



LOCAL SHORT FILM RECOGNIZED IN CANADA

Cheong Kin Man will receive his 2015 Rising Star Award for "A Useless Fiction" this coming April in Vancouver

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WORLD BRIEFS



USA Oscar-winning actress Angelina Jolie revealed yesterday that she has undergone more preventive surgery, having her ovaries and fallopian tubes removed in hopes of reducing her risk of cancer. Writing in the New York Times, the filmmaker and philanthropist said that a recent blood test showed a possible early sign of cancer. The news came as a blow to the star, as she has already had a double mastectomy.

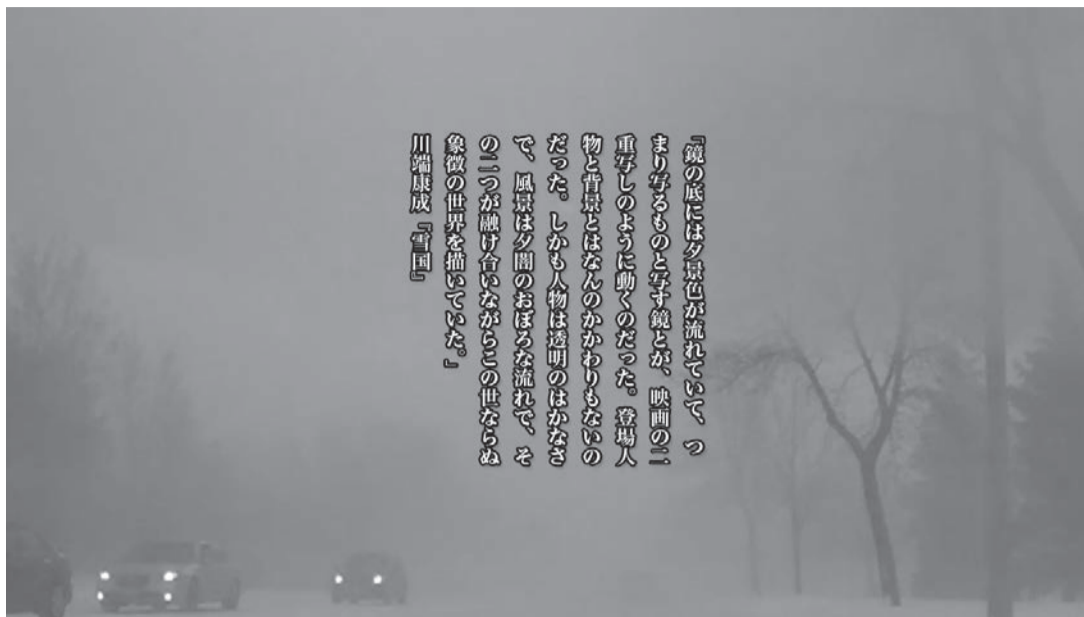
CHINA's manufacturing fell to the lowest level in nearly a year as new orders shrank, according to a report that underscored the weakening outlook for the world's second biggest economy. [More on p10](#)

JAPANESE government auditors say the operator of the destroyed Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant has wasted more than a third of the USD1.6 billion in taxpayer money allocated for cleaning up the plant.

More on backpage



CHEONG KIN MAN (IN BERLIN). IRANIAN VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGIST SADAF JAVANI



A still from the film (the text is an excerpt from Yasunari Kawabata's "Snow Country")

CHEONG KIN MAN

Local short film recognized at Canada International Film Festival

IF inherent creativity and years of experience in video production was all it took to produce a good film, local translator and interpreter Cheong Kin Man's success would surely challenge that kind of thinking. His latest award-winning short film has premiered at the Canadian International Film Festival.

The Macau-born language enthusiast will receive his 2015 Rising Star Award for "A Useless Fiction" this coming April in the Canadian city of Vancouver. As part of his graduation project for a master's degree in Visual and Media Anthropology at Freie Universität Berlin, Cheong

told the Times that his lack of filmmaking background combined with encouragement from his lecturer and supervisor enabled him to think outside the box, setting him free from traditional cinematographic approaches.

