



AIR MACAU SHIFTING BUSINESS MODEL

Local airline Air Macau is shifting its business focus from Chinese gamblers to the local market and nearby travellers

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AD

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WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA A Malaysian robbery suspect was captured 22 minutes after he grabbed watches from a downtown Beijing luxury store while carrying a black toy gun, police said yesterday. Moi Kit Leng, 38, was detained on suspicion of robbery Monday evening after the robbery at a shopping center in the bustling Wangfujing district, the police said. The Beijing News identified the retailer as a Cartier store.

PHILIPPINES-LIBYA The Philippine government says that four Filipino nurses reported to have been kidnapped from a Libyan hospital by militants from an Islamic State group affiliate were actually taken to a safe place by a friend and were not abducted. *More on p12*

NEPAL is adding more medical staff at Mount Everest's base camp and working to speed up rescue efforts in steps to boost safety after 16 local guides were killed by an avalanche last year in the deadliest disaster ever on the world's highest peak. Four doctors, up from two or three in the past, will be stationed at the base camp's emergency room tent. *More on p12*

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Air Macau shifting business model

Brook Yang

Local airline Air Macau is shifting its business focus from Chinese gaming visitors to the local market and nearby travellers. It will therefore develop regional routes to some Asian destinations aside from mainland Chinese cities.

“Before we were basically expanding on the routes to the mainland. Since this year, because the economy is in an adjustment period not only in the mainland but also in Macau, our airline network is also adjusting,” explained the chairman of Air Macau’s board of directors, Zheng Yan, on the sidelines of a new aircraft inauguration ceremony.

Zheng said the airline’s main

We have competition which has emerged from conventional airlines from the mainland and low-cost airlines from Southeast Asia

ZHENG YAN
AIR MACAU CHAIRMAN



Zheng Yan (2nd left) accompanied by guests of Air Macau’s new airplane inauguration

focus is now on the local market and on customers coming from west Guangdong, facilitated by the 24-hour border crossings. “Under these circumstances, we may develop more regional and international routes,” he said.

Flights to Osaka, Tokyo, Seoul and Bangkok will be increased in frequency within the year. Other destinations in Southeast Asia – such as Vietnam – will be added to its airline network, with the frequency of flights depending on the market demand.

Air Macau’s profits plummeted by 74.4 percent in the first half of 2014. According to Zheng, this was due to intense competition among five major airports in the Pearl River Delta region.

In order to improve connections to neighbouring airports in Zhuhai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Hong Kong, new means of transportation are being built,

such as the Zhuhai-Guangzhou intercity light railway and the Zhuhai-HK-Macau Bridge.

“What this added convenience brings is competition amongst the five major airports and their airlines. And in our local market, we have competition from conventional airlines from the mainland and low-cost airlines from Southeast Asia,” explained the chairman.

He added that Air Macau’s airfares would also become competitive in the region. “For sure, the competition resulted in pressure on our airfares, that’s also why we need to adjust our entire business idea and provide our services from the perspective of the masses (...) The fare will definitely decline, but it will still be subject to the market rules,” he said, adding that improved accessibility should be considered a desirable feature of airports.

The chairman also acknowledged a decline in high-roller passengers using the airline, due to China’s economic reform as well as the anti-graft movement.

“The company’s operations have basically been following the city’s entertainment [gaming] market in the past several years. But I believe through exploring other types of markets and capturing leisure-oriented visitors, we won’t be affected much. (...) Macau’s economy and its aviation industry growing to what they are today is not simply because of the high-roller market, Macau also has a leisure market.”

Despite the profit plunge, Zheng said 2014 was still a satisfying year for the airline financially; it also recorded a significant rise in passenger loads.

“Each customer group has its different demands; in Macau, the demands can’t be met sim-

ply in the economy cabins. Therefore we will keep our path as a conventional airline to cater to different customer groups and introduce more aircraft models that are blended with business and economy cabins,” he said.

The company added a new A321 airbus to its fleet yesterday, as another step in its fleet expansion and renewal. Zheng said the Air Macau fleet will expand from the current 15 aircrafts to 17 within this year, and to 24 by 2018, with each plane costing over USD50 million. “Now basically every year we replace one or two old aircrafts; the replacement plan will be completed in 2020,” he added.

AIRPORT INCREASES CAPACITY

MACAU AIRPORT is also expanding its terminal in order to increase its capacity, as the government anticipates a bigger tourist influx. “With all the infrastructure in place, more people will come to Macau because of easy access,” said the president of Macau’s Civil Aviation Authority, Chan Weng Hong. “We are adopting a very liberal aviation policy, laying down very flexible conditions for the airlines to make commercial decisions (...) But so far, there’s no solid application filed to my office to apply for new route operations.”

Two tragic car accidents in a row raise public concern

Two fatal traffic accidents in a row within the space of a month in the same district have sounded the alarm on Macau’s road conditions, which have concerned many road users who hope the government will take the issue seriously to avoid the occurrence of similar tragedies.

It was believed that the construction of the light railway transit and Tai-

pa ferry terminal were behind both appalling accidents, which claimed a total of three lives this month. Most of the roads in that area have been diverted or resized from time to time in response to the demands of the ongoing large construction projects. The city’s drivers have called on the government to optimize the conditions of the roads there in the wake of the

two deadly accidents. The trucks and casino shuttle buses that dart along the roads there every day have worsened the road conditions as their massive weight has caused wearing of the road surface, making it bumpier and more dangerous.

The IFT alumni association of one of the student victims killed by the March 16 car accident organized a fundraising activity

yesterday for his family, with the aim of mitigating their financial burden following the young man’s death. The group called for IFT students and alumni to make donations to the deceased’s family.

It has been confirmed that the pair, who lost their lives in Monday’s traffic accident, were both young men working for the same restaurant



in the Grand Hyatt Macau. According to the Macao Daily, the taxi driver, aged 56, rejected claims that his taxi collided with the scooter before it went down and was crushed by the truck, despite dents being found on its rear.

This tragic accident happened two days after another accident that took a 44-year-old man’s life. The man was suspected to have lost control of his scooter before it rammed into the curb in the middle of the road. **Staff reporter**

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Catarina Pinto

LAWMAKERS are likely to pass the second reading of the minimum wage bill toward the end of this year, according to the Legislative Assembly (AL) president Ho Iat Seng. Speaking on the sidelines of an AL media Spring lunch held yesterday, Mr Ho acknowledged that the minimum wage for cleaners and security guards employed by property management companies might only come into effect at the beginning of 2016.

He told reporters that lawmakers will most likely go to a discussion and vote on the minimum wage bill, which passed its first reading last July, by the end of 2015. Mr Ho added that they are planning to have the minimum wage implemented by the beginning of 2016, as the bill only comes into force 180 days after approval.

On Monday, the government announced it would be putting the minimum wage in place in other labor sectors within three years. The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, stated that once the minimum wage has been applied to cleaners and security guards working for property management companies, they will aim to “implement it universally.”

The indirectly elected Lawmaker Chan Chak Mo said yesterday, “If this is the government’s will, we will support it.” However, he questioned whether three years is an adequate timeframe in which to draft and discuss the legislation. “We don’t know three years from now how Macau’s economy will be performing, namely [we don’t know] how diversified Macau’s economy will be. Is it possible to have everything ready by then? If it’s the government’s intention we will be backing it,” he said.

Another indirectly elected legislator Cheang Chi Keong

AL likely to pass bill on minimum wage by year-end



Ho Iat Seng

stated that implementing a universal minimum wage represents “a great step forward in the legislative process.”

The president of the AL also reiterated to reporters yester-

day that the Legislative Assembly has always shown interest in citizens’ opinions and concerns.

Although the LGBT advocacy group Rainbow of Macau has

complained of being unable to hold a meeting with the AL’s 1st Standing Committee, which is now discussing and evaluating the domestic violence bill, Mr Ho stated that

lawmakers have always been willing to hear different opinions from various sections of Macau society.

However, he recalled that AL’s role rests in balancing society’s different interests. “We need to know exactly how we can respond to society’s expectations. Every lawmaker in each standing committee works from a legislator’s point of view and they try to understand what society thinks about each bill. We are conscious of our responsibility.”

Mr Ho also pledged to improve dialogue with the government in order to better prepare the legislative work.

Reviewing AL’s work over the current term, Mr Ho said 15 lawmakers have prepared spoken enquiries to be delivered in an AL plenary meeting scheduled for May.

Currently, 11 bills are still under discussion within AL’s three standing committees, some of which “are related to rather complex matters.” Mr Ho reiterated that “these [bills] refer to legislation requiring demanding legal expertise and that have also divided society; therefore [the bills] require a more detailed comparative analysis taking into consideration the interests of different parties, aiming at reaching a consensus favoring social harmony.”

These include the domestic violence and minimum wage bills, which have sparked greater discussion in society over the past few months.

Policy address: Gov’t should take economic outlook into account

LAWMAKERS have urged Macau’s government to take the current economic situation into account when drafting this year’s Policy Address. Legislator Chan Chak Mo said he expects “new ideas” from the government on how to address the consecutive decline of ga-

ming revenue. “I think the government should focus more on the diversification of the industries, furthering [regional] cooperation and [on understanding] how it can add more elements or ideas to turn Macau into a leisure and tourism center,” he stressed.

Chief Executive Chui Sai On will deliver this year’s Policy Address on March 23.

Lawmaker Gabriel Tong also stated: “We need to prepare for a change in our society, as over the past ten years our economy has been growing, but things have changed now due to a decline in the casino revenues.”

“It doesn’t seem this will change in the near future, so we need to be prepared and make sure we have enough jobs for locals, [adjusted] foreign labor policies, and a social security system.”

Paul Pun welcomes old age pension increase

THE secretary-general of Caritas Macau, Paul Pun, has welcomed an increase in the old age and invalidity pensions. He recalled that Macau senior citizens are often faced with challenges triggered by the rising cost of living.

The Standing Committee for Coordination of Social Affairs announced on Monday that it is discussing the increase of elderly and invalidity pensions. Both pensions will increase from MOP3,180 to MOP3,350 as of next July.

“The increase was necessary. Some people say it’s not enough and others say our government might not have the ability to cope with the increase. There are different opinions in Macau’s community but for senior citizens, for sure, the majority faces difficulties with the



rising cost of living,” he told The Times.

Mr Pun acknowledged that when it comes to helping senior citizens cope with inflation, “this increase is good.” He hinted that Macau’s economy might not be as strong compared to previous years, but an increase of pensions still has to meet citizens’ basic expectations.

“Among senior citizens themselves, I

believe that for those who have no other income, [living just with this] pension might be difficult to cope with [the cost of living]. But normally people [have either] early or long-term retirement plans, so they don’t have many difficulties because this MOP3,350 is just supplementary,” he recalled.

Caring for the underprivileged should be a priority concern

PAUL PUN

Caritas has been managing its Food Bank since 2011 and has noticed an increase in the number of elderly citizens resorting to the program. “This means that elderly citizens with no income would remain dependent on the support of the society. So this increase is necessary for them,” Mr Pun added.

