell to a 28-month low. AP



A woman walks by an advertisement billboard for a new shopping mall which is under construction in Beijing

Ralph Jennings, Taipei

TAIWAN

# Crashed plane hoisted from river; 25 confirmed dead

**R**ESCUERS used a crane to hoist a wrecked TransAsia Airways plane from a shallow river in Taiwan's capital late yesterday as they searched into the night for 18 people missing in a crash that killed at least 25 others.

Flight GE235 with 58 people aboard — most of them travelers from China — banked sharply on its side shortly after takeoff from Taipei, clipped a highway bridge and then careened into the Keelung River.

Rescuers in rubber rafts pulled 15 people from the wreckage during daylight. After dark, they brought in the crane, and the death toll was expected to rise once crews were able to search through previously submerged portions of the fuselage, which came to rest a few dozen meters from the shore.

Dramatic video clips apparently taken from cars were posted online and aired by broadcasters, showing the ATR 72 propjet as it pivoted onto its side while zooming toward a traffic bridge over the river. In one of them, the plane rapidly fills the frame as its now-vertical wing scrapes over the road, hitting a vehicle before heading into the river.

Speculation cited in local media said the pilot may have turned sharply to follow the line of the river to avoid crashing into a high-rise residential area, but Taiwan's aviation authority said it had no evidence of that.

Taiwanese broadcasters repeatedly played a recording of the plane's final contact with the control tower in which the pilot called out "Mayday" three times. The recording offered no direct clues as to why the plane was in distress.

It was the airline's second French-Italian-built ATR 72 to crash in the past year. Yesterday's flight had taken off at 11:53 a.m.

## A YEAR OF DEADLY CRASHES

**LAST YEAR** was the deadliest year for air travel since 2005 globally. Malaysia Airlines lost two Boeing Co. 777s - one thought to have disappeared in the Indian Ocean, and flight MH17 presumed shot down over Ukraine. Then last month, AirAsia Bhd. lost a plane in Indonesia. The global annual toll was 884, according to safety consultant Ascend Worldwide. "An incident right after the Indonesia accident, doesn't reflect well on the region as whole and on the industry in this part of the world," Shukor Yusof, founder of aviation research firm Endau Analytics, said from Singapore. "The skies over Taiwan is going to get crowded with increased traffic from mainland China. This is an urgent issue that needs to be resolved quickly."



Emergency personnel try to extract passengers from a commercial plane after it crashed in Taipei

from Taipei's downtown Sunghshan Airport en route to the outlying Taiwanese-controlled Kinmen islands. The pilot issued the mayday call shortly after takeoff, Taiwanese civil aviation authorities said.

TransAsia director Peter Chen said contact with the plane was lost four minutes after takeoff. He said weather conditions were suitable for flying and the cause of the accident was unknown.

"Actually this aircraft in the accident was the newest model. It hadn't been used for even a year," he told a news conference. Thirty-one passengers were from China, Taiwan's tourism bureau said. Kinmen's airport is a common link between Taipei and China's Fujian province.

Taiwan's Civil Aeronautics Administration said 25 people were confirmed dead, 15 were rescued with injuries and 18 were still missing.

Wu Jun-hong, a Taipei Fire Department official who was coordinating the rescue, said the missing people were either still in the fuselage or had perhaps been pulled down the river.

"At the moment, things don't look too optimistic," Wu told reporters at the scene. "Those in the front of the plane are likely to have lost their lives."

Rescuers could be seen pulling luggage from an open plane door to clear the fuselage. Ten inflatable dinghies also searched for the missing.

As a drizzle fell around nightfall, military crews took portable bridges to the scene, where rescue workers were building docks for easier access to the wreckage. About 300 rescue personnel and members of the media stood along the banks of the narrow river.

Part of the freeway above it was littered with debris and was closed after the crash.

Relatives of the victims had not reached the scene by dusk yesterday but some were expected to arrive today, including some flying from Beijing.

The plane's wing hit a taxi on the freeway, and the driver and a passenger were injured, Chen said.

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said it had sent 165 people and eight boats to the riverside rescue scene, joining fire department rescue crews.

Another ATR 72 operated by the same Taipei-based airline crashed in the outlying Taiwan-controlled islands of Penghu last July 23, killing 48 at the end of a typhoon for reasons that are still under investigation.

ATR, a French-Italian consortium based in Toulouse, France, said it was sending a team to Taiwan to help in the investigation.

The ATR 72-600 that crashed yesterday is manufacturer's best plane model, and the pilot had 4,900 hours of flying experience, said Lin Chih-ming of the Civil Aeronautics Administration.

Greg Walden, Asia managing editor at Flightglobal magazine in Singapore, said the ATR 72-600 is the latest iteration of one of the most popular turboprop planes in the world, particularly favored for regional short-hop flights in Asia.

It has a generally good repu-

tation for safety and reliability and is known among airlines for being cheap and efficient to operate.

While it's too early to say what caused the crash, engine trouble or weight shifting were unlikely to be causes, Waldron said. Other possible factors include pilot error, weather or freak incidents such as bird strikes.

"It's too early now to speculate on whether it was an issue with the aircraft or crew," Waldron said.

The accessibility of the crash site should allow for a swift investigation, and an initial report should be available within about a month, Waldron said. **AP**

## 5 TRANSASIA-MACAU ROUTES PER WEEK

### TAIWAN-BASED CARRIER

TransAsia Airways already has a strong presence in the Macau market. The air provider, which runs frequent flights between Macau and Taipei on a daily basis, has recently seen a steady rise in its passenger volume. TransAsia currently runs three flights between Taipei and Macau a day, together with two additional routes between here and Taichung departing on Thursdays and Fridays respectively, bring-

ing the total number of scheduled routes per week to five.

TransAsia operates a total of 29 direct routes between Taiwan and mainland China. Last year, the carrier initiated new scheduled flights to Guiyang, in Guizhou province, as well as to Quanzhou City in Fujian Province. It similarly expanded its routes to Japan and mainland China and increased the frequency of its flights to Tokyo, Osaka and Okinawa.

## NORTH KOREA

# Regime rules out any talks with US 'gangster' state

Andrew Davis

**N**ORTH Korea said it won't agree to talks with the U.S. and is now focused on its ability to destroy the country with conventional, nuclear and cyber-warfare attacks.