"I did not really have an anthropological nor filmmaking format in my mind," said Cheong. "My supervisor, Laurent Van Lancker, encouraged me not to do a film in a traditionally structured way, and Kristian Petersen, my poetic framing teacher, told me in the very beginning of the filmmaking process that I could do whatever I would want to. I felt totally free throughout [the process]."

According to the filmmaker, the 31-minute short took less than three months to finish before it entered the film festival's "Experimental Film Competition." For Cheong, it was nothing more than a fruitful result after two years of studies, which offered him fresh insights into perception of this world

through cinematography.

Born and raised in the former Portuguese enclave, the film enthusiast expressed how he felt compromised by the overwhelming power of language and complex cultural divisions throughout his life, which he sought to reflect in what he described as "a series of multilayered fictive or true stories through visual, [aural] and textual manipulations."

"In the film, I tried to show how I had been struggling among many kinds of contrasts from different cultures and ways of thinking through languages," said the filmmaker, who also described himself as "too greedy" since he intended to squeeze his longtime struggles against cultural complexity in the half hour film.

Inspired by Kon Ichikawa's film and Michio Takeyama's novel, and the multiculturalism in Singapore (where he spent two months on a sociological research internship), the

fickle filmmaker initially could not settle on a particular idea for his production project. He finally decided to present his lifelong dilemmas and struggles to the audience. His intended idea was to continue a previous project on local Macau identity, which he called an "amateur documentary" and was completed in 2009.

The film's English name, "A Useless Fiction," was actually a translation from the official international title in Portuguese. Cheong told The Times how baffled he felt while editing the film and writing its thesis, yet it was this confusion that gave birth to the film's name.

"The idea came from the nothingness in Buddhism explained by the Japanese monk, Mumon Yamada."

"I was very confused during the editing and thesis writing process where I saw my film as totally useless," he said, adding that the film also showcases his confusion and bafflement during that time,

which he found difficult to explain in words.

Following the Canadian film festival's recognition of his efforts, the filmmaker would like to express his heartfelt gratitude to those who helped him along the way. Cheong said: "There are too many friends to whom I really wish to thank. First of all, I need to say thank you to my mother Ho Hang Fan for her endless support and love, [also] to songwriter and singer Hsu Shi-tien from the United States for her beautiful voice, and Dabin Park from Korea for her patience in rewriting my script in Korean."

The Canadian International Film Festival ranks among the top film festivals in Canada. It is running for the ninth consecutive year, bringing Canada the very best of world cinema from over 90 countries around the world. Each year, the festival awards the top films and filmmakers, writers and actors in all main categories. **Staff reporter**

I tried to show how I had been struggling among contrasts from different cultures and ways of thinking through languages

CHEONG KIN MAN

Illustrator's artwork to be displayed

TALENTED local artist Eric Fok will present a new collection of artwork in his first solo exhibition for the year, which will be held at AFA Macau from 26th March to 25th April.

Making its first appearance this Thursday at the exhibition, called "Land-

fall - Works by Eric Fok," is the young illustrator's brand new series, "1513." According to the artist, the idea of the title originated from the year when Portuguese voyagers first set foot in the city, illustrated through Western painting.

In 2013, the local artist's work was

included in the "Bologna Illustrators Exhibition," where only 77 out of 3147 participants from around the globe had their illustrations on display. He was one of the only two Chinese artists in the internationally renowned exhibition.

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 Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84
 Advertisement: advertising@macaudailytimes.com
 For subscription and general issues:
 general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

Paulo Barbosa

IT was an uneventful afternoon at the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday, where the chief executive was, for the second consecutive day, tasked with answering lawmakers' questions. They were mostly non-controversial questions, even from outspoken lawmakers like Pereira Coutinho and Ng Kuok Cheong. The main topics addressed were economic diversification, regional cooperation and elderly care. It was so humdrum that some of the attendees found time to take a nap or play video games while the CE was replying to the lawmakers.