With Chief Executive Chui Sai On set to deliver this year’s Policy Address on March 23, Mr Pun said that, “caring for the underprivileged should be a priority concern [of the Policy Address].”

“The elderly, people who are sick, disabled people and then children without parental care, they are the priority concern. The government needs to cope with society’s constantly changing needs,” he stressed. **CP**

EDUCATION

UM organizes largest career fair in its history

THE University of Macau (UM) is holding a Careers and Internships Fair until Friday. The fair is considered the first of its kind on the new campus and the largest in its history.

According to a press release issued by UM, the event includes more than 100 companies, offering over 5,000 jobs in more than 20 industries to over 1,300 graduating UM students.

The university conducted an employment and further studies survey among graduates from bachelor's degrees for the 2013/2014 academic year. The study indicates that the three most popular industries for UM graduates are education, entertainment and gaming, and hospitality, with the employment rate reaching 92 per cent and the median monthly income being MOP 14,000. Twen-



ty percent of last year's UM graduates elected to pursue further studies.

Elvo Sou, head of the Student Counselling and Development Section of the Student Affairs Office and organizer of the fair, said that this year's event aims to teach students about how to make career choices. It provides an opportunity for students to showcase their talent. He added that UM also plans to launch a series of assistance programs to help students start their own businesses.

Students translate Portuguese short stories

UNIVERSITY of Macau students have translated 14 short stories written by Isabel Mateus from Portuguese into Chinese. The translations were made by students taking part in the Master of Translation course within UM's Portuguese Department.

The short stories recount childhood games and toys that are typical of Portuguese rural villages. The local students picked the stories to be translated (which are excerpts from an Isabel Mateus book), bearing in mind their

memories as children and teenagers.

"It was very relevant for me to know more about the way children played in China, and which were the most popular hand-made toys during the time of the grandparents of the students who translated the short stories," Isabel Mateus told the Lusa news agency. The author acknowledged that "the reality of the Chinese students resembles the livelihood of the figures depicted in the stories a lot and also mine."

Old campus sports complex open to public



THE sports complex on the University of Macau's old campus, now renamed the "Centro Desportivo do Nordeste da Taipa" following its January takeover by the Macao Sport Development Board (the Board), will be open to the public starting from today, with only two squash courts and open-air tennis courts available so far for use.

According to a press release issued by the board, citizens can choose to either pre-book or register on-site to use the four sports facilities, whose opening hours start from 7am through until 8pm.

The authorities noted in the press release that other facilities in the sports pavilion are currently under renovation and will be made available for public use by the time the works are complete.

The sports complex has been pending the government's planning arrangements since the university moved into its Hengqin campus last year.

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PURPOSE:

The 56th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale will take place in Venice, Italy, from May 9th to November 22nd, 2015. Albergue SCM is organizing a Visiting Program for Macau Artists, to which all local resident artists may apply. The program includes a visit to the Pavilion of Macau and the various exhibitions being held, as well as the support to the artist Mio Pang Fei, who represents Macau this year. This is an opportunity for the group to appreciate in firsthand the most recent and relevant worldwide artistic expressions.

TARGET GROUP: Artists holding the Macau SAR Permanent Resident Identity Card

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED (PRINTED AND DIGITAL FORMAT):

1. Photocopy of both sides of the candidate's Macau Permanent Resident ID card on one A4 page.
2. One recent 1.5-inch photo
3. Application Form (download at <https://www.facebook.com/creativealbergue.scm>)
4. Personal Information
 - Curriculum Vitae describing the artist's career.
 - Images/ Published Articles about the artist's work.
 - Description of the artist's current creative project

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 10 - 12

DATE: May 6th to May 11th

DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT:

April 2nd, 2015, on the website:
<https://www.facebook.com/creativealbergue.scm>

SELECTION METHOD: An independent jury composed by local artists, scholars and curators, appointed by Albergue SCM, will analyze the curriculums of the candidates. Further interview may be required.

APPLICATION PERIOD:

From now until March 23rd
PRINTED APPLICATION DELIVERY:
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Calçada da Igreja de São Lázaro No.8 Macau

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday to Friday - 9:30 to 13:00; 14:30 to 18:30
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SUBSIDY METHOD:

To each of the selected artists a subsidy of MOP13,000.00 (Thirteen thousand patacas) will be awarded for transportation, accommodation, insurance and other related expenses.

NOTES: Albergue SCM reserves the right of final decision according to this regulation.

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DSAT looking for new head as Wong Wan quits

THE Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, yesterday confirmed that Mr Wong Wan will be leaving his post as head of the Transport Bureau (DSAT). The Secretary clarified that DSAT's chief "resigned for personal reasons" and the government has not yet made a decision on his intended replacement.

"The aim is to fill his position as soon as possible," a statement issued by the chief executive's office revealed. Mr Rosário stated that several services within the public works portfolio have been facing "huge pressure from society" and a resignation request from any department chief "affects, at a certain level, the works of the department."

"When that happens, vacancies will be filled as soon as possible," the statement added. The secretary was speaking on the sidelines of a spring reception for the Macau Chinese Enterprises Association. Upon



Wong Wan

being asked to comment on the sudden resignations of several department chiefs within the public works department, Mr Rosário stated that, "the public works area is currently facing great pressure from society and [these] works aren't easy to develop." He added that the government will remain committed to "finding competent and suitable professionals to fill these vacancies."

However, Mr Rosário acknowledged that those who replace them will still need some time to adjust, and to get a sense of the work of each depart-

ment to later "perform their duties in the best possible way."

Yesterday, Radio Macau reported that Mr Wong Wan would be leaving his post in May. He has served as the head of DSAT since the bureau's creation in 2008. In recent years, Mr Wong and DSAT have come under fire for failing to solve major transportation issues in Macau. Recently, the deputy director of the Transportation Infrastructure Office (GIT), André Ritchie, said he would also be leaving his post at the end of this month. **CP**

Management of coastal waters crucial to development, scholars say

THE Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) held a symposium yesterday exploring the link between Macau's maritime management and the city's sustainable development.

During Xi Jinping's visit to the city in December, the Chinese president announced the central government's decision to commence preparations to grant Macau management of its own coastal waters.

One of the guest speakers, Prof. Leong Wan Chong, said that the 85 square kilometers of management area the city will enjoy under the new scheme could serve to assist Macau's move towards sustainable development. The scholar from the Macao Polytechnic Institute's One Country Two Systems Research Center also mentioned that the SAR government should examine how the territory's limited space could be fully utilized to achieve economic diversification.

Another speaker Prof. Pang Chuan, associate vice-president of MUST, echoed the scholar's remarks, saying the city's coas-



leong Wan Chong

tal water management could help realize a sustainable growth through regional collaboration. The professor told the media that without sufficient land resources, the city's target of transforming itself into a hub for travel and leisure could hardly be attainable. "I believe having [coastal waters management] is an expectation held by everyone, but even so, as the central government claimed, the city's reclaiming of its waters requires the central government's approval," he stated. "However, as long as our government commits to reasonable infrastructural planning – which is conducive to the city's economic development and its goal of becoming a key travel and leisure destination – the central government must show its support." **Staff reporter**

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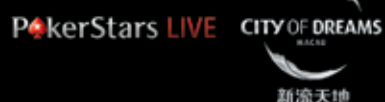
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GAMING

At least 35 pct drop expected in March

LOCAL casinos are expected to close in March with a year-on-year revenue drop of at least 35 percent, with one gaming operator even expecting a fall of over 40 percent.

However, according to gaming industry sources, March revenue will be superior to the one registered in the previous month - unlike back in 2014, when despite being the third best month ever for gaming, March didn't beat the record month of February. Our sources predict a 20 percent drop in gaming revenue in 2015.

If a 40 percent year-on-year March gaming revenue drop is confirmed, that would mean casinos would close the month with MOP21.2 billion in revenue.

"We are in a new phase of adjustment, readapting to a reality where the VIP gamblers are not coming to Macau and are looking for new places [to gamble]," a SJM source told Lusa news agency. "Macau is a



Pedestrians walk past the Galaxy Macau casino resort

preferred place for the Chinese gamblers. The money transferences must be controlled, but we can't scare the gamblers as if all of them were doing something illegal. We must bet in a sustainable market and growth, which should also benefit the local society."

Macau's economy shrank 17.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2014, after casino revenues

slumped and visitors cut spending. The gross domestic product for the full year dropped 0.4 percent, following a 10.2 percent decline in the second half of the year.

The region is heavily dependent on gaming and tourism as the casinos pay a 35% direct tax and another 4% or so in indirect taxes to the local authorities. **MDT/Lusa**

Melco drops as Morgan Stanley lowers to hold on gaming outlook

Stephen Stapczynski and Belinda Cao

MELCO Crown Entertainment Ltd. fell for the first time in three days in New York as Morgan Stanley cut the Macau casino operator to hold, saying revenue will probably keep dropping in the gambling enclave.

Gambling in Macau has slumped as high rollers, who account for about two-thirds of revenue, were dissuaded from playing there amid concern President Xi Jinping's anti-graft campaign will attract scrutiny and after the government tightened visa rules. Chinese consumers also cut spending as the economy expands at the slowest pace in 24 years. Morgan Stanley reduced Melco Crown from the equivalent of buy, projecting a 25 percent drop in gaming sales in Macau this year.

"The primary drivers have been the government crackdown and tighter credit," Matthew Jacob, a director at ITG Investment Research in New York, said by phone. "Trends aren't getting any better. The rhetoric we have seen is that the government will get even more strict."

Traffic into Macau may dwindle further as the government said in January it intends to impose a full smoking ban on all areas at casinos. A VIP-room smoking ban this year would further weaken gaming profits in Macau, Jacob said. Private high-roller rooms are currently exempted from a smoking ban already implemented in other casino areas.

Melco Crown, controlled by Lawrence Ho and Australian billionaire James Packer, has declined 17 percent this year in New York, compared with a 0.1 percent drop in the Bloomberg index of the most-actively traded Chinese companies in the U.S. **MDT/Bloomberg**

Razon to buy Korean island in casino push

Norman P. Aquino

PHILIPPINE billionaire Enrique Razon will buy an island in South Korea to develop a leisure and tourism complex, as he taps the country's growth in gambling on rising tourist arrivals from China.

Bloomberry Resorts Corp., controlled by Razon and operator of a casino in Manila, will buy the 21-hectare Silmi Island through unit Solaire

Korea Co., according to a Philippine Stock Exchange filing yesterday. It's Bloomberry's second announcement of a property purchase in the country this year after the company signed in January four deals with landowners on Korea's Muui Island, which is adjacent to Silmi Island.

Asian casino operators including Bloomberry are capitalizing on a downturn in the gambling industry of Macau as

China's corruption crackdown scares many away from the world's biggest gambling hub.

In contrast, gambling revenue in South Korea and the Philippines will grow 16 percent and 33 percent respectively this year, gaining from the spillover of Chinese gamblers, Deutsche Bank analyst Karen Tang wrote in a note in January.

About 6.1 million mainland travelers went to South Korea last year, an

increase of 42 percent, according to data from the Korea Tourism Organization.