Kim Jong Un's regime accused the U.S. of "inching closer to the stage of igniting a war of aggression" by stepping up its sanctions, holding military drills with South Korea and predicting the future collapse of the administration, the official Korean Central News Agency said, citing a statement from the National Defense Commission.

"Since the gangster-like U.S. imperialists are blaring that they will 'bring down' the DPRK, oblivious of its poor plight facing adverse fate, the army and people of the DPRK cannot but officially notify the Obama administration of the U.S.A. that the DPRK has neither need nor willingness to sit at negotiating table," KCNA said, using the acronym for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The rejection of talks comes after a rush of diplomatic activity by the U.S. and North Korea's ally China to prod the regime back to the table, po-



tentially for bilateral talks and eventually six-country negotiations that offered aid in return for an end to its nuclear program. Kim raised expectations of progress when he suggested in a Jan. 1 speech he'd be open

to meeting South Korea's President Park Geun Hye.

Russia's Interfax news agency reported Jan. 28 that Kim would make his first foreign trip in May since coming to power three years ago, to at-

tend celebrations for the 70th anniversary of Russia's victory in World War II. Park may also attend, setting up what could be the first meeting between two Korean leaders since 2007.

The statement focuses on the U.S. and doesn't close the door to individual talks with China or South Korea. China's Defense Minister Chang Wanquan is on a three day visit that started Tuesday to South Korea, and was meeting his counterpart Han Min-koo yesterday to discuss issues including North Korea.

It also comes after North Korea said Feb. 1. the U.S. rejected an invitation for a senior official to visit. The regime asked Sung Kim, special representative for North Korea policy, to Pyongyang during his trip to Asia last month, KCNA said, but the talks didn't occur because the U.S. refuses to engage in dialogue unless North Korea first agrees to give up its nuclear program.

While Kim sits on a nuclear arsenal estimated at 12 bombs and a standing army of 1.2 million, he faces United Nations allegations of human rights abuses and tighter U.S. economic sanctions after a cyber-attack on a Hollywood studio in November blamed on North Korea.

"If the U.S. ignites a war of aggression against the DPRK by conventional forces, it will fight it by conventional forces of its style," KCNA said in its latest report. "If the former unleashes a nuclear war against the latter, it will counter it through its own nuclear strikes, and if the former tries to bring down the latter through a cyber warfare, it will react to it with its own preeminent cyber warfare and will thus bring earlier the final ruin of the U.S." **Bloomberg**

Sam Kim

**N**ORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un executed an army general last month in his latest purge of senior officials.

General Pyon In Son, head of operations in the Korean People's Army, was killed for expressing an opinion different to that of Kim, a South Korean official told reporters in Seoul yesterday, speaking on condition of anonymity as per government policy. The official didn't say what they disagreed on.

Kim still mistrusts the military, the official said, adding that senior officers are growing increasingly uneasy. The "Supreme Leader" also removed Ma Won Chun, a National Defense Commission official overseeing construction design, from office in November for alleged corruption and a failure to follow orders.

Kim has relied on pur-

## Kim Jong Un executes army general in latest purge of officials



ges to consolidate his grip on power since he took over a country with a nuclear arms program and 1.2 million troops

in 2011. After killing his uncle and one-time deputy Jang Song Thaek in 2013, he executed about 50 officials last year on

charges ranging from graft to watching South Korean soap operas.

"The purge of Pyon sends a message that

helps to discipline the military," said Kim Yong Hyun, a professor of North Korean studies at Dongguk University in Seoul. "The execution is a symbol that will help tighten loyalty."

Pyon was promoted to a four-star general in March last year and then removed from office in November, according to the North Korea Leadership Watch blog. South Korea's Unification Ministry's website still identifies him as a general who oversees military operations.

Kim's younger sister Kim Yo Jong may be married and even pregnant, the official said, saying she has a ring on her finger and has recently been seen wearing comfortable shoes

in public.

Yonhap News said on Jan. 2 that she married one of party secretary Choe Ryong Hae's sons, citing two unidentified people in China. The official said it's unlikely she wed Choe's son because that would concentrate too much power in Choe.

Earlier yesterday, North Korea said it wouldn't agree to talks with the U.S. and is now focused on its ability to destroy the country with conventional, nuclear and cyber-warfare attacks.

Kim's regime accused the U.S. of "inching closer to the stage of igniting a war of aggression" by stepping up its sanctions, holding military drills with South Korea and predicting the future collapse of the administration, the official Korean Central News Agency said, citing a statement from the National Defense Commission. **Bloomberg**

## BANGLADESH

# Police say ex-PM instigated deadly firebombing



Bangladeshi firefighters inspect a burnt bus set on fire allegedly by opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) supporters and activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami party, during a nationwide blockade called by the BNP in Dhaka, Tuesday

Julhas Alam, Dhaka

**P**OLICE yesterday accused Bangladesh's former prime minister and an opposition alliance leader of instigating a bus firebombing that killed seven people and injured 16 others as political violence is surging in the country.

Attackers threw the crude fire bombs at the packed bus as it traveled from the coastal city of Cox's Bazar to the capital, Dhaka, before dawn Tuesday during an opposition-sponsored general strike. Unlike many vehicles traveling on major roads during the blockade, the bus had no security escort from police or paramilitary border guards.

Local police chief Uttam Chakrabarty said two cases were filed, accusing 56 named suspects and another 20 who were unnamed, while former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has been named as the instigator.

Nuruzzman Howlader, another police official who filed the cases, said the attack was related to the opposition strike and it was carried out following the order of Zia.

"That's why her name has been mentioned as the instigator," Howlader said.

Zia, her aides and opposition activists have denied involvement in the bus attack but did not immediately respond to the new police accusations.

She was not one of the formal suspects named in the two cases, but Howlader said the prime accused suspect was a central leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami party from Comilla, the scene of the attack.

Political attacks, mostly firebombings of vehicles, have killed at least 53 people since early January, when an opposition alliance led by Zia ordered a transportation blockade in an attempt to force Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step down.