The session began with easy questions: Kou Hoi In was one of the lawmakers to note that the local economic structure is too dependent on gaming, saying that "now is the time to promote the diversified development of the economy."

In response, Mr Chui Sai On said the new government is placing great importance on economic diversification and professional training. "We noticed a fast development of the gaming industry in the past few years. The government actions were planned bearing in mind that the gaming sector was driving the other economic activities," he stated, adding that the local authorities hadn't predicted such a fast pace of gaming development.

Appointed lawmaker Cheang Chi Keong expressed concerns with the gaming slowdown and asked about the factors that led to such a massive fall.

"The government will do what it can to stabilize the situation. The gaming sector has a relatively high weight in the local economy. (...) The new [gaming] projects continue to be developed and will have a major influence in gaming and non-gaming activities. The percentage of VIP rooms/mass market has been changed, with the latter gaining importance. But the gross gaming revenue is still MOP20 billion per month; comparing with other countries where gambling is legal we are still on top," the chief executive said.

However, Chui Sai On admitted that there is "structural change" in the gaming sector, and praised the fact that the number of tourists didn't go down – a fact that, according to him, will be beneficial to Macau's major industry.

The government leader noted that the local economy's entering a "normal adjustment phase," and said the region is ready for the challenge through measures like the creation of an investment fund to better manage the region's financial reserves.

Chui also said there would be "a certain budget control" due to the new financial prospects. Despite that, he said that the administration intends to hire more staff in the health and, especially, security sectors. The priority given to security was explained by the fact that "it takes longer to train per-

POLICY ADDRESS 2015

Uneventful debate at the AL, diversification and cooperation top concerns



CONSULTATIVE BODIES WITH SHORTER MANDATES

THERE WAS almost no reference to the creation of a municipal body devoid of political power, as announced by the CE on Monday. Regarding consultative bodies, the CE said that several of them were created during the 15 years of the MSAR's existence and it is now "time to review those bodies, whose members shouldn't have mandates superior to two, three years."

sonnel" for security forces.

Adaptation strategies seem to be arising, given the "new normal" in Macau. The CE said that the government wants to promote non-gaming related activities along with regional cooperation. "In order to diversify the economy we hope to develop works related to regional cooperation and use vacant land to overcome the problem of lack of space. We also need to promote the training of talents," he said.

Chui Sai Peng said "the high speed development registered during recent years has caused difficulties in governance," and then inquired about the cash handout program. Chui Sai On said that the population has welcomed the

measure, introduced in 2007, but also mentioned "scholars and experts" who say it "is not in accordance with the economic laws."

Chui hinted at a possible review of the program, highlighting that "it is not a regular mechanism" and is seen as a way to distribute public income, and could be indexed to it.

Head of the Macau Civil Servants Association Pereira Coutinho denounced what he deemed "unequal treatment" of public servants, who consequently want an early retirement. The CE replied that the authorities are increasing benefits, especially to front line workers, adding that the career progression for public servants will be revised.

Space available for elders in Hengqin

EARLY retirement was one of the issues Eup for debate, with the issue raised by both New Macau Association representatives, Au Kam San and Ng Kuok Cheong. The former said that elderly people were led to believe that they wouldn't suffer financial losses if they retired earlier, before the latter revealed that they, in fact, had lost money.

"We will put in efforts so that the elderly have a dignified life after retirement," answered Chui. "Respect for the elderly is a good feature of ancient Chinese culture and the ol-

der people should be able to live in the same neighborhood where they lived [during their active life]." The CE pledged more investment to create more elderly care homes and strengthen the healthcare.

Concerning local elders gone to live on the mainland, he mentioned that, should they want to return to Macau, they could be housed in Hengqin, and said that he would ask the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture to look into the introduction of the measure.

So Chio Fai approached the regional cooperation debate by commenting that the round-the-clock border brought positive results. The CE added that the HK-Zhuhai-Macau bridge is also expected to enhance the cooperation, as are the "high level meetings" between the Pearl River Delta regions.