Solaire Korea also signed a deal with shareholders of Golden & Luxury Co. to buy as much as 92 percent of the company, which owns and operates T.H.E. Hotel & Vegas Casino on Korea's Jeju Island, Bloomberry said in a separate statement on Tuesday.

"We are excited at the prospect of Solaire setting



The Solaire Casino in Manila is majorly owned by the second richest Filipino, Enrique Razon Jr

up a base in Korea," Razon said in the statement. "This is our first venture outside of the Philippi-

nes, and the possibilities for expansion in this country are promising." **Bloomberg**

Elaine Wynn campaigns for board seat by touting independence

ELAINE Wynn, the third-largest shareholder of Wynn Resorts Ltd., urged investors to re-elect her to the board next month after the company declined to nominate her.

"No one at the company, other than our chairman and CEO, is more knowledgeable about its history, its operations, its customers or its award-winning staff," she said in a letter to shareholders released yesterday.

Elaine, 72, has been fighting her ex-husband, Wynn Resorts' Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Steve Wynn, in court



over control of her 9.4 percent stake in the Las Vegas-based casino operator. The pair have an agreement dating back to their 2010 divorce that allows him to vote the shares.

The company's board said last month it wouldn't seek her reelection at the April 24 annual meeting, citing her lack of independence under Nasdaq rules and the impact of her court fight on the "atmosphere in and effectiveness" of the board.

In her letter to investors, Wynn said she was the last woman on the board, "an appalling

lack of diversity" for a global consumer-oriented company. Given her large stake, she said her interests and those of investors are aligned.

The company responded by saying 38 percent of the people in senior leadership roles are women, including General Counsel Kim Sinatra and Linda Chen, president of Wynn's international marketing.

Wynn Resorts' board will shrink to seven members, according to a regulatory filing this week. The company said it intends to search for new in-

dependent director candidates that will increase the board size and reflect a diversity of backgrounds.

Elaine Wynn has never had an operating role at the company with responsibility for lines of business or corporate functions, Wynn Resorts said. If she were to regain voting control of her shares, it could trigger a change of control provision that could force the company to make an offer to repurchase debt at a premium, according to Wynn Resorts. **MDT/Bloomberg**

Leon Mangasarian and Dalia Fahmy

ONCE home to track stars and Soviet soldiers, buildings constructed for the 1936 Olympics on the outskirts of Berlin are getting a third lease on life as housing for average citizens.

A developer intends to turn the Olympic Village built under Adolf Hitler and used by the Soviet Union as barracks after the Nazi defeat in 1945 - and where American sprinter Jesse Owens lived while winning four gold medals - into townhouses and apartments.

The plan to restore the crumbling complex, located in Wustermark about 11 kilometers outside Berlin city limits, is part of a building boom around the German capital as residents flee soaring prices in the center. The influx is bringing new life to eastern German villages, many of which have struggled with slumping populations in the 25 years since reunification.

"Lots of Berlin families are moving here," said Holger Schreiber, 53, a former businessman who's now Wustermark's mayor. "When I was growing up here as a boy it was all farms and fields."

Berlin's housing costs have climbed the fastest of any large German city over the past five years, with prices rising 38 percent and rents increasing 30 percent. The gains stem from a tight housing market, as 45,000 new residents have flocked to the city of 3.6 million annually since 2011. The brisk pace has surprised developers, who are now racing to meet the demand.

The soaring prices are prompting families to move further afield to towns in the state of Brandenburg, which was cut off from West Berlin during the Cold War. Brandenburg communities adjacent to the capital have added 20,000 residents in the past five years, enticed by

Hitler's 1936 Olympic site reborn as homes on Berlin's edge



"When I was growing up here as a boy it was all farms and fields," said Wustermark's Mayor Holger Schreiber, a former logistics businessman

cheaper real estate, the area's forests and lakes and commuter lines built in the 25 years since the Wall's collapse.

In Wustermark, located on the autobahn that rings Berlin, 400 people moved to the town in 2014 alone, lifting the population to 8,400. Among arrivals this year are Helena von Hutten and her husband, who works in Berlin as an auctioneer. Last month, they signed a contract to buy a two-story 1920s house with a brick barn. The train ride to Berlin's center takes them 32 minutes.

"Normal earners like us have to look outside of Berlin where it's cheaper," said von Hutten, a 29-year-old stay-at-home mother with three children.

Wustermark issued 176 build-

ing permits last year, contributing to a 20 percent surge in permits in Brandenburg, according to government data. New projects in the area range from large blocks of affordable apartments to luxury villas.

Deutsche Wohnen AG, Berlin's biggest landlord, is spending 17 million euros (USD18 million) to renovate 130 apartments in historic buildings in Wustermark constructed in the 1930s for German railway workers.

"Berlin is booming and the positive economic development is spreading to the surrounding regions," said Stefan Degen, Deutsche Wohnen's head of construction and facilities.

Wustermark's expansion contrasts with population declines

and economic weakness beyond the commuter rail lines.

"Brandenburg is a divided state," said Daniel Foerste, a sociologist at the Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning near Berlin. "In some areas, schools are forced to close, doctors are lacking and the communities are having trouble maintaining basic services."

Wustermark's growth presents challenges. Retaining the rural character is key to Wustermark's attractiveness and farming remains part of the local economy, said Mayor Schreiber. Geese, cranes and grazing roe deer are visible around the town, which is interspersed with fields and meadows with water-filled ditches. Trees have

■ The developer plans to turn the Olympic dining hall into apartments, and the athletes' lodging into townhouses

been planted along the roads.

The village is also struggling to build schools fast enough to keep up with a 50 percent rise in pupils since 2005.

"We're at the limits of our capacity," Christine Scharschmidt, director of the Heinz Sielmann High School, said as she greeted students walking through the immaculate halls of a modern addition to the old school building. "We'll need more space to take in the children who will come when the Olympic Village is restored."

The developer plans to turn the Olympic dining hall into apartments, and the athletes' lodging into townhouses. The swimming pool and sports facilities will be renovated, and the park, with rolling hills, oaks and pines, restored.

"When you walk through the grounds you'll be able to sense what the original Olympic Village was like," said Erik Rosnagel, head of Terraplan, the Nuremberg-based developer. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

'EGGS-TRA' SPECIAL EASTER AT FADO



With Easter fast approaching, this year Hotel Royal Macau is celebrating Easter the Portuguese way at Fado

restaurant with an a-la-carte menu created by Executive Chef, Luís Américo.

The Easter menu offers a

choice of 6 dishes, from appetizers, main courses to desserts. First up is Poached egg over an Easter nest with chorizo and green pea cream soup, then a reinvented appetizer of Squid stuffed with Portuguese sausage and black bean mash; next for main course selections, either Salmon tornedo with Jerusalem artichoke purée and roasted vegetables or Easter Lamb chops with corn textures and spinach stew; and finally for desert, Easter eggs with Portuguese crème brûlée and chocolate crumble and Portuguese pavlova, stuffed with egg cream and roasted Easter almonds to finish.

Fado's Easter Special a-la-carte menu is available from March 30th to April 6th, and is available for diners to mix and match dishes of their choice.

SANDS CHINA CARE AMBASSADORS SHARE CARNIVAL SPIRIT AT THE VENETIAN



Fifty members of the Macau Association for the Parents of the Mentally Handicapped were invited to spend an afternoon at Venetian Carnevale Saturday. They were accompanied by 36 Sands China Care Ambassadors as they participated in the entertainment and festivities of the Italian-themed annual event at The Venetian's outdoor lagoon area.

Before the carnival, the attendees were first invited to Bambu restaurant for a buffet lunch together with the SCCA volunteers. Afterwards, they experienced the festivities on offer at Venetian Carnevale, including face painting, the "Feed the Clown" and "Scooter Shooter" games, and a range of performers from around the world.

For the duration of Venetian Carnevale, which concludes March 29, all proceeds generated from face painting (costing MOP20) and all contributions collected from the donation box placed close to where the Sienta la Cabeza performance takes place will be donated to the association.

"On behalf of our members I would like to thank The Venetian Macao for showing us such a wonderful time today," said Wong Kam Fong, Vice President of the Macau Association for the Parents of the Mentally Handicapped. "As an association we are very happy to be involved with companies such as Sands China, as the support we receive, both financial and otherwise, is invaluable to the work we are trying to do in our community."

Brazil plans to install cotton research centers in Mozambique

A team of researchers from Brazil has been in Tete and Manica in central Mozambique since last week to assess the possibility of installing two experimental cotton research units, reported Mozambican daily newspaper *Correio da Manhã*.

The team has visited the basins of the Lower Chire and Zambezi rivers to assess the possibility of installing the two units, whose construction is scheduled for the current year.

A source at the Mozambican Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security told the newspaper that the main aim of this project was to transfer

BLOOMBERG



A worker stands amongst raw cotton in a container at a distribution warehouse

Brazilian technology for cultivation of cotton varieties with higher yield and that are more resistant to various pests and to promote exports of agricultural equipment.

The team currently in Mozambique is part of the regional project to strengthen the cotton sector in the Chire and Zambezi basins, signed off by the Mozambican Cotton Institute (IAM) and the Brazilian Co-

operation Agency (ABC), and in Tete province will cover the districts of Mágoè, Cahora Bassa, Moatize and Mutarara.

However, the Mozambican Cotton Institute has lowered its cotton production target for 2015, to around 98,000 tons, pointing to the heavy rains that recently shook the central and northern regions of the country as the main cause. **MDT/Macauhub**

PORTUGAL

Government puts railway companies up for sale

THE decree-law for the privatisation of railway companies CP Carga and Empresa de Manutenção de Equipamento Ferroviário (EMEF) is expected to be approved by the government of Portugal by the end of the month, reported the daily financial newspaper *Diário Económico* citing a source in the Economy Ministry.

The newspaper added that, if this date is maintained, the government should start receiving binding proposals for the purchase of the two companies by the end of June and is expected to complete the process in July.

Approval of these diplomas also depends on the non-opposition decision by the European Competition Commission, a process in which the CP-Comboios de Portugal is being advised by BIG bank and law firm SRS Advogados.

The company and the government want to ensure that Brussels does not consider any support that CP has given the two subsidiaries over the years to be illegal subsidization.

The decree-law is expected to include the possibility that the government will sell 100 percent of CP Carga and EMEF, but according to the same source this decision will depend on the proposals that are submitted. **MDT/Macauhub**

Heavy rains are causing a reduction of the country's cotton production

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

HONG Kong's Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying yesterday afternoon held a press conference telling the city's media there was no domestic violence in his family home following allegations made by his daughter on social media, the South China Morning Post reported.

According to the Hong Kong-based newspaper, CY Leung made a plea to the public to give his 23-year-old daughter Chai-yan space, after a spate of Facebook posts yesterday morning that alleged she had been pushed and slapped by her mother and was planning to leave home.

An ambulance and police were summoned to Government House yesterday morning following a series of messages posted on Chai-yan's publicly accessible Facebook page.

SCMP detailed several of the messages, one of which read: "My mother just literally pushed me up against a wall slapped me [sic]. I fell, hit my spine against corner of study table."