The two have long battled for political supremacy in the South Asian nation. Hasina last month told Parliament that, if necessary, Zia would be tried for the deaths of people killed in political violence.

Zia's party and its partners boycotted 2014 elections, which allowed Hasina to win a new, 5-year term. Hasina says new elections will not be

held until 2019.

Politics have long been accompanied by chaos in Bangladesh, but the renewed violence ended a year of relative calm.

Western countries and the United Nations have called for a dialogue, but a stumbling block is the Jamaat-e-Islami party, the main partner of Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Hasina has said Zia could help initiate talks by removing Jamaat-e-Islami from her alliance.

Jamaat-e-Islami bitterly opposes Hasina, who has targeted the party's leaders in war crimes trials for their actions during Bangladesh's war of independence from Pakistan in 1971. Jamaat-e-Islami opposed the war, which was led by Hasina's father.

Eight senior Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, including party chief Motiur Rahman Nizami, have been convicted in the trials and one has been hanged.

Zia was prime minister from 2001 to 2006 but failed to hand over power peacefully. A military-backed caretaker government ruled the country before Hasina came to power in 2008 elections. **AP**

## AUSTRALIA

# Abbott backed by Cabinet as lawmakers publicly break ranks

Jason Scott

**S**ENIOR Cabinet members rallied behind Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott after two lawmakers broke ranks and said he'd lost their support, stoking speculation he will face an internal party challenge as soon as next week.

Treasurer Joe Hockey and Finance Minister Matthias Cormann both publicly backed Abbott yesterday, a day after Foreign Minister Julie Bishop issued a statement saying she wasn't campaigning for Australia's top job.

"The Cabinet is unanimous in its support of the prime minister," Hockey told reporters in Canberra. "We are getting on with the job of government."

Abbott is struggling to quell disquiet over his leadership amid a backlash against his spending cuts and a decision to bestow a knighthood on Prince Philip. As his poll ratings slump, some lawmakers have indicated his Liberal Party may hold a leadership vote - or spill - when parliament returns next week, with his coalition parties due to hold a joint meeting Tuesday.

Abbott's Liberal-National coalition won power in September 2013 after six years of Labor rule dominated in the later period by power struggles between former prime ministers Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard that eroded Labor's support. Since then his coalition has suffered the fastest poll reversal for a newly elected government in at least 30 years as it seeks to rein in a budget deficit forecast at A\$40.4 billion (USD\$31 billion) this financial year.

"I am determined to deliver steady, stable, solid dependable government," Abbott said in a radio interview yesterday when asked if he will be challenged. "What I think every one in the party room understands is that the last thing we should do is go anywhere near reproducing the rabble of the Labor years."

Liberal backbencher Dennis Jensen told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. Tuesday that Abbott should be replaced. Jensen was one of two Libe-



ral lawmakers who signed an initial spill motion in 2009 - when the coalition was in opposition - that saw then-leader Malcolm Turnbull lose to Abbott by a single vote. Turnbull is now Communications Minister.

"In my view the more quickly you do this, the better," Jensen said, without saying he was prepared to call a leadership spill.

Another backbencher, Warren Entsch, has said he would seek a "resolution" of the issue next week, ABC reported.

Abbott's government relies on support from minor parties and independents to pass legislation in the Senate, as it lacks a majority in Australia's upper house. He's been forced to abandon or re-work savings measures, including charging people A\$7 to visit a doctor, after opposition in the Senate.

Abbott's allies have suffered recent losses in state votes that have raised nerves within coalition ranks at the federal level. Queensland Liberal National Party leader Campbell Newman lost his own seat in the state parliament in a Jan. 31 ballot and his government is expected to be ousted after a single term.

Labor won power in Victoria state in a November election, ousting a first term Abbott-allied Liberal-National coalition. New South Wales, Australia's most populous state, holds an election in March, with Liberal-National Premier Mike Baird seeking to retain office.

Senior coalition lawmakers are backing Abbott to stay.

"The prime minister enjoys the unanimous support of the Cabinet and I believe he enjoys the overwhelming support of the party room," Cormann told ABC radio yesterday. **Bloomberg**

## ISIS TERRORISM

# Jordan executes 2 al-Qaida prisoners after IS kills pilot



This still image made from video released by Islamic State group militants and posted on the website of the SITE Intelligence Group on Tuesday, purportedly shows Jordanian pilot Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh standing in a cage just before being burned to death by his captors

Karin Laub and Omar Akour,  
Amman

**J**ORDAN executed two al-Qaida prisoners before dawn yesterday, just hours after an online video purported to show Islamic State group militants burning a captured Jordanian pilot to death in a cage.

The gruesome death of 26-year-old Lt. Muath Al-Kaseasbeh, captured while participating in airstrikes by a U.S.-led coalition targeting the militants, sparked outrage and anti-Islamic State group demonstrations in Jordan.

Newspaper headlines warned Jordan “will take revenge” for his slaying as King Abdullah II, a staunch Western ally, rushed back to his kingdom from Washington. In Raqqa, the Islamic State group’s de facto capital, the militants gleefully played al-Kaseasbeh’s slaying on big-screen televisions, Syrian activists there said.

In its first response, Jordan executed Sajida al-Rishawi and Ziad al-Karbouly, two Iraqis linked to al-Qaida, government spokesman Mohammed al-Momani said. Another official said they were executed by hanging.

The executions took place at Swaqa prison about 80 kilometers south of the Jordan’s capital, Amman. At sun-

rise, two ambulances carrying the bodies of al-Rishawi and al-Karbouly drove away from the prison with security escorts. Authorities said they’d be buried later in Jordan.

Al-Rishawi had been sentenced to death after her 2005 role in a triple hotel bombing that killed 60 people in Amman orchestrated by al-Qaida in Iraq, the predecessor of the Islamic State group. Al-Karbouly was sent to death row in 2008 for plotting terror attacks on Jordanians in Iraq.

## ■ Tuesday’s [video] was the first to show a captive being burned alive

The militants purportedly had demanded Jordan release al-Rishawi in exchange for the pilot. Over the past week, Jordan had offered to trade her, but froze any swap after failing to receive any proof that the pilot was still alive. Jordanian state television said the pilot was killed as long ago as Jan. 3, suggesting officials there knew any attempt to trade would be in vain.