Regarding public works, Ho Ion Sang said there's a "vicious cycle" that results in low-quality projects due to under-budgeting and delays. The CE agreed, although he declared that government law experts advised him against addressing the light rail transit issue. He said that a compensatory measure should be introduced in future public contracts in order to safeguard the government's interests.

The troubles faced by the local middle class were brought up by lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng. She said that youths that own their property are "slaves to their homes" and those who don't own

The gross gaming revenue is still MOP20b per month; comparing with other countries where gambling is legal, we are still on top

CHUI SAI ON

a flat face surging rents. The CE argued that "the government predicted the fall of housing, food and other prices." He also mentioned the introduction of mechanisms targeting the middle-income earners, such as medical benefits and tax exemptions.

The "tragic reality" of public housing was mentioned by Au Kam San, who said that over 40,000 families had applied to the scheme and couldn't get a flat. The CE indicated that the affordable housing law should be amended, but also that many of those families weren't eligible for the scheme, or could find a place in one of the 19,000 units built under the scheme, since some of them remain vacant.

Robert Carroll, Hong Kong

IT'S been a long-awaited and welcome return to the movie theatre for both veteran actress, screenwriter, and director Sylvia Chang and lead actress, Macau-raised Isabella Leong in "Murmurs of the Heart", this year's premiere of the Hong Kong International Film Festival. Ang Lee hit-movie star Chang has not directed a film since 2012 and Leong has not made a movie since appearing in the final part of the Hollywood "Mummy" trilogy, "The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor". In between filming, Leong remained the subject of intense public interest as the mother of three Li Ka-shing grandsons, fathered by son and heir Richard Li.

"Murmurs" takes on the subject of dysfunctional families through the past and present lives of two generations. It sees lost soul Yu-mei (Leong) as an artist living in Taipei struggling to maintain a relationship with an equally lost Hsiang (Joseph Chang), who's losing a battle to remain a professional boxing contender.

Yu-mei was cruelly separated from brother Yu-nan (Lawrence Ko) with whom she was very close when her mother took her away from their

Macau-born Isabella Leong triumphs in HK film festival premiere



COURTESY DANIELA JURISOVA

island home to the mainland of Taiwan. So a second narrative strand through the film is whether the two estranged siblings can deal with their in-

ner demons and reconcile.

Imprisoned in the past as they are their childhood home, Green Island, a former prison island is a fittingly claustropho-

pic setting for the protagonists. Through a weaving of flashbacks and contemporary stories, Chang's empathetic tale of losers seeks to reveal the tragedy of unfulfilled lives trapped in unhappy childhoods, unable to make sense of a terrible family split which saw on the one hand, brother and father, and on the other, sister and mother, separated - more, torn apart - by their mother's decision to leave her boy behind.

Leong and Chang as the two main protagonists, the anguished artist and the boxer, produce tour de force performances evoking empathy despite their weaknesses, surprisingly in the case of fighter Hsiang, a largely unlovable cold character who is only able to connect to his real emotions when his world is falling around him.

While the acting is the film's

strongest point, the stabs at magical realism - although laudable pieces of cinematography - the underwater dream sequences come across as a little forced. The justification for these and the thread that takes us there comes from the fact that the mother used to tell them fairy tales of mermaids when they were children. The sea is used again as a metaphor for separation and works better when mother and daughter are caught in a ferry in the middle of a terrible storm where disaster looms. A pity that scene was not prolonged.

The boxing scenes are likewise very well acted and choreographed and, mercifully, lack any melodrama or over acting seen in many a boxing movie. Hsiang's sad slide away from his fighting goals despite his best efforts in training are made more poignant by the fact that he's an athlete who's still smoking and drinking beer.

While the two main characters are engaging, the mother Jen (Angelika Lee Sinje) of the separated siblings has too little room to gain much of our sympathy. Neither does the brother appear enough, nor is allowed to spread his acting wings sufficiently; nevertheless competent and believable performances by both.