She later posted "off to hospital", as emergency services arrived at the residence.

In an unusually personal response to yesterday morning's events, according to the paper, Leung said Chai-yan had been suffering "health problems" and had been emotionally unstable since she started her studies in the UK.

"As a daughter of a public officer, she has been facing tremendous pressure in life," SCMP quoted Leung as saying.

"Meanwhile, there are many public functions at the Government House and therefore she

HONG KONG

Ambulance summoned to Leung's residence as daughter alleges abuse on Facebook

could not have a quiet environment to recover." Leung declined to reveal any more details about Chai-yan's health.

Furthermore, during the 10-minute press conference he denied his wife had been violent towards his daughter, or that she had been barred from leaving Government House - both allegations she made on her Facebook account earlier yesterday before the account was removed at lunchtime.

As stated by the Hong Kong broadsheet, he told journalists that police had confirmed no one at the scene had suffered any injuries.

"I talked to her personally a few hours ago and she said she did not need to go to the hospital or [seek] any medical attention," Leung said.

On the allegations Chai-yan had been held against her will, he added: "You can use common sense to judge, how can anyone possibly imprison a person in Government House", the paper reported.

A spokeswoman for the emergency services yesterday morning confirmed an ambulance had been sent to Government House after receiving a call at 10.50am. "The ambulance has left and no one needed hospital



Leung Chun-ying

treatment," the spokeswoman said at 11.45am.

According to SCMP, she did not reveal why the ambulance

had been requested and it was unclear who had made the call.

A police spokeswoman said the force was also contacted, at

10.51am, saying "a woman needed police assistance". Officers are currently investigating at the scene, she added. **MDT**

Germany, France, Italy to join Beijing-led Asian bank

Geir Moulson, Berlin

GERMANY, France and Italy followed Britain yesterday in announcing that they plan to join a proposed Chinese-led Asian regional bank, swinging Europe's biggest economic powers behind a project that is viewed with concern in Washington.

Britain last week became the first major Western country to seek membership in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Yesterday's announcement brings three more members of the Group of Seven industrial powers on board.

China proposed the bank in 2013 to finance construction of roads and other infrastructure. It has pledged to



put up most of its initial USD50 billion in capital. Twenty-one other governments including India, New Zealand and Thai-

land have said they want to join, but the U.S. and close allies Japan, South Korea and Australia have not.

The United States has expressed concern the new bank will allow looser lending standards for the environment, labor

rights and financial transparency, undercutting the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The Europeans appeared at pains to counter those concerns.

A German Finance Ministry statement announcing the three European countries' plan to join the AIIB said that, working in partnership with existing development banks, it "could play an important role to provide funds for addressing the large infrastructure needs in Asia."

"France, Italy and Germany, in close coordination with international and European partners, are keen to work with the AIIB founding members to establish an institution that follows the best standards and practices

in terms of governance, safeguards, debt and procurement policies," it added.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said the AIIB is an "open and inclusive" organization and China welcomes the countries willing to be its founding members.

"China will work together with all parties to forge a professional and highly efficient infrastructure investment platform that will be beneficial and reciprocal to all parties so as to contribute to regional infrastructure construction and economic growth," Hong said.

The bank is one of a series of initiatives by Beijing to increase its influence in global finance and expand trade links. **AP**

Harvard's president speaks in Beijing about climate change

Didi Tang, Beijing

THE Harvard president told students at one of China's most prestigious universities yesterday that academic institutions must be unfettered places where every topic can be raised and every question asked to help tackle challenges such as climate change.

The comments by Drew Gilpin Faust were part of a 30-minute speech at Beijing's Tsinghua University on climate change in which she urged universities in the two countries to collaborate on research and on teaching the next generation how to deal with climate change.

"Knowledge emerges from debate, from disagreement, from questions, from doubt, from recognizing that every path must be open because any path might yield an answer," Faust said.

Her speech at the alma mater of Chinese President Xi Jinping came one day after she met Xi for discussions on U.S.-China cooperation in higher education and the threat of climate change.

"Universities must be places where any and every topic can be broached, where any and every question can be asked," she told the faculty and students of Tsinghua. "Universities must nurture such debate because discoveries come from the intellectual freedom to explore that rests at the heart of how we define our fundamental identity and values."

The comments contrast with efforts by the Chinese leadership under Xi to impose a more doctrinaire approach to education in China and to purge campuses of what has been labeled Western liberalism.

Since Xi took power in late 2012, some outspoken Chinese professors have been marginalized, silenced or expelled from their institutions. Economics professor Ilham Tohti, an ethnic Uighur scholar who had advocated for the rights of the Uighur minority, was sentenced last fall to life in prison on separatism charges.

This is Faust's second trip to Tsinghua University as Harvard's president. During her previous visit to the school in 2008, she spoke on the value of higher education as "illuminating one's bright virtue."

Faust met this time with Harvard alumni in China. She also invited Xi to visit the Ivy League school, where the Chinese president's daughter has studied. **AP**

PetroChina vice chairman Liao probed by anti-graft body

Joe McDonald
Business Writer, Beijing

THE Vice chairman of China's biggest state-owned energy company has become the latest prominent executive targeted by Communist Party investigators in a spreading anti-corruption campaign.

Liao Yongyuan, vice chairman of PetroChina Ltd., is under investigation for possible "serious violation of the law," the ruling party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection announced late Monday. Its one-sentence statement gave no details but a separate statement by PetroChina said Liao was suspected of violating discipline, the party's term for corruption.

PetroChina is a key target of an anti-corruption campaign led by President Xi Jinping that appears to be aimed at tightening the party leadership's control over politically influential and often independent-minded state industries.

The state-owned oil and gas industry was a power base for Zhou Yongkang, the ruling party's former security chief who was arrested in



In this photo taken April 26, 2011, Liao Yongyuan, vice chairman of PetroChina Ltd. inspects PetroChina facilities in Wanzhou district in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality

December on charges including bribery and leaking state secrets. Control over state companies can provide political figures with jobs to reward supporters and mo-

ney to promote their own careers.

PetroChina is Asia's biggest oil and gas producer by volume but is regarded by executives at other companies as bloated and inefficient.

Its vast cash flow and the complexity of its heavily regulated and politically sensitive industry create ample opportunities to divert money or assets to private use.

At least four present and former executives of PetroChina and its parent, China National Petroleum Corp., have been detained. A former CNPC chairman was fired in September as head of the Cabinet body that oversees China's biggest state-owned companies.

Zhou, who stepped down in 2012 as a member of the party's ruling inner circle, the Standing Committee, would be the highest-ranking Chinese political figure to be prosecuted since the early 1980s. He is a former CNPC general manager.

Liao spent most of his career at PetroChina, working in Gansu province in the northwest and Sichuan in the southwest before becoming its vice president in 2005, according to the company website. **AP**

HONG KONG

Airport gets green light for USD18b third runway



THE Hong Kong government gave final approval yesterday for a third runway at the Asian financial center's airport, aiming to meet surging growth in passengers and air cargo.

Officials said the project will begin next year and cost HKD141.5 billion (USD18.2 billion).

The Hong Kong government is pledging to fund the expansion through a mix of internal funds, external borrowings and higher user fees.

Airport Authority Hong Kong is proposing to levy a HK\$180 additional fee on departing, non-transit passengers until the end of the construction, Chief Executive Officer Fred Lam said at a press briefing in Hong Kong yesterday. It will also retain operational surpluses for a decade and halt annual dividend payments to the government, he said.

"The three-runway system is more than a transport infrastructure project, it is essential to keep our economy going," Anthony

Cheung, Hong Kong's secretary for transport and housing, said at the same briefing.

About 650 hectares of land will be reclaimed from the sea for the runway and a new passenger building. Construction is expected to be completed by 2023.

Hong Kong International Airport expects to reach maximum capacity under its current layout by 2022 at the latest.

Yesterday's announcement did not mention any increases in airline charges to fund the project. The International Air Transport Association warned Hong Kong could lose competitiveness if the airport authority seeks to pay for the runway by raising the fees it charges airlines, IATA CEO Tony Tyler said last week.

Strong growth in China has been a key driver of Hong Kong airport traffic. Most of the visitors to the specially administered Chinese region come from mainland China, which is one of the fastest growing air travel markets. For the rest of the world, Hong Kong is also a gateway to China.

Last year, the airport handled 63.4 million passengers and 4.4 million metric tons of cargo, both records.

The airport predicts that the third runway will allow it to handle 102 million passengers and 8.9 million tons of freight a year by 2030.

Across Asia, airport operators are scrambling to build new terminals or expand existing ones to keep up with growth in air travel. **AP/Bloomberg**

Esther Htu San, Yangon

A Myanmar court yesterday sentenced a New Zealand bar manager and his business associates to 2 1/2 years in prison for insulting Buddhism in an online advertisement that showed a psychedelic depiction of Buddha wearing headphones.

Philip Blackwood, 32, Tun Thurein and Htut Ko Ko Lwin were given two years of hard labor for insulting religion and six months for disobeying an order from a public servant. After the sentencing, Blackwood told reporters as he was getting into a police van that he would appeal.

About 90 percent of Myanmar's people are Buddhist. Perceived insults to the religion are taken seriously, especially in the context of the religious-based violence in the past few years pitting Buddhists against Muslims.

The sentences drew strong rebukes from human rights groups.

"It is ludicrous that these three men have been jailed simply for posting an image online to promote a bar. They should be immediately and unconditionally released," said Rupert Abbott, Amnesty International's research director for South East Asia and the Pacific, in a press release.

Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director of Human Rights Watch, said the three men acted in a culturally insensitive way but should not be sent to prison.



Philip Blackwood, second right, New Zealand general manager of V Gastro Bar, walks with Myanmar nationals, Bar owner Tun Thurein, second left, and its manager Htut Ko Ko Lwin, seen behind Blackwood, upon arrival for their trial at a township court

MYANMAR

Court jails New Zealand man for insulting Buddha

"What this shows is freedom of expression is under greater threat than ever in Burma (Myanmar) just as the country heads into a pivotal election year," he said in an emailed statement.

The trial of V Gastro man-

ager Blackwood, bar owner Tun Thurein and employee Htut Ko Ko Lwin came as Myanmar grapples with a surge of religious nationalism, including violence against Muslims.

About half a dozen monks and hard-line Buddhists gathered

outside the Yangon court to hear the verdict.

"The verdict is fair. This punishment will deter others from insulting Buddhism or other religions," said Paw Shwe, a member of a Buddhist organization.

The three were arrested in December after the image was used to promote the tapas bar and lounge, and have been detained in Myanmar's notorious Insein prison. The online ad was removed and an apology was posted. **AP**

PHILIPPINES

4 Filipino nurses in Libya safe, not kidnapped

Oliver Teves, Manila

THE Philippine government said yesterday that four Filipino nurses reported to have been kidnapped from a Libyan hospital by militants from an Islamic State group affiliate were actually taken to a safe place by a friend and were not abducted.

The Philippine Embassy in Tripoli got in touch with one of the nurses, who said they were all safe, Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Charles Jose said.