Al-Kaseasbeh had fallen into the hands of the militants

when his F-16 crashed near Raqqa. He was the first airman participating in the U.S.-led bombing raids against militant positions in Syria and Iraq to be captured.

In the 20-minute video purportedly showing his killing, he displayed signs of having been beaten, including a black eye. Toward the end of the clip, he is shown wearing an orange jumpsuit. He stands in an outdoor cage as a masked militant ignites a line of fuel leading to it.

The video, which threatened other purported Jordanian pilots by name, was released on militant websites and bore the logo of the extremist group’s al-Furqan media service. The clip featured the slick production and graphics used in previous Islamic State group videos. The video could not immediately be confirmed independently by The Associated Press.

Jordan’s military quickly confirmed al-Kaseasbeh had been killed.

“Our punishment and revenge will be as huge as the loss of the Jordanians,” army spokesman Mamdouh al-Ameri said.

Jordan faces increasing threats from the militants. Jordan borders areas of Islamic State group’s self-declared caliphate. There also have been signs of greater support

for the group’s militant ideas among Jordan’s young and poor.

The pilot’s father, Safi Yousef al-Kaseasbeh, was attending a tribal meeting in Amman when news of the video surfaced, and he was seen being led from the session. Other men were seen outside, overcome with emotion.

After word spread that the pilot had been killed, dozens of people chanting slogans against the Islamic State group marched toward the royal palace to express their anger. Waving a Jordanian flag, they chanted, “Damn you, Daesh!” — using the Arabic acronym of the group — and “We will avenge, we will avenge our son’s blood.”

Protesters marched in the pilot’s home village of Ai and set a local government office on fire. Witnesses said the atmosphere was tense and that riot police patrolled the streets.

Al-Kaseasbeh is from a tribal area in southern Jordan’s Karak district. The tribes are considered a mainstay of support for the monarchy, but the pilot’s capture has strained that relationship. Members of the pilot’s family have repeatedly accused the government of botching efforts to win his release and have also criticized Jordan’s participation in the anti-Islamic State group alliance.

The Islamic State group has released a series of gruesome videos showing the beheading of captives, including two American journalists, an American aid worker and two British aid workers. Tuesday’s was the first to show a captive being burned alive.

The latest video was released three days after another video showed the purported beheading of a Japanese journalist, Kenji Goto, who was captured by the Islamic State group in October.

The militants had linked the fates of the pilot and the journalist. A second Japanese hostage was apparently killed earlier last month.

David L. Phillips, a former State Department adviser on the Middle East, said he believes the pilot’s killing could backfire, antagonizing Sunnis against the extremists, including Sunni tribes in Iraq. He also said the extremist group’s recent military setbacks may have fueled the killings.

“They need to compensate for that with increasingly gruesome killings of prisoners,” said Phillips, director of the Program on Peace-building and Human Rights at Columbia University.

Yesterday morning, Jordanians were shocked over the brutality of the Islamic State group.

“There is no religion accepts such act,” Amman resident Hassan Abu Ali said. “Islam is a religion of tolerance. (The Islamic State group) have nothing to do with Islam. This is criminal act.”

In Washington, King Abdullah II and President Barack Obama vowed in a hastily arranged White House meeting Tuesday not to let up in the fight against the Islamic State group. Abdullah has portrayed the campaign against the extremists as a battle over values. In a speech later aired on Jordanian state television, he urged his countrymen to unite.

“It’s the duty of all of us to stand united and show the real values of Jordanians in the face of these hardships,” Abdullah said.

U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter Jr., a California Republican, said after a meeting with congressional lawmakers and King Abdullah that the Jordanian monarch had been visibly angry and promised swift and certain retaliation against Islamic State group militants.

“They’re starting more sorties tomorrow than they’ve ever had. They’re starting tomorrow,” Hunter told the Washington Examiner in an interview published online Tuesday night.

Hunter added the king also said: “The only problem we’re going to have is running out of fuel and bullets.” **AP**

Peter Prengaman, Buenos Aires

ARGENTINA

# Prosecutor considered call for president's arrest

**I**NVESTIGATORS examining the death of a prosecutor who accused Argentine President Cristina Fernandez of agreeing to shield the alleged masterminds of a 1994 terror bombing said Tuesday (early yesterday, Macau time) they have found a draft document he wrote requesting her arrest.

Chief investigator Viviana Fein said the draft detention request was found in a trash bin of the apartment where Alberto Nisman's body was discovered on Jan. 18. It was not included in a complaint the prosecutor had filed in federal court days earlier.

"To formally go after a sitting president like this, especially somebody like Cristina, is a huge deal," said James Cooper, professor at California Western School of Law and an expert on legal reform in Latin America. "It makes you wonder if Fein is getting pressure not to press the case further?"

Nisman was found dead of a gunshot wound in his bathroom hours before he was to appear in Congress to detail his allegations that Fernandez agreed to protect those responsible for the 1994 bombing of Buenos Aires' largest Jewish community center. The attack, which killed 85 people, remains unsolved. Fernandez



A woman holds up a sign that reads in Spanish "Justice" as she gathers with others outside the funeral home where a private wake for the late prosecutor Alberto Nisman takes place

has dismissed the allegations against her.

Fein at first denied the existence of the document requesting the president's arrest after Argentina's Clarin newspaper published an article about it on Sunday. Cabinet chief Jorge Ca-

pitanich ripped up the article in front of reporters on Monday and said it was a lie produced by the "opposition media."

But Clarin then published a copy of the draft, which was dated from June 2014. It said Nisman also had considered re-

questing arrest orders against Fernandez's foreign minister, Hector Timerman, and other officials in the government.

Fernandez's government and Clarin often clash, and the Nisman case has reignited the dispute. For years, Fernandez has been trying to break up Grupo Clarin, one of the leading media conglomerates in Latin America, while her government works to build up a large media presence of its own.

On Tuesday, Fein clarified her earlier statement, acknowledging the existence of the draft document and saying she made an error of "terminology and interpretation," and there had been a miscommunication with her office.

"The words I should have used are: 'I know that there was a draft' of a document, she said. But she said its existence "is not important enough to change the course of the investigation."