AD



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MURONG XUECUN

Chinese dissident writer speaks at USJ

MURONG Xuecun, one of China's first web-based novelists, social critic, and now contributing opinion writer for The New York Times, delivered a speech at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) on Monday as part of The Script Road.

As one of the most vocal writers against censorship in China, Murong is known for his defense of freedom of expression. In recent years, he's also gained notoriety for his fearless blogging and opinion pieces. He had about 8.5 million followers on Weibo, China's equivalent of Twitter, before censors shut down his account in May 2013.

Shortly after, the dissident author gained a powerful platform for his views with The International New



York Times. However, web publications of his opinion pieces are blocked in mainland China. Under the tense circumstances, Murong left Beijing and is now based in Hong Kong.

Sewell Chan, deputy editor of the newspaper's op-ed section, previously told Foreign Policy that the paper decided to invite Murong "because of the literary acclaim his fiction has received, as well as the popularity of his essays, his blogging, and his other non-fiction

writing in China."

The writer, whose real name is Hao Qun, was born in 1974 to a farming family in Northern China's Jilin Province, and studied law at the China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing, graduating in 1996. His debut novel "Leave Me Alone: A Novel of Chengdu," first published online in 2002, propelled him to stardom and later sold more than one million print copies. His 2008 novel, "Dancing Through

Red Dust," delved into the secretive world of China's legal system, and has been translated into French and English.

According to a source, the writer was sent by The Script Road to USJ Monday morning, replacing another speaker - children's literature author Joe Tang - at the last minute.

The same university stunned local society and academia last year in its dismissal of Eric Sautede, a senior lecturer of Political Science, for his active comments on local political affairs. Rector Peter Stilwell saw Sautede's comments as putting the university's pursuit of a new campus project in danger. The event that triggered the sacking, according to Sautede, was a dispute over a lecture with historian Frank Dikotter - whose books show a critical view of communist China.

The Times sought comments from the USJ's vice rector yesterday, as Stilwell is currently out of town, but did not receive a reply by press time. USJ's News & events website page has not mentioned the presence of Murong on campus. **BY**

CE to attend annual Boao Forum in Hainan



CHIEF Executive Chui Sai On will be in Hainan Province this weekend for the opening of Boao Forum, held as part of Asia Annual Conference 2015. The Chief

Executive will attend the four day forum, themed "Asia's New Future: Towards a Community of Common Destiny," this Friday and Saturday.

O Lam, Chief-of-Office of the Chief Executive's Office; Chan Chi Ping, Director of the Government Information Bureau, and Fung Sio Weng, Director of Protocol, Public Relations and External Affairs, will accompany the CE to the conference.

The Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Macao Special Administrative Region, Hu Zhengyue, was also invited to join the delegation.

The Secretary for Administration and Justice, Chan Hoi Fan, will serve as Acting Chief Executive when the CE is out of town.

AD

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MIECF

Environmental fair to focus on air quality

Brook Yang

THE annual Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum and Exhibition (MIECF) is set to take place from tomorrow to Saturday, hosting its eighth edition at the Venetian Macao. For the first time, “air quality” has become the focus of MIECF’s activities.

Themed “Green Economy – Solutions for Clean Air,” the fair will emphasize the solutions and business opportunities available in the pursuit of clean air. It will consist of an inter-

national forum, exhibition, as well as business matching and networking activities, aiming to provide a green platform designed to promote the environmental industry’s development.

During the three-day event, more than fifty environmental experts, corporation executives, and policy makers from different countries and regions will deliver speeches in a series of sessions; namely, “The business case for better air quality: solutions for the commercial and industrial sectors,” “Reviewing air quality and the transportation industry,” “Stra-

tegrating climate change mitigation – innovation in policy and technology,” and “Clean urban air – lessons learnt and future trajectories.”

For this year’s keynote speech, the organizer has invited the “mother of sustainable development,” Ms Gro Harlem Brundtland, who served as former Prime Minister of Norway, former Chair of the World Commission on Environmental Development (WCED), and UN Special Envoy on Climate Change. Besides a speech in the morning of the opening day, she will also share her expe-

rience with participants during a special interview session on the afternoon of 27 March.