An official of a militia battling the Islamic State group affiliate had reported the kidnappings in the Libyan city of Sirte on Monday.

Jose, however, said "a local friend who was concerned for their sa-

fety" had actually taken the nurses from their accommodation to a "safer place."

"Our embassy in Tripoli verified this information and the four Filipinos were not actually kidnapped," Jose told reporters. "They were actually taken from their accommodation to a safer place, and our charge d'affaires from our embassy has actually talked to one of them and they said they are safe."

An official from the 166 Battalion, which is battling the Islamic State group affiliate, had said the kidnappings took place Monday afternoon at Sirte's main hospital, Ibn Sina. He said his battalion helped evacuate the remaining foreign medical crew in the hospital to the Libyan city

of Misrata, where the battalion is based.

There was no word about the fate of seven Filipino oil field workers kidnapped recently in Libya, Jose said, adding that the Philippine Embassy was still trying to determine their whereabouts. No group has claimed responsibility for the abductions and the workers' employers have not received any ransom demand, he said.

The Philippines, one of the world's largest labor exporters, has banned the deployment of workers to Libya due to the escalating violence in the country. About 4,000 Filipino workers and dependents have remained in Libya despite a government offer to repatriate them, Jose said. **AP**

NEPAL

Gov't boosts doctors, rescue efforts at Everest base camp

Binaj Gurubacharya, Kathmandu

NEPAL is adding more medical staff at Mount Everest's base camp and working to speed up rescue efforts, officials said yesterday, in steps to boost safety after 16 local guides were killed by an avalanche last year in the deadliest disaster ever on the world's highest peak.

Four doctors, up from two or three in the past, will be stationed at the base camp's emergency room tent, which will be equipped to handle almost any medical need, said Devi Bahadur Koirala of the Himalayan Rescue Association Nepal.

Authorities have also arranged for rescue helicopters to airlift sick or injured climbers from base camp within 90 minutes, Koirala said. Previously, each team would arrange their own rescue, which would often take hours.

Sick or injured climbers would be first treated at the base camp and airlifted to their lower altitude clinic at Pheriche, located at an elevation of 4,370 meters and if necessary to the

capital, Kathmandu.

During the spring climbing season that runs from March 1 to May 31, more than 300 foreign climbers attempting to scale Everest and their local guides and support staff swell the base camp's population to more than 1,000 people, turning the area into a tent village. In addition, hundreds of trekkers hike up to the base camp during the same time.

Koirala said most of their patients suffer from high altitude sickness, but other common problems include injuries and broken bones of people who slip and fall on the mountain slopes.

In the 2014 avalanche that struck just above the base camp, several local guides and porters who were carrying equipment and supplies at the beginning of the season were swept away by snow, hit by falling ice and rocks, or fell into crevasses. Nepal was criticized for not having a rescue plan during disasters or any government presence at the base camp despite charging climbers huge permit fees. **AP**



Clothes are seen laid out to dry as Adrian Banga surveys his destroyed house in Vanuatu's capital Port Vila

VANUATU

Cyclone flattens the landscape in outer islands

Joe Morgan, Port Vila

RELIEF workers saw a flattened landscape and widespread destruction in Vanuatu's outer islands yesterday after struggling for days to reach the areas of the South Pacific nation hardest hit by a fierce cyclone.

Radio and telephone communications with the outer islands were just beginning to be restored, but remained incredibly patchy three days after Cyclone Pam hit.

Australian military planes that conducted aerial assessments found significant damage, particularly on Tanna Island, where it appears that more than 80 percent of homes and other buildings were partially or completely destroyed, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said.

"We understand that the reconnaissance imagery shows widespread devastation," Bishop said. "Not only buildings flattened — palm plantations, trees. It's quite a devastating sight."

Teams of aid workers and government officials carrying medical and sanitation supplies, water, food and shelter equipment managed to land on Tanna and neighboring Erromango Island yesterday afternoon, said Colin Collett van Rooyen, Vanuatu director for aid group Oxfam. The two islands were directly in the

path of the storm, which packed winds of 270 kilometers per hour when it hit early Saturday.

The destruction on Tanna was significantly worse than in the nation's capital of Port Vila, where Pam destroyed or damaged 90 percent of the buildings, said Tom Perry, spokesman for CARE Australia.

11 people were confirmed dead, including five on Tanna, lowering the earlier report of 24 casualties

"The airport was badly damaged, the hospital was badly damaged but still functioning ... there's one doctor there at the moment," he said. "It's obviously a pretty trying situation."

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that 11 people were confirmed dead, including five on Tanna, lowering their earlier report of 24 casualties after realizing some of the victims had been counted more than once. Officials with the National Disaster Manage-

ment Office said they had no accurate figures on how many were dead, and aid agencies reported varying numbers.

The confusion over how many died in the storm reflects the difficulty officials face as they try to deal with a disaster spread across many remote islands amid a near-total communications blackout.

"Vanuatu is a challenging place at the best of times, in the sense of getting around and logistics," Perry said. "So a situation like this is pretty testing."

Poor weather and communications issues have hampered relief workers efforts to reach the outer islands for days. A break in the weather yesterday gave them a chance to try again, though access remained difficult. Most of the islands have no airports and those that do have only small landing strips that are tricky for large supply planes to navigate. On the main island of Efate, bridges were down outside Port Vila, impeding vehicle traffic.

"There are over 80 islands that make up Vanuatu and on a good, sunny day outside of cyclone season it's difficult to get to many of them," said Collett van Rooyen of Oxfam. "Until today, the weather has been particularly cloudy, so even the surveillance flights would have had some difficulty picking up good imagery."

The relief teams on Tanna and Erromango were planning

to meet with local disaster officials and conduct damage assessments, said Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, disaster coordinator for the U.N.'s humanitarian affairs office.

Some of the islands were just beginning to get their phone networks running again, and technical crews were en route to set up data and voice satellite communications. Officials hoped to restore communications to the islands within 48 hours, Stampa said.

Photos of the islands taken by crews on board Australian, New Zealand and New Caledonian military surveillance flights were being analyzed in the capital, Port Vila. The information will help officials dispatch aid to the worst-hit areas, Stampa said.

"Tanna has a problem with its water anyway; it's dry outside the disaster season, so there's a reasonable chance there's a lack of water there," Stampa said.

Collett van Rooyen spoke to another aid worker who had managed to land in Tanna.

"His description in two words is 'utter devastation,'" he said.

Vanuatu has a population of 267,000 people. About 47,000 people live in the capital.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said 3,300 people were sheltering in dozens of evacuation centers on the main island of Efate and in the provinces of Torba and Penama. **AP**

SINGAPORE

Founding father Lee's condition worsens



The condition of Singapore's 91-year-old founding father, Lee Kuan Yew, has worsened as he remains at the hospital where he has been treated for nearly six weeks, the government said yesterday. Lee was admitted to Singapore General Hospital on Feb. 5 for severe pneumonia and was later put on life support. Lee's "condition has worsened due to an infection. He is on antibiotics. The doctors are closely monitoring his condition," the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement posted on its website. Singapore's first prime minister, Lee ruled for 31 years until 1990, and has been credited with transforming the city-state from a sleepy tropical port to a wealthy, bustling financial hub with one of the highest average incomes in the world. Lee commands immense respect among Singaporeans, who this year will celebrate the country's 50th independence anniversary.

SOUTH KOREA

Top diplomats of S. Korea, China and Japan to resume talks



The foreign ministers of South Korea, China and Japan will meet this week for their first trilateral talks in three years, Seoul officials said yesterday. The annual talks, which began in 2007, have been suspended since they were last held in April 2012 due to territorial and history disputes among the countries. Subsequently, there have been no meetings since then of the leaders of the three countries, who were also meeting annually in a trilateral forum. Japan colonized the Korean Peninsula and occupied parts of China, often brutally, before and during World War II. Tokyo's ties with Seoul and Beijing have further soured in recent years over nationalistic events and remarks in Japan. Seoul's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it expects Saturday's meeting in Seoul to serve as a chance to restore trilateral cooperation systems. The agenda includes ways to strengthen ties among the countries and resume the three-way summit talks, ministry officials said.

Daniel Estrin, Jerusalem

ISRAEL

Netanyahu's future on the line in Israel parliament election

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's political survival was on the line yesterday in a hard-fought parliamentary election pitting his nationalist and security-first ideology against his challengers' focus on the plight of the country's struggling middle class.

Opinion polls showed a tight race heading into yesterday's vote, with Netanyahu's opponents, led by Isaac Herzog of the centrist Zionist Union, showing a slight lead. The last available poll was published Friday, when a significant number of voters were still undecided.

In a dramatic last-ditch effort to appeal to his right-wing base, Netanyahu pledged on Monday night to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state and accused his opponents of endangering the country's safety by seeking peace with its Arab neighbors.

"In order to prevent the left-wing parties from governing, there is just one thing that needs to be done: to close the gap between the Likud and Labor and to vote for Likud," Netanyahu said after voting early yesterday in Jerusalem.

Herzog has promised to revive peace efforts with the Palestinians, repair ties with the United States and reduce the growing gaps between rich and poor.

"Whoever wants to follow (Netanyahu's) path of despair and disappointment will vote for him," Herzog said after casting his vote. "But whoever wants change, hope, and really a better future for Israel, will vote the Zionist Union led by me."

Elections day is a public holiday in Israel. Most people don't go to work, beaches and restaurants fill up, and stores advertise election-day sales.

Israeli election officials said voter turnout so far was higher



AP PHOTO
Ultra orthodox Jews line up to vote in Bnei Brak, Israel

than in other recent elections — with about 14 percent of voters casting ballots by 10 a.m. yesterday. Facebook featured a special "I voted" button in Hebrew, as it has during elections in other countries, in an effort to get out the vote.

Israelis are electing the 120-member parliament, casting ballots for a party list, rather than individual candidates. No party has ever won a majority, and so after an election, it can take weeks of negotiations to form a governing coalition of parties.

Several smaller centrist and religious parties that have not pledged support for either Netanyahu or Herzog will likely tip the scales to determine who will become prime minister.

Netanyahu has governed for

the past six years and has long been the most dominant personality in Israeli politics.

He has swung further to the right in the final stages of the campaign, complaining of an international conspiracy funded by wealthy foreigners to oust him, and warning of a "left-wing government supported by the Arabs," referring to a list of mostly Israeli Arab politicians that according to polls could emerge as the third biggest party in Israel.

This election season has amplified the bitter divide between hard-liners and moderates in Israel.

Earlier this month, tens of thousands of Israelis rallied in a central square in Tel Aviv where a former head of Israel's Mossad spy agency called for

Netanyahu's ouster. And on Sunday, tens of thousands of right-wing Israelis filled the same square to hear Netanyahu and nationalist politicians speak.

Netanyahu has appeared increasingly rattled, and after largely shunning the Israeli media for years, he gave a series of interviews to major Israeli television networks and small regional radio stations.

In a live phone interview on Israeli Channel 10 TV, Netanyahu ruled out a coalition with Herzog and said he would seek an alliance with the ultra-national Jewish Home party, which also opposes Palestinian statehood.