The final complaint Nisman

submitted to judicial authorities called for Fernandez and Timerman to face questions in court instead.

Why Nisman may have changed tack is unclear, but it brings the focus back to Fernandez, who has tried to distance herself from the case, in part by suggesting rogue elements in intelligence services were behind Nisman's death.

She is currently in China seeking investments, and before she left she submitted a proposal to Congress to reform the Secretary of Intelligence. A Senate committee took up the bill on Tuesday.

Conspiracy theories have swirled around Nisman's death since his body was found. Authorities initially said he likely committed suicide, but his supporters insisted the prosecutor would not have killed himself and even Fernandez has said that, contrary to initial findings, his death could not have been a suicide. AP

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## what's ON



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IN CELEBRATION OF THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE MACAU HANDOVER  
TIME: 10am-7pm  
(Closed on Mondays, no admission after 6:30 pm)  
UNTIL: March 15, 2015  
VENUE: The Handover Gifts Museum of Macau,  
Avenida Xian Xing Hai, NAPE  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8504 1800

**HAND PAINTED PORCELAIN**  
- FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH: EAST-WEST  
RITUALS BY ARLINDA FROTA  
TIME: 2pm-7pm (closed on Sundays)  
UNTIL: February 7, 2015  
VENUE: Creative Macau, G/F Macau Cultural  
Centre Building, Xian Xing Hai Avenue  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2875 3282

**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

**GRAND TAIPA NATURAL PARK**  
Park and Sculpture Zone: 24 hours  
Grass-skiing field: 2:30pm-5:30pm (Tuesdays to  
Fridays); 10:30am-5:30pm (Weekends and public  
holidays)  
VENUE: Rampa do Observatório, Taipa  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0087

**PENGUINS UNDERCOVER ICE WORLD**  
WITH THE DREAMWORKS GANG  
TIME: 11am-8pm  
UNTIL: March 8, 2015  
VENUE: Cotai Expo  
ADMISSION: MOP120  
ENQUIRIES: 2882 8818

## Offbeat

## THE ROSS BROTHERS REDEFINE THE WESTERN

Documentary directors and brothers Bill and Turner Ross have made a career out of examining microcosms in the modern American landscape, from their first film, "45365," about their middle-class hometown of Sidney, Ohio, to "Tchoupitoulas," which follows three young brothers wandering New Orleans at night.

Their latest, "Western," takes them to a foreign territory: the border.

The film, which picked up a special jury award for verite filmmaking at this year's Sundance Film Festival, transports the audience to the once harmonious, now violence-plagued border towns of Eagle Pass, Texas, and Piedras Negras, Mexico.

"The Rio Grande is a natural boundary in visualizing the frontier. If you're talking about something as visual as a film and using landscapes, I think the most iconic way to do that is to see two cities on either side of the river," Turner Ross said over breakfast at Park City's High West Distillery & Saloon.

This new frontier is shown through the eyes of cattleman Martin (pronounced "Marteen") Wall and the longtime mayor Chad Foster, both of whom have had their livelihoods challenged by the increasingly imminent threat of cartel violence.

But it's not a political movie. "Western" is atmospheric, inventive and immersive.

## TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
18:10	Brazil Avenue (Repeated)
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:30	Criminal Minds S8
22:10	Brazil Avenue
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

## cinema

## CINETEATRO

5 FEB - 11 FEB



## JUPITER ASCENDING

ROOM 1

(2D) 2.30, 4.45, 9.45 pm

(3D) 7.15 pm

Director: Andy Wachowski, Lana Wachowski

Starring: Channing Tatum, Mila Kunis, Eddie

Redmayne

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 127min



## GANGNAM BLUES

ROOM 2

2.00, 4.30, 7.00, 9.30 pm

Director: Yoo Ha

Starring: Lee Min-ho, Kim Rae-won

Language: Korean (Chinese/English)

Duration: 135min



## THE CON ARTIST

ROOM 3

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Kim Hong-sun

Starring: Kim Woo-bin, Lee Hyun-woo, Ko Chang-seok

Language: Korean (Chinese/English)

Duration: 116min

## MACAU TOWER

5 FEB - 18 FEB

## JUPITER ASCENDING

2.30, 4.30, 7.00, 9.30 pm

Director: Andy Wachowski, Lana Wachowski

Starring: Channing Tatum, Mila Kunis, Eddie

Redmayne

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 127min

## this day in history



Sir Freddie Laker

## 1982 LAKER AIRWAYS GOES BUST

Pioneering budget airliner Laker Airways has collapsed owing £270 million to banks and other creditors.

After a four-hour board meeting at London's Gatwick Airport, company chairman Sir Freddie Laker asked Clydesdale Bank to appoint a receiver.

All 17 Laker aircraft have been ordered to return to the UK by tonight and the British Airports Authority has impounded a DC10 at Gatwick to cover the company's landing and parking costs.

Stranded passengers - numbering 6,000 - will have the return half of their tickets honoured by British Airways, Pan American Airways, Air Florida and British Caledonian.

The receiver Bill Mackey, partner of Ernst and Whinney, told the media: "There is no way that Sir Freddie Laker can carry on with this business in its present form. It has to be sold."

He said the Civil Aviation Authority had given six days' notice for the withdrawal of the operating licence for the fleet of Laker aircraft.

The company's 2,500 staff will continue to be paid until liquidators have finalised their decisions about redundancies.

Earlier in the week Sir Freddie was optimistic he had put together a £60 million rescue package for the company he established in 1966.

Talks with his creditors - and the close involvement of the Bank of England - have been underway since the autumn but they broke down when new figures showed ticket sales and bookings were lower than expected.

The government has also taken a keen interest in the fortunes of Laker - Mrs Thatcher is a personal admirer of Sir Freddie - but yesterday afternoon the Department of Trade confirmed once and for all there could be no state assistance.

Mr Mackey will meet Sir Freddie tomorrow and expects to have worked out the future of the airline by the end of the week.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Thousands of pounds poured into a "Save Laker" fund, set up by members of the public sympathetic to the flamboyant tycoon. But it was too little too late.

Within weeks Sir Freddie was attempting to re-launch an airliner by transferring the Laker Airways licences to a new company.

The Civil Aviation Authority officially blocked his efforts in May after objections from other airlines and the public.

Twelve months later Laker's American liquidators launched a billion-pound lawsuit against several airlines and US aircraft manufacturer McDonnell Douglas alleging conspiracy and violation of the anti-trust laws.

Freddie Laker retired to Florida, then the Bahamas. He died in Miami aged 83 on 10 February 2006.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Your childlike nature comes out to play - so enjoy the day as best you can!

Taurus April 20-May 20 You know what's best, though you may need to spend some extra time preparing your arguments.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You're having a great time challenging assumptions and asking big questions, but at least one colleague isn't so sure they're ready for this kind of conversation.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 This is not a good time to go bargain hunting just for its own sake - if anything, you need to go for quality first.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Your creative juices are flowing strongly today - so indulge that side of yourself and make sure that you're creating something worthwhile.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 There's just too much going on today - your energy needs to be evenly distributed or you are sure to be exhausted by day's end.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Your leadership skills are rarely as obvious as they are today - so dive into action and make sure that your people know what's expected of them.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 A power play may take you by surprise today - but you can still fight back without breaking a sweat.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Take a risk - tell the boss how they're wrong or ask out that one hottie who seems to be out of your league.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Sharing can be trouble today - once people ask for an inch, they are likely to take a mile.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 One of your most important relationships needs some fine tuning - what fun! It may take some effort, but it is totally worth it in the long run.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You've got to mind your own business today - things just aren't quite where they need to be, but there's only so much you can do about it.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles categorized by difficulty: Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each category contains a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

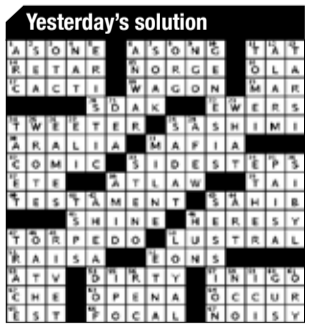
WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION. It lists weather for various cities in CHINA and the WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Interlock; 5- Bundle; 9- Customary; 14- \_\_\_ breve; 15- Unwritten; 16- Part of TNT; 17- Smoke deposit; 18- Hula hoops?; 19- Of the kidneys; 20- Unofficial advisers; 23- Illustrious warrior; 24- Clean air org.; 25- \_\_\_ kwon do; 28- Remarkable; 31- Swiss river; 34- Diamond flaw?; 36- Building wing; 37- Gumbo pod; 38- In spite of; 42- Dagger of yore; 43- Aussie hopper; 44- Causing goose bumps; 45- Frozen Wasser; 46- Form of bowling; 49- DDE opponent; 50- KLM rival; 51- Takes home; 53- First appearance of an influential phrase or idea; 60- Charged; 61- Endure; 62- Centrepiece of the human face; 63- Author Zola; 64- Away from the wind; 65- Increased in size; 66- Like Cheerios; 67- Tailless rodent; 68- Bring home;

DOWN: 1- Face covering; 2- "The Time Machine" people; 3- Type of machine found in Las Vegas; 4- Bring forth from the egg; 5- Lively Spanish dance; 6- Playground retort; 7- Not of the cloth; 8- "Born Free" lion; 9- Immature; 10- City in Tuscany; 11- Magazine founder Eric; 12- I smell \_\_\_; 13- Chat room chuckle; 21- Artist Matisse; 22- Feminist Abzug; 25- Uptight; 26- Rice-\_\_\_; 27- Some Art Deco works; 29- Greek fabulist; 30- Diner order; 31- Director Kurosawa; 32- Army leader?; 33- Fads; 35- Have debts; 37- Lyric poem; 39- Head lock; 40- Sweetie; 41- Bird homes; 46- Make straight; 47- Momentarily; 48- Lipton competitor; 50- Fish covering; 52- Burn slightly; 53- Tibetan priest; 54- Put a lid \_\_\_; 55- Give it up for a performer?; 56- In \_\_\_ land; 57- Mrs. Dithers, in "Blondie"; 58- \_\_\_-friendly; not too technical; 59- In stitches; 60- Stutz contemporary



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**E**NGLAND selected another new center partnership, recalled prop Dan Cole, and put Nick Easter and Danny Cipriani on the bench in an injury-hit lineup for the Six Nations (6N) opener against Wales at the Millennium Stadium tomorrow.

With Manu Tuilagi, Brad Barritt and Kyle Eastmond injured, Jonathan Joseph and Luther Burrell will be the latest midfield combination in England's problem area in recent years.

The experienced Cole has recovered from a foot problem, and replaces injured David Wilson for his first test appearance for almost year.

Easter, who hasn't played for England since the 2011 Rugby World Cup, will provide cover in the reserves for No. 8 Billy Vunipola and the locks. Cipriani is backup for flyhalf George Ford, and is set for his first Six Nations appearance in six years.

Such is England's injury crisis that there are only nine survivors from the team that started the victory over Australia in their last November test. Locks Courtney Lawes and Joe Launchbury,

RUGBY | 6N

# England picks new centers, recalls prop Cole for Wales



England's Jonny Wilkinson takes a penalty shot at goal during their Rugby World Cup game against Scotland in Auckland, New Zealand

flyhalf Owen Farrell, No. 8 Ben Morgan, and flanker Tom Wood are also unavailable because of injuries.

Tuilagi remains a big loss for England coach Stuart Lancaster, as the Joseph-Burrell partnership

has just 13 caps between them. "JJ has been one of the form centers in the country," Lancaster said on Wednesday. "He and Luther have trained well together and this is a big opportunity for both of them."

Cipriani is another player in good form for his club, Sale Sharks, and is back in England after being dropped for the autumn tests. His recall for last June's tour of New Zealand ended a six-year spell in the international wilderness.

Cipriani was preferred to the more conservative Stephen Myler in the reserves.

England lost 30-3 in its last trip to Cardiff, in the 2013 6N title decider.

Today, Wales will be at full strength after recalling hooker Richard Hibbard and winger George North to the starting team.

The British and Irish Lions players are the only changes to the side that started the 12-6 win over South Africa in November, which ended Wales' 22-match losing run against the southern hemisphere's big three.