Netanyahu portrayed Herzog as someone who would easily give up territory for a Palestinian state. The Palestinians want to establish a state in the

■ In a dramatic last-ditch effort to appeal to his right wing base, Netanyahu pledged to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state

West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, lands Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

"We have a different approach," Netanyahu said. "They (the Zionist Union) want to withdraw. I don't want to withdraw. If I put together the government, it will be a nationalist government."

Netanyahu's comments marked a political gamble.

For years, he assured the international community that he accepts the idea of Palestinian statehood and that he is ready to negotiate the terms of such a state. Netanyahu has portrayed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as the main obstacle to a peace deal.

"The world needs to listen carefully to this statement and stop calling for talks with Netanyahu over the two-state solution if he is elected," said Saleh Rafat, an aide to Abbas. **AP**

IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

Washington, Tehran resume nuke talks with GOP letter hanging over them

Bradley Klapper and George Jahn, Lausanne

TOP U.S. and Iranian diplomats returned to talks yesterday, seeking to resolve differences blocking a deal that would curtail Iran's nuclear program and ease sanctions on the country. Among the issues they're now contending with is a Republican letter warning that any deal could collapse the day President Barack Obama leaves office.



AP PHOTO
U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Ali Akbar Salehi, from left to right, pose for a photograph before resuming talks over Iran's nuclear program in Lausanne

The discussions between Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif came after a senior U.S. official described Iranian diplomats twice confronting their American counterparts about last week's open letter to Iran's leaders written by freshman Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas and signed by 46 other GOP senators.

The letter came up in talks Sunday between senior U.S. and Iranian ne-

gotiators, the official said, and the Iranians raised it again in negotiations Monday led by Kerry and Zarif.

The official described the Republican intervention as a new challenge for negotiators facing an end-of-month deadline for a framework accord. Zarif confirmed that it was on his mind, telling Iranian state media: "It is necessary that the stance of the U.S. administration be defined about this move." The U.S. official wasn't

authorized to speak publicly on the matter and briefed reporters on condition of anonymity.

Kerry and Zarif met for nearly five hours in the Swiss city of Lausanne Monday, before the Iranians departed for Brussels for talks with European negotiators.

There, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said "we are entering a crucial time, a crucial two weeks." German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said after "more than 10 years of negotiations, we should seize this opportunity." British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said all sides were committed to trying. China, France and Russia are also involved in the negotiations. **AP**

PLAYMATE'S CLUB



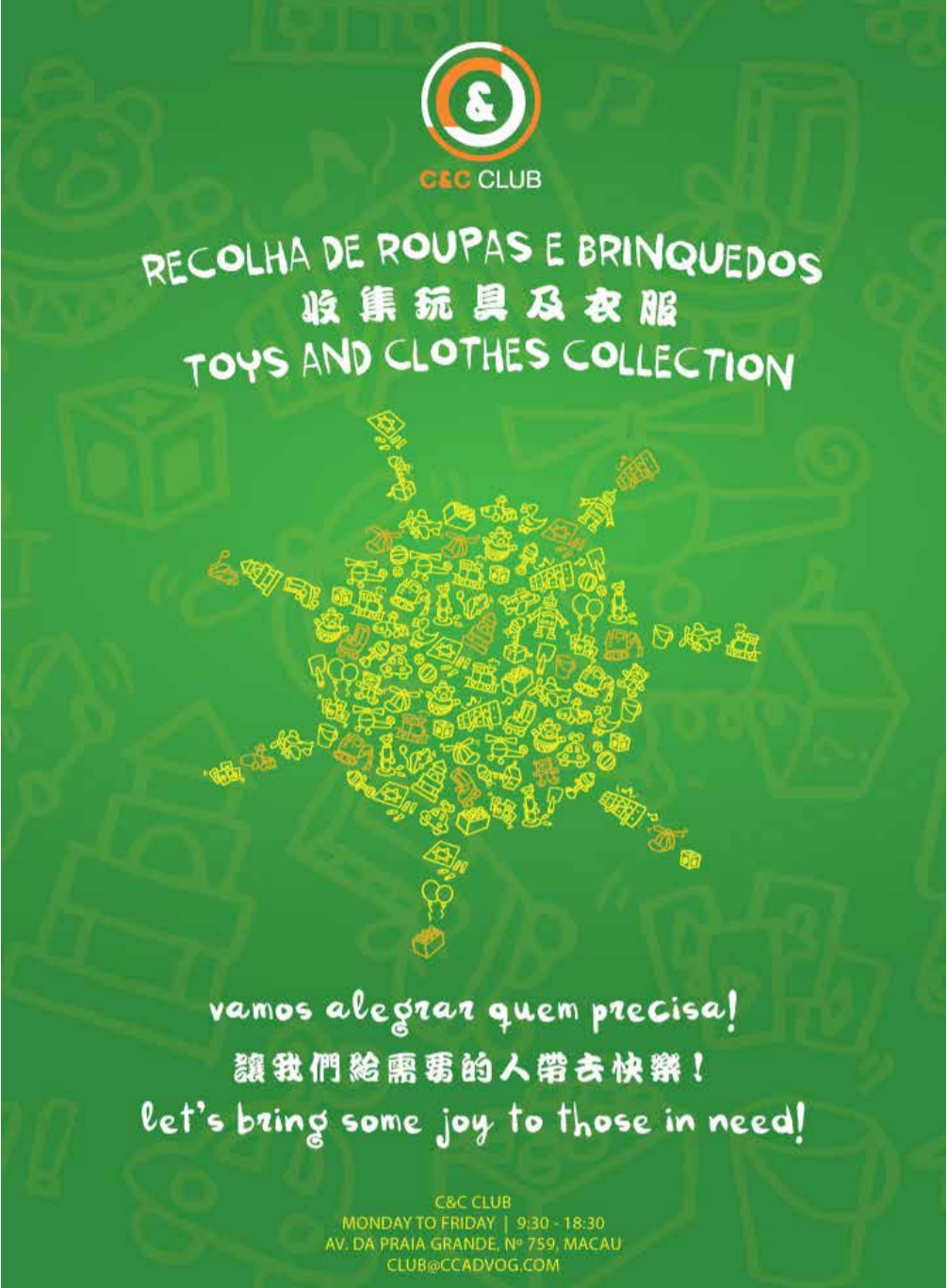
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what's ON



THE PROMOTION PROJECT OF MACAU ARTISTS - CHINESE PAINTINGS EXHIBITION OF CHIO TIN SONG
 TIME: 10am-7pm
 UNTIL: March 25, 2015
 VENUE: UNESCO Centre of Macau, Alameda Dr. Carlos d'Assumpção
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2872 7066

CULTURES OF CHINA, FESTIVAL OF SPRING (CONCERT)
 TIME: 8pm
 UNTIL: March 19, 2015
 VENUE: Grand Auditorium, Macau Cultural Centre
 ADMISSION: Free
 LANGUAGE: Mandarin
 ENQUIRIES: 2856 8832

COOKIN' NANTA
 TIME: 8pm (Tuesdays to Fridays)
 5pm & 8pm (Saturdays & Sunday)
 8pm (March 22, 2015)
 UNTIL: March 22, 2015
 VENUE: Sands Theatre at the Sands Macau/ No.203, Largo de Monte Carlo, Macau
 ADMISSION: MOP280 up

"ONE HUNDRED PHOTOGRAPHERS FOCUS ON MACAU" EXHIBITION
 TIME: 24 hours
 UNTIL: March 22, 2015
 VENUE: Level 2 Showcase, MGM Macau
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8802 8888

MACAU GRAND PRIX MUSEUM & WINE MUSEUM
 TIME: 10am-8pm (Closed on Tuesdays)
 VENUE: Rua Luis Gonzaga Gomes, 431, basement (Tourism Activities Centre-CAT)
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8798 4108 / 2833 3000

RED SANDALWOOD ART EXHIBITION OF OLD BEIJING CITY GATES
 TIME: 12pm-9pm (Tuesdays to Sundays, open on Mondays that fall on a public holiday)
 UNTIL: March 22, 2015
 VENUE: Level 2 MGM Art Space
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8802 8888

RED SANDALWOOD ART EXHIBITION OF OLD BEIJING CITY GATES
 TIME: 12pm-9pm (Tuesdays to Sundays, open on Mondays that fall on a public holiday)
 UNTIL: March 22, 2015
 VENUE: Level 2 MGM Art Space
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8802 8888

Offbeat

US WOMAN: STOMACH PAINS LED TO SURPRISE BIRTH IN SHOWER

A woman stepped into the shower this week to help ease the discomfort of stomach pains. She emerged holding a newborn. Brittany Young, 24, told the Des Moines Register that she knew she was pregnant and had recurring stomach pains last Wednesday. Turns out, Young may have misunderstood a hospital worker in December. Instead of being 12 weeks pregnant then as Young believed, she had 12 weeks left.

"I got in the shower, not even five minutes after that, I was like, my stomach is still hurting. Not even five seconds (later), I had to push," Young said. Soon after, her daughter, Miracle, arrived, weighing 6 pounds, 8 ounces (2.27 kilograms).

"This baby's eyes were open; she was just sitting there staring at me," Young said. "She didn't cry or anything. I was in shock. I was like, there's a baby here."

Dr. Michael Cardwell at Mercy Medical Center said women with a medical condition called precipitous labor means contractions can start a couple of hours before delivery. Cardwell didn't personally treat Young, who has had three other children, but said that women who are already mothers can go into labor quickly.

After Miracle arrived, Young asked her friend in the living room to call an ambulance. The police report says emergency responders found Young's friend holding the child and Young in the shower. Both mother and baby were taken to the hospital.

"I've been in shock for the last couple of days, because I didn't expect a full-term baby," Young told the newspaper, adding that she didn't have clothing or diapers ready. She had gone to the hospital in January, found out she was pregnant and was told "12 weeks" by a technician. She says she likely misunderstood.

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	TDM Interview (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Montra do Lilau
21:40	Fairyland of Earth Building
22:10	Brazil Avenue
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Champions League Highlights
23:50	Documentary Series

cinema

CINETEATRO

12 MAR - 18 MAR



CINDERELLA

ROOM 1

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Kenneth Branagh

Starring: Lily James, Richard Madden, Cate Blanchett

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 112min

CHAPPIE

ROOM 2

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Neil Blomkamp

Starring: Sharlito Copley, Dev Patel, Hugh Jackman

Language: Cantonese (English and Chinese)

Duration: 120min



THE BOY NEXT DOOR

ROOM 3

2.15, 4.00, 7.45, 9.30 pm

Director: Rob Cohen

Starring: Jennifer Lopez, Ryan Guzman, John Corbett

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 91min

STAND BY ME DORAEMON

ROOM 3

(3D) 7.30 pm

Language: Cantonese (Chinese)

Duration: 95min

MACAU TOWER

05 MAR - 18 MAR

CHAPPIE

2.30, 4.30, 7.00, 9.30 pm

Director: Neil Blomkamp

Starring: Sharlito Copley, Dev Patel, Hugh Jackman

Language: Cantonese (English and Chinese)

Duration: 120min

this day in history



1992 SOUTH AFRICA VOTES FOR CHANGE

White South Africans have backed an overwhelming mandate for political reforms to end apartheid and create a power-sharing multi-racial government.