North, who replaces Liam Williams, is one of the stars of Welsh rugby, but has been warned by Gatland that he needs a big game at Cardiff's Millennium

Stadium to keep his place in the side.

"We don't think he has played that well in the Welsh jersey in the last few games," Gatland said. "So there is a lot of pressure and expectation on him to perform."

"But one of the things he has done for Wales is that he has scored tries and he continues to do that for his club as well. He does have that X-factor. We are looking for a big performance from him."

Hibbard comes in for Scott Baldwin in a team selected two days ahead of schedule by Gatland, who had an injury-free squad to choose from.

"It wasn't the hardest team in the world to pick," Gatland said. "There are no injuries and everyone has trained this morning, which is good."

"We decided to name the team early to give the players the best possible chance of preparation."

Sam Warburton is captain for his 50th international appearance. **MDT/AP**

LINEUPS

**WALES:** Leigh Halfpenny, Alex Cuthbert, Jonathan Davies, Jamie Roberts, George North, Dan Biggar, Rhys Webb; Taulupe Faletau, Sam Warburton, Dan Lydiate, Alun Wyn Jones, Jake Ball, Samson Lee, Richard Hibbard, Gethin Jenkins. Reserves: Scott Baldwin, Paul James, Aaron Jarvis, Luke Charteris, Justin Tipuric, Mike Phillips, Rhys Priestland, Liam Williams.

**ENGLAND:** Mike Brown, Anthony Watson, Jonathan Joseph, Luther Burrell, Jonny May, George Ford, Ben Youngs; Billy Vunipola, Chris Robshaw (captain), James Haskell, George Kruis, Dave Attwood, Dan Cole, Dylan Hartley, Joe Marler. Reserves: Tom Youngs, Mako Vunipola, Kieran Brookes, Nick Easter, Tom Croft, Richard Wigglesworth, Danny Cipriani, Billy Twelvetrees.

6N

## South African-born Kockott to start for first time for France

**S**OUTH African-born scrumhalf Rory Kockott will start for the first time for France, against Scotland in their Six Nations opener on Saturday.

In the absence of Sebastien Tillous-Borde, who has a knee injury, Kockott was given the starting nod over Morgan Parra by France coach Philippe Saint-Andre yesterday.

Since taking over from Marc Lievreumont after the 2011 Rugby World Cup, Saint-Andre has tinkered with his halfback pairings. He looked to have found the right formula last autumn with Tillous-Borde and Camille Lopez, but will have to try his 14th combination against the Scots at Stade de France. Lopez remains.



Kockott has already given serious guarantees though, appearing during the November tests as an impact player. He proved decisive in a 29-26 win over Australia, hitting a key 45-meter penalty eight minutes from time. Bayonne fullback Scott Spedding was pi-

cked in place of Brice Dulin, who has not yet fully recovered from a sore right arm, and powerful center Mathieu Bastareaud comes in for the injured Alexandre Dumoulin to form an impressive partnership with Wesley Fofana.

Winger Teddy Thomas, who made a splashy debut with four tries in his first two matches against Fiji and Australia in November then was dropped for missing training, has been recalled, while Toulouse's Yoann Huget will start on the right flank.

Yoann Maestri and Pascal Pape form the second row, while tighthead prop Rabah Slimani was preferred to Nicolas Mas after impressing at Stade Francais. **MDT/AP**

NBA

## Fans struggle with Seahawks' Super Bowl loss

**A**S shocking as it was, the Seattle Seahawks' last-minute loss to the New England Patriots in the Super Bowl was probably not even the worst loss in the city's sports history.

Seattle did lose an NBA team, after all, when the SuperSonics moved to Oklahoma City. At least the Seahawks will be playing again next season.

But the grief, anger and bewilderment felt by many Seahawks fans ne-

vertheless show only mild signs of abating, even days after Sunday's game. Many say they're certain the decision to pass from the 1-yard line — instead of handing off to bruising running back Marshawn Lynch — will forever haunt Seattle the way previous sporting gaffes defined other cities.

"I'll be 90 years old and still thinking about this game," said Norb Caoili, a longtime season-ticket holder from Renton. "The

history of sports is defined by moments like this, where heroes rise and save the day, or where teams collapse on the biggest stages. It's always going to be a part of the fabric of Seattle, and that's tough to swallow."

Caoili, 45, is the force behind Norb-Cam, a YouTube channel that features videos of himself — wearing a green wig, Seahawks headband, and blue-and-green face paint — reacting to the

action during Seahawks games. The videos have been viewed an improbable number of times, making him a prominent voice among Seahawks fans.

For him, the way the team lost is what makes it so tough: Moments earlier, the team seemed on the brink of a miraculous victory, with receiver Jermaine Kearse making an inconceivable, bobbling, falling catch despite great coverage from Patriots

rookie Malcolm Butler. It was a gift from the football gods, "divine intervention" that signaled a certain Seahawks victory, he said.

Lynch's subsequent run, taking the ball to the 1 with the clock ticking down, only fortified that impression.

The decision to pass becomes not just "the worst play call I've seen in the history of football," as Hall of Fame running back Emmitt Smith described it, but an affront to the gods, a sort

of cardinal sin punished by instant karma: Butler's goal-line interception, and New England's fourth championship of the Tom Brady-Bill Belichick era.

It was an epic failure, akin to the ground ball through Bill Buckner's legs that helped sink the 1986 Boston Red Sox, or the "wide right" field goal attempt in 1991 that proved to be the first of four consecutive Super Bowl losses for the Buffalo Bills. **AP**

opinion

**HK Observer**

Robert Carroll



**OCCUPY FALLOUT**

Following the Occupy fallout, Hong Kong has recently been declared as a core security interest for China by a senior PLA official.

We can surely expect keener monitoring of political dissent here. As another consequence of Occupy Central, we should also expect a ratcheting up of pressure on media and academics to toe party lines.

The former Dean of Law at the University of Hong Kong, Johannes Chan Man-mun said on Tuesday that since November there has been a concerted campaign by pro-Beijing newspapers to try to discredit him and other outspoken academics; an attempt to prevent them from achieving the highest managing roles at HKU. This was after it was said Chan was being recommended for a top post at the university.

This is a matter of some concern not just in the interests of academic freedom but as a potential threat to HKU's outstanding world ranking.