In a landslide victory for change, the government swept the polls in all four provinces, and all but one of 15 referendum regions.

It won 68.6% of the vote in a record turn-out, which, in some districts exceeded 96%.

The extent of change was highlighted in the Kroonstad region of the Orange Free State, where five of the seven Parliamentary seats are held by the "no" campaigners in the conservative party.

Despite being one of the most conservative districts in the whole country there was a small yes majority for change.

Only Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal, a rural right-wing stronghold where Dr Andries Treurnicht has his parliamentary constituency as head of the CP, returned a no vote.

Pretoria, the administrative capital which has symbolised Afrikanerdom, produced a 57% "yes", in the legislative capital, Cape Town, 85% voted "yes" and in the judicial capital of Bloemfontein 58.5%.

"Today we have closed the book on apartheid," Mr de Klerk said in Cape Town as he also celebrates his 56th birthday.

White electors have not only voted by a 2-1 majority to abolish apartheid but also to lose their own power.

Mr de Klerk said the result was a boost for the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, Codesa, but he could not commit himself to a timetable for installing a multi-racial government, which required further discussions

Dr Treurnicht pledged never to work on the Codesa board and that CP would not join the negotiating forum.

He said: "De Klerk has won his referendum. That is clear."

But he vowed there would be a return of apartheid in the country and he blamed media propaganda, foreign intervention and threats by businessmen against employees for the result.

Nelson Mandela, the president of the African National Congress who was jailed for 27 years because of his fight against black segregation, said he was "very happy indeed".

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The following year talks had led to the creation of an interim constitution and in 1994 South Africa's first non-racial elections was won by the ANC and Nelson Mandela became president.

This brought with it a lifting of sanctions, restored membership of the Commonwealth along with South Africa retaking its seat in the UN General Assembly after an absence of 20 years.

Both Mr Mandela and Mr de Klerk won the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize for their very different but effective assaults on apartheid and the progress of South Africa.

In 1999, Mr Mandela stepped down as president.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19

No problem is insurmountable to you and your amazing personal energy! Figure out a few creative solutions just to get warmed up, then wow the crowd with an improvised reaction that looks impossible!

Taurus April 20-May 20

Let others lecture the room — you need to marshal your resources and avoid looking too pompous now. You should find it easy to improve your position if you just keep quiet for much of the day.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21

Don't hold back! Your opinions are firmly held (well, for now, anyway) and should be well received. The social whirl you live in may create a bit of confusion, but it shouldn't last for long.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Sometimes your impulses get the better of you — and then there are days like today, when they make life infinitely better for you! Some little action you quickly decide on sets a positive cascade in motion.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22

People are really paying attention to you today, and you can understand why — you can even see in the mirror how dynamic and charismatic you are! Have fun and try to remember the little people.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22

The day gets a little out of hand by this afternoon, and you could find yourself wishing you could just go to bed early. Work through it all — you've got some great energy coming, and you want to be free to enjoy it!

Libra Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You are closer to your inner workings than usual — as if a barrier has been temporarily lifted. You should be able to plot out your next few moves knowing exactly what you want to accomplish.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

Your boss — whatever that term may mean to you — is causing you stress today. That doesn't mean it's time for a confrontation, but you should see if you can ease back a little in your dealings.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Try not to make a big deal out of it when you find that your situation has suddenly improved — maybe quite dramatically. Your energy has caused the universe to take notice and upgrade you!

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You've got problems — but that doesn't mean you can't focus on business. In fact, those are the issues that are easiest for you to face. It still takes work, but you can pull off a coup!

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Try not to worry about how difficult the social situation is — just make sure that you're playing your part and advocating for what you think is right. Power struggles can't be ignored!

Pisces Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Your friends and colleagues are generally pretty easygoing, but today is not a good time to try to influence them. No matter what, it comes across as a lecture, so give it a rest until tomorrow.

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.

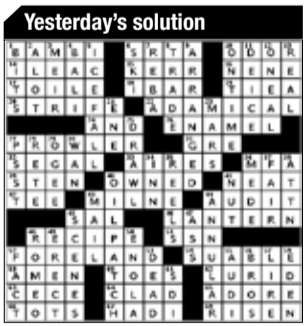
WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Actor Cobb; 5- Gas burner or Sicilian volcano; 9- Rx watchdog; 12- "The Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer; 13- Castle water pits; 15- Dues; 16- Score after deuce; 17- Slender boat; 18- Congers; 19- Ripens; 21- Saliva enzyme; 23- Encourage in wrongdoing; 24- Vietnamese New Year; 25- Oppressively hot; 28- Waistline; 33- Green-lights; 34- Only Just Begun; 35- River of Flanders; 36- Part of TNT; 37- Farm machine; 38- Lilt syllable; 39- Cereal grain; 41- Small brook; 42- Heavy footwear; 44- Guess; 46- Sullenly ill-humored; 47- "Miss Saigon" setting; 48- Actress Kedrova; 49- Substitute; 53- One more; 57- Author Stanley Gardner; 58- Pass into disuse; 60- Caucus state; 61- Prevaricator; 62- Senior; 63- Like a line, briefly; 64- Early hrs.; 65- "...countrymen, lend me your ___"; 66- Capone's nemesis;

DOWN: 1- Neeson of "Rob Roy"; 2- Mother of the Valkyries; 3- Expel gas or odor; 4- First month; 5- Hosted; 6- Browned sliced bread; 7- A Bobbsey twin; 8- On; 9- Examine by touch; 10- Sandwich shop; 11- Org.; 14- Pioneer; 15- Suitably; 20- Baseball stats; 22- Are we there ___?; 25- From head ___; 26- Gumbo pods; 27- Singer Bonnie; 28- Ball girl; 29- First name in stunts; 30- Playground retort; 31- Drat!; 32- Clear the boards; 34- Hold on!; 37- Prickly shrub; 40- Transgressor; 42- String tie; 43- Speech; 45- Deranged; 46- Pit-workers; 48- Coherent light beam; 49- Actress Ward; 50- Barbershop request; 51- Exclamation to express sorrow; 52- Ivy League school; 54- Give an edge to; 55- Baa maids?; 56- X-ray units; 59- Palm Pilot, e.g.;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 1990 992
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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WALES has been forced by injuries to start new props in the Six Nations decider against Italy in Rome on Saturday.

Loosehead Rob Evans and tighthead Aaron Jarvis will carry on where they finished the 23-16 win over Ireland last Saturday at Millennium Stadium.

Jarvis was flung against Ireland early, after Samson Lee went down with left Achilles trouble. Evans joined him for the start of the second half, after Gethin Jenkins, who entered the game with a calf problem, hurt his hamstring but carried it for half an hour to halftime. A front row with 146 test caps suddenly had only 18, including hooker Scott Baldwin. Evans made his debut.

"Rob and Aaron stepped up well last weekend, and we expect the same on Saturday," coach Warren Gatland said at the team announcement yesterday.

Forwards coach Robin McBryde ruled out a summons for 100-cap tighthead Adam Jones, who announced his international retirement in January after he wasn't picked in the Six Nations squad. However, McBryde said they were open to a call from Jones.

The rest of the team was unchanged, with inside center Jamie Roberts cleared after an accidental head knock in the second half.

In the reserves, Saracens' Rhys Gill and Cardiff's Scott Andrews were the covering props, and fit-again Scarlets hooker Ken Owens was recalled for the first time since last June, as Richard Hibbard was undergoing concussion protocols.

RUGBY | 6N

Wales forced to change props for Italy test in Rome



Italy's Edoardo Gori, left, is challenged by France's Bernard Le Roux

Scrumhalf Mike Phillips, capped 98 times, was dropped for Scarlets' Gareth Davies, whose only cap was as a second-half replacement for Phillips in a loss to South Africa last June.

Of the four teams trying to win the title on points difference in the last round, Wales had the third-best points difference and a second disadvantage, the earliest kickoff.

"The challenge to us is to go to Italy and win, and try and win by a significant margin, but we know that's an extremely tough ask, and the first job will be to simply get the result," Gatland said.

"Italy build their confidence around the scrum and lineout drive, and that's an area we are going to have to compete strongly in." AP

WALES LINEUP

LEIGH HALFPENNY, George North, Jonathan Davies, Jamie Roberts, Liam Williams, Dan Biggar, Rhys Webb; Taulupe Faletau, Sam Warburton (captain), Dan Lydiate, Alun Wyn Jones, Luke Charteris, Aaron Jarvis, Scott Baldwin, Rob Evans. Reserves: Ken Owens, Rhys Gill, Scott Andrews, Jake Ball, Justin Tipuric, Gareth Davies, Rhys Priestland, Scott Williams.

FOOTBALL | EPL

Advocaat heads to England to save troubled Sunderland

MUCH-TRAVELED coach Dick Advocaat took his first job in English soccer yesterday when he was hired by Sunderland in the latest late-season change by the perennial Premier League struggler.

The 67-year-old Advocaat replaced Gus Poyet, who was fired Monday after 17 months in charge, to become the oldest coach in the Premier League — and the third Dutch manager currently employed in England's top division.

Sunderland is a point above the drop zone with nine games remaining, and is relying on Advocaat's experience to get the northeast club out of another relegation scrap. The man nicknamed "The Little General" has never been relegated in three decades as a coach.

"Dick has an incredible CV and vast experience of managing at the very highest level," Sunderland chairman Ellis Short said. "We have one aim only now, to climb the table, and everyone is fully focused on the task ahead."

Advocaat's illustrious coaching career has taken in two stints in charge of the Netherlands and spells with the national teams of



Dick Advocaat

United Arab Emirates, South Korea, Belgium, Russia and most recently Serbia. He has been out of work since leaving the Ser-

bian national team in November, just four months into a two-year contract.

As a club coach, he won the Scottish league-and-cup double twice in his four years at Rangers from 1998 to 2002 and has won league titles in his homeland with PSV Eindhoven and in Russia with Zenit St. Petersburg.

The diminutive Advocaat got his nickname from his time as assistant to Rinus Michels — known as "The General" — with the Dutch national team in the mid-1980s.

"Sunderland is a big club, and I am very much looking forward to the challenge ahead," Advocaat said. "We must now concentrate on Saturday at (West Ham) as a priority, and I can't wait to get started."

Sunderland will finish a season with a different coach than it started with for the fourth straight year, with Short — an American businessman — no stranger to making changes to inject life into the team.

Poyet came in midway through last season for Paolo Di Canio, who had replaced Martin O'Neill toward the end of the 2012-13 campaign. O'Neill had come in for Steve Bruce with less than two months to go in the 2010-11 season.

All three coaches kept Sunderland in the lucrative Premier League.

Poyet was fired two days after Sunderland lost 4-0 at home to Aston Villa, which previously hadn't scored an away goal in the league in more than 10 hours. Sunderland has also been beaten 8-0 this season by Southampton. AP

BHUTAN

FIFA's lowest-ranked team advances in World Cup qualifying

The lowest-ranked team in world soccer won again yesterday and advanced to the second round of World Cup qualifying. Bhutan, a Himalayan kingdom ranked 209th by FIFA, beat Sri Lanka 2-1 at home in the second leg and advanced 3-1 on aggregate. Chencho Gyeltshen scored both goals for Bhutan. In the next round, Bhutan will be placed into one of eight groups of five teams and could end up facing Asian powers like Japan, Iran or South Korea. Also, India was held to a 0-0 draw by Nepal in Kathmandu but advanced with a 2-0 aggregate victory, and East Timor beat Mongolia 1-0 in Ulaanbaatar to advance 5-1 on aggregate.

opinion

Artifacts
 Vanessa Moore



CREATIVITY AND COMMERCE

Hong Kong has been hitting the headlines for all the right reasons over the past few days with its current contemporary cultural happenings attracting the worldwide glitterati. The third edition of Art Basel, which closed its doors yesterday, was at the centre of art week in Hong Kong, a time when art and commerce expertly blended together. And of course HK being HK, everything was indeed up for sale. Aside from the art though, the Hong Kong social scene went into overdrive with gallery openings, warehouse parties, charity auctions and artsy dinners, all accompanied by copious champagne quaffing by the likes of Jack Ma, Gwyneth Paltrow, Susan Sarandon and Kate Moss.

Evidently from the above guest list, it takes no Einstein to deduce that Hong Kong is where it's at now. Art has always followed money and power, and evidently the global axis for both has now firmly shifted eastwards. Celebrities, bankers, expats, nouveau riche mainlanders and the international moneyed elite in search of new pieces for their multiple homes all descended on the city to pore over trillions of dollars worth of art over the weekend, with as many as 233 galleries from 37 countries displaying USD3 billion worth of art. As a result, the city has suddenly become a permanent fixture on the international art calendar – which is no small feat in itself.

Under the Art Basel umbrella of global events, also comprising Miami and Switzerland editions, HK now provides an anchor in the eastern hemisphere to foster the Asian and Chinese art market. While international dealers tend to dominate Art Basel, 65 per cent of the contemporary galleries at this year's event were from greater Asia, with 18 from Hong Kong alone. It seems that for some reason the art world was initially slow to wake up to Asia's potential, lagging behind the rest of the world in getting to grips with its financial prowess.

But things have definitely changed. From being known primarily as a financial hub, in a few short years HK has succeeded in cultivating its burgeoning art scene to appeal to a wider international audience. Aside from celebrities and gallerists, the general public is also benefitting from the change with projects like the M+ museum in the pipeline as well as a plethora of events adjacent to Art Basel also popping up. Several other satellite events also complemented the main behemoth Basel experience, with the Art Central art fair launching for the first time this year in a tent on the HK island harbour side waterfront. Aimed at those with more modest budgets, the pop-up brought an edgier side and more galleries to the city's weekend of art.

Fairs like Art Basel present an occasion to see stimulating and thought-provoking oeuvres all under one roof, offering up an assortment of different artists – much like a variety box of liquorice allsorts. However HK has managed to harness its unique competitive advantage of being the most western-friendly Asian city to become a place for Western collectors to discover work by Asian artists, helping to fill the artistic knowledge gap for Western audiences unfamiliar with modern Asian art. Likewise, in a similar but contrasting approach, the fair does the same for mainland audiences, offering a gateway for Chinese buyers to access the Western market and familiarise themselves with both European and American contemporary artists.

As part of this year's Art Basel, international galleries from Tokyo, Zurich, Beijing, New York, London and Sao Paulo (to name but a few) all presented diverse offerings by renowned modern artists. Famous names included Yayoi Kusama, Masaya Chiba, Grayson Perry, Sam Falls, Sarah Lucas (who will represent the UK at this year's 2015 Venice Biennale), Pamela Rosenkraft (the curator of this year's Venice Swiss pavilion) and Joana Vasconcelos (who represented Portugal in the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013).

For those who missed out on Art Basel, fear not. Vasconcelos is also displaying a dramatic installation at Macau's MGM that runs through until the end of October. Titled "Valkyrie Octopus", the mammoth embellished fabric sculpture forms part of the artist's first solo exhibition in China and has been specifically created for the space. While it's true that Macau is no Miami, thanks to Vasconcelos, for the next few months we can at least experience a little of the Venice effect.

THE BUZZ EU POLICE GROUP LAUNCHES TEAM TO TACKLE MIGRANT SMUGGLERS

The European Union police agency has launched a new team to crack down on organized crime gangs that smuggle tens of thousands of migrants across the Mediterranean from North Africa to Europe.

In an example of the work the team will do, Europol announced yesterday that it had supported Greek authorities who arrested 16 suspected people-smugglers last week.

The suspects are accused of arranging travel for 350 migrants, mostly Syrians, who paid up to 9,000 euros each to get from Turkey to the Greek islands and then onward to mainland Europe using forged travel documents.

Europol says some 220,000 migrants crossed the Mediterranean last year, costing 3,000 migrants their lives. A further 1,000 have died already this year.

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	40-60 Good	
High Density Residential Area	65-95 Moderate	
Ambient	30-50 Good	

SOURCE: DSMG

No ordinary job seeker: Prince Harry looking for work

Gregory Katz, London

PRINCE Harry is looking for work – but don't expect him to be sending out invitations to connect on LinkedIn.

No one is likely to keep the fourth in line for the British throne waiting for a job interview, or to grill him about his background – even though he's been caught smoking pot and photographed playing "strip billiards" in Las Vegas.

And if it takes him a while to find the right position, the family fortune should tide him over until his first payday.

Royal officials said yesterday that the 30-year old prince will leave the armed forces in June. Kensington Palace said he will volunteer with a program that helps wounded service members "while actively considering other longer-term employment opportunities."

In the meantime, Harry's final army duties will include a four-week assignment in April and May with the Australian Defence Force. The prince will spend time in Darwin, Perth and Sydney and attend centenary commemorations of the World War I Gallipoli campaign in Turkey.

Harry said leaving the



Prince Harry

army after a decade of service, which included two tours of duty in Afghanistan, has been "a really tough decision" but that he is excited about the future.

"The experiences I have had over the last 10 years will stay with me for the rest of my life," Harry said in a statement. "For that I will always be hugely grateful."

Harry graduated from Sandhurst officers' academy in 2006 and joined the Household Cavalry as an armored reconnaissance troop leader. He served in Afghanistan as a battlefield air controller for 10 weeks in 2007-08 until a media leak cut his tour short.

Keen to return to the front

lines despite fears he would be a top Taliban target, Harry retrained as a helicopter pilot and served in Afghanistan in 2012-13 as an Apache co-pilot gunner.

Most recently he has served as a staff officer in the army's London headquarters, playing a lead role in bringing the Invictus Games – an international sports competition for wounded troops – to Britain.

Harry and his brother, Prince William, have carried forward the tradition of senior royals taking on military roles.

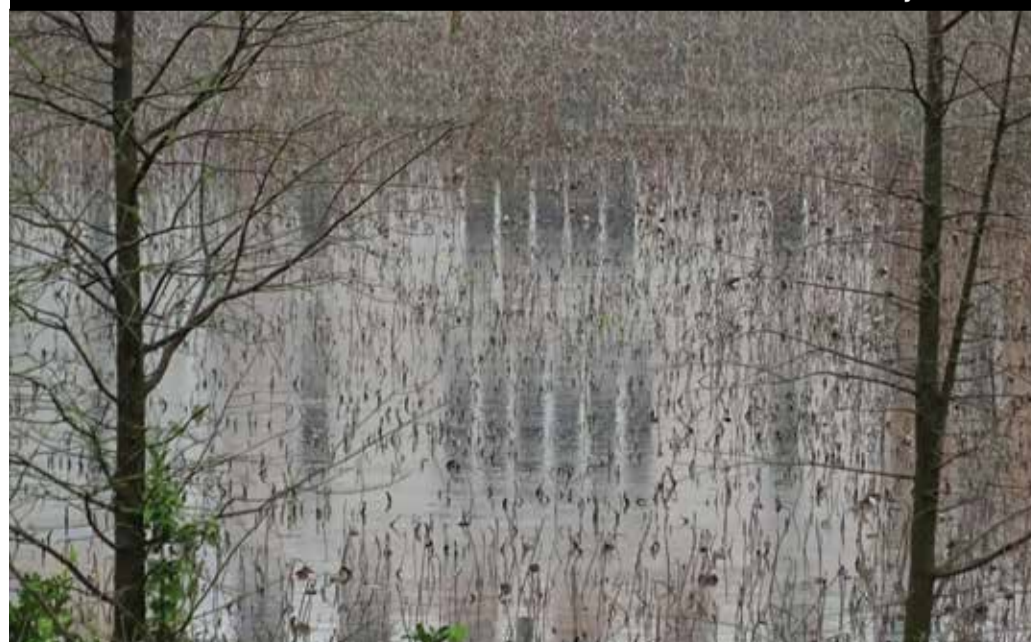
William left the Royal Navy in 2013 after extensive training as a helicopter pilot, and became an air-ambulance pilot. Harry was the first British royal to see combat since his uncle, Prince Andrew, who flew Royal Navy helicopters during the 1982 Falklands War.

Harry has often seemed more comfortable as a soldier than in his royal duties, and he has been visibly energized by his work with charities for wounded veterans.

"It's very easy to forget about who I am when I am in the army," Harry said in an interview after returning from Afghanistan in 2013. "Everyone's wearing the same uniform and doing the same kind of thing." AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Courtesy Mike Lewis



Our reader Mike Lewis just send us this pic which shows The Venetian, Cotai, reflected in the Baía de Nossa Senhora da Esperança wetland. Mr Lewis took the photo last Friday from the Taipa Houses Museum.

WORLD BRIEFS



PAKISTANI officials say they have executed 12 people in the country's single-largest day of executions, after a nationwide ban on the death penalty was lifted. The Home Minister for Punjab province, Shuja Khanzada, said authorities at several different jails in the province hanged 10 prisoners yesterday who had been sentenced to death in murder cases.

MYANMAR The death toll in a weekend ferry accident off Myanmar's northwestern coast has increased to 59 as more bodies were recovered, state-run media reported yesterday. The Myanmar Ahlin newspaper said that rescuers pulled 23 more bodies out from inside the ship in about 30 meters of water, but that the number of survivors increased to 169 from 167.

AUSTRALIA A Roman Catholic archbishop in Australia is charged with covering up for a pedophile priest during the 1970s. Archbishop of Adelaide Philip Wilson said he was disappointed that New South Wales state police had decided to charge him with concealing a serious child sexual abuse offence.

USA Several celebrities have joined the boycott bandwagon launched by Elton John after fashion designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana criticized same-sex parents and the use of in vitro fertilization in an Italian magazine, calling the resulting children "synthetic." Courtney Love and Ricky Martin are among those pledging to ditch their Dolce & Gabbana clothes and support the boycott.



IRELAND Landmark buildings across Ireland and the world have been floodlit green as global celebrations of the Emerald Isle's patron saint are culminating in parades and celebrations in Dublin and other cities for St. Patrick's Day.