Chan oversaw a significant rise in the Law faculty he supervised, yet he is being criticized for running a faculty which conducted poor research. As a prominent defender of Hong Kong's freedoms he is surely being targeted more for that stance than for his former faculty's performance.



Doesn't this mean that the maintenance of one of the territory's greatest success stories should better be trimmed than be allowed to be seen as a beacon of free expression in the view of Beijing's men here?

It's curious that Hong Kong's—and Asia's—richest man has revealed his hand at last in regard to his loyalty to the city and China, or rather his lack of it by moving his head office out to a tax haven in the Caribbean.

Of course he has long been heavily investing overseas so it's not a complete surprise. However coming so soon after Occupy Central and all the mainland exhortations to be patriotic, what sort of message is that to pull up stumps in such sensitive times?

One of the two biggest political groupings the pro-Beijing, Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong is about to have a leadership reshuffle. DAB head Tam Yiu-chung is set to retire hopefully paving the way for a younger generation within its ranks. With long established pan-democrats likely to have to move aside for the young guns at the next elections, this fresh injection of young talent may be just what the city needs to shake up what has become a stagnant political scene.

**THE BUZZ NOT JUST MONOPOLY MONEY: GAME IN FRANCE WILL HAVE REAL THING**

You can pass go, get out of jail free and collect real money.

The French version of Monopoly is celebrating its 80th year by slipping cash into 80 boxes of the game.

One box will have the full complement in real money — 20,580 euros (USD23,600) — as well

as the Monopoly money needed to actually play the game, one of the most popular in France. Another 79 boxes will have smaller amounts, according to Hasbro.

The Paris version lets players buy the Champs Elysees, four railroad stations and other famous avenues of the French capital.



ART

**MGM announces Joana Vasconcelos exhibition in town**

**T**he internationally celebrated artist Joana Vasconcelos will be presenting her first solo exhibition in China in Macau. The Portuguese creator is the latest addition to MGM Macau's art program. She has designed an exhibition to be showcased at MGM's Grande Praça between March 16 and October 31.

According to a press release issued by MGM, "the aesthetic installation is inspired by the venue décor of MGM Macau, Vasconcelos also draws with the marine and the maritime in mind, and connects with the Portuguese heritage of Macau."

"Exhibiting at MGM Macau's Grande Praça constitutes a very special moment in my career, particularly due to the connection with the history of the epic Portuguese overseas expeditions to the Orient and the relations between Portugal and Macau, as well as my family's passage through the territory," the artist said. "The Portuguese atmosphere of the Grande Praça is the ideal scenery to receive the monumental works I've created for the MGM Macau," she added.

Central to the exhibition is Valkyrie Octopus, the largest piece to date

in her iconic Valkyries series, which she has been working on since 2004. This amorphous organic form hangs from the skylight dome of MGM's central atrium. The various textures and richness of detail in the piece result from Vasconcelos's practice of appropriating textiles and ornaments of different origins. She combines artisanal techniques such as crochet and Nisa embroidery (from the Alto Alentejo region of Portugal) with thousands of LED lights and boldly colored, patterned materials embellished by various kind of beads in a patchwork of patterns, shapes and textures.

The artist also offers visitors

**“The Portuguese atmosphere of the Grande Praça is the ideal scenery to receive the monumental works I've created”**

JOANA VASCONCELOS

the opportunity to become part of the artwork with three large-scale floor sculptures from the Tetris series: Chiado, Alfama and Mouraria, upon which viewers can sit and contemplate, from three perspectives, the exhibition that envelops them. These works explore the intersections of sculpture, architecture and painting. The artist draws on the Grande Praça's unique characteristics with its prominent façades inspired by iconic Portuguese buildings. The titles refer to Lisbon's main historic neighborhoods and the works are clad in handmade tiles (azulejos) complete with motifs and themes common in 17th century Portuguese and Hispano-Moresque tile work. Tubes and protuberances in crochet and exuberantly colored fabric spill from the structure into the surrounding space.

Joana Vasconcelos exhibited extensively at numerous editions of the Venice Biennale including Trafaria Praia, her project for the Portuguese Pavilion in 2013 as well as the first floating pavilion in the history of the Biennale. Recent solo exhibitions were held at equally prestigious venues including the Château de Versailles, Tel Aviv Museum of Art and Palácio Nacional da Ajuda (Lisbon). Vasconcelos was similarly showcased at the Gucci Museo with works from the François Pinault Collection. Her sculptures are distinguished by their monumental scale, mixed use of appropriated materials and mastery of organic form, colour and artisanal techniques.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	95-125 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	95-125 Moderate
Ambient	85-115 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**THAILAND-USA** The United States will conduct live-fire training at an upcoming military exercise in Thailand despite saying it would be focusing the drills on nonlethal security cooperation, a U.S. official says.

**SRI LANKA's** president says the country has not been able to unite the hearts and minds of ethnic groups despite ending a decades-old civil war five years ago. In his Independence Day address, President Maithripala Sirisena called on all political leaders to ask themselves what went wrong in the 67 years since independence from Britain.

**USA-CHINA** The U.S. defense intelligence chief warns that America's technological edge over China is at risk because of cybertheft. Lt. Gen. Vincent Stewart also says Chinese military training and weaponry pose a significant threat to U.S. forces in the western Pacific.



AP PHOTO

**UK** A Venetian waterscape by Claude Monet has sold for more than USD35 million as the high-end art market shows resilience in a bumpy global economy. "Le Grand Canal," fetched 23.67 million pounds (\$35.6 million) at Sotheby's, though it didn't reach the top of its pre-sale estimate of 20 million pounds to 30 million pounds. Monet's "Poplars at Giverny," sold by New York's Museum of Modern Art, fetched 10.79 million pounds (\$16.2 million).



AP PHOTO

**USA** "To Kill a Mockingbird" will not be Harper Lee's only published book after all. Publisher Harper announced Tuesday that "Go Set a Watchman," a novel the Pulitzer Prize-winning author completed in the 1950s and put aside, will be released July 14. Rediscovered last fall, "Go Set a Watchman" is essentially a sequel to "To Kill a Mockingbird," although it was finished earlier.