“More and more scholars have been attracted to the MIECF with the purpose to meet the speakers,” said the Executive Director of the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), Ms Irene Lau, at a press conference held yesterday.

This year’s MIECF has also attracted over 450 exhibitors from 22 countries and regions to showcase their products and services at the “Green Showcase.” In the venue that covers an area of 16,900 square meters, international brands and environmental technology suppliers will present solutions for energy efficiency, renewable energy, green building, green transportation, and waste and water management, as well as air purification technology and the monitoring and treatment of atmospheric emissions.

To strengthen regional coope-

ration, a roundtable discussion will be held particularly for the Pan-Pearl Delta River region on air pollution prevention policies and treatment technology. In addition, a Green Chemical Forum will be held to strengthen the oil industry’s standardization management and explore a green road suitable for the sustainable development of Chinese petrochemical enterprises.

“The purpose of MIECF is to highlight Macau’s role as a platform for idea exchanges and industry networking in the environmental protection field, in order to facilitate more cooperation in the green industry,” said Ms Lau.

The Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA)’s acting director, Vai Hoi Jeong, also stated that the event hasn’t just been a platform, but also a driving force, behind Macau’s environmental industry.

“It has also been very educational for our government officials and business leaders. Many of our government officials have become aware of environmental issues through this event, such as myself; they expanded their horizons in terms of environmental protection technologies,” he said.

The exhibition has grown significantly in its scale from 25 exhibitors in its first edition. Meanwhile, a total of 180 business protocols have been signed over the past seven editions of MIECF; during the fair this year, 22 more will be signed.

The budget for the event has stood at between MOP25-26 million for the past five years. Ms Lau said this was attributable to the organizer’s efforts in reducing marketing costs as well as reducing waste. “95 percent of the construction material used on the Macao Pavilion is recyclable. This is how we are going to educate our Macau people,” she said.

Gov’t to implement minimum wage for all sectors in 2019

A minimum wage will be fully implemented in all sectors during Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong’s term of office, emphasized Cheang Chi Keong, chairman of Legislative Assembly (AL)’s third standing committee, citing the secretary yesterday.

According to the chairman, Leong reiterated his promise that minimum wage will be fully implemented no later than three years after the new law on minimum wage takes effect. The lawmaker also estimated that if the bill,

which stipulates the minimum wage for cleaners and security guards, is passed by the AL in May, it will come into force in December this year. Accordingly, he expects a full implementation of the minimum wage in 2019.

The committee continued discussing the minimum wage bill for cleaners and security guards yesterday, where government representatives introduced lawmakers to the enactments of supporting laws for implementing this bill. The government has started the

legislative process for the amendment of laws and regulations on the management of buildings, and will launch the legislative process for regulating the property management sector in May.

In a Q&A session with the AL on the Policy Address yesterday, the Chief Executive Chui Sai On also stressed that the government will proactively implement the minimum wage. He expects the bill will be passed and that the scheme could be extended from the first two professions to all sectors in Macau. **BY**

All students poisoned with carbon monoxide released from hospital

ALL the schoolchildren from a local international school suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning during a field trip to a bread factory located at Rua da Praia do Manduco two days ago have been discharged from the hospital last night after treatment.

According to a statement released yesterday by the Health Bureau, the authorities have already ordered the factory to suspend its entire operation until further notice for safety reasons. Meanwhile, the bureau urged other education institutes to cease baking classes or activities at the factory involved.

On Monday morning, ten students from the international school, around nine years of age, followed their tea-

chers to the bread factory for a baking session. With the air-conditioning running, all windows and doors inside the workshop were kept closed until the stove was turned on. Later, three students displayed symptoms of nausea and were rushed by ambulance to the Hospital Conde S. Januário for blood tests. The remaining students also went to the hospital with their families, with some of them claiming illness.

Dizziness, nausea and vomiting might arise as symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. It can also induce a coma and even death. As part of standard safety practices, stove users must keep the room ventilated while using related equipment. **Staff reporter**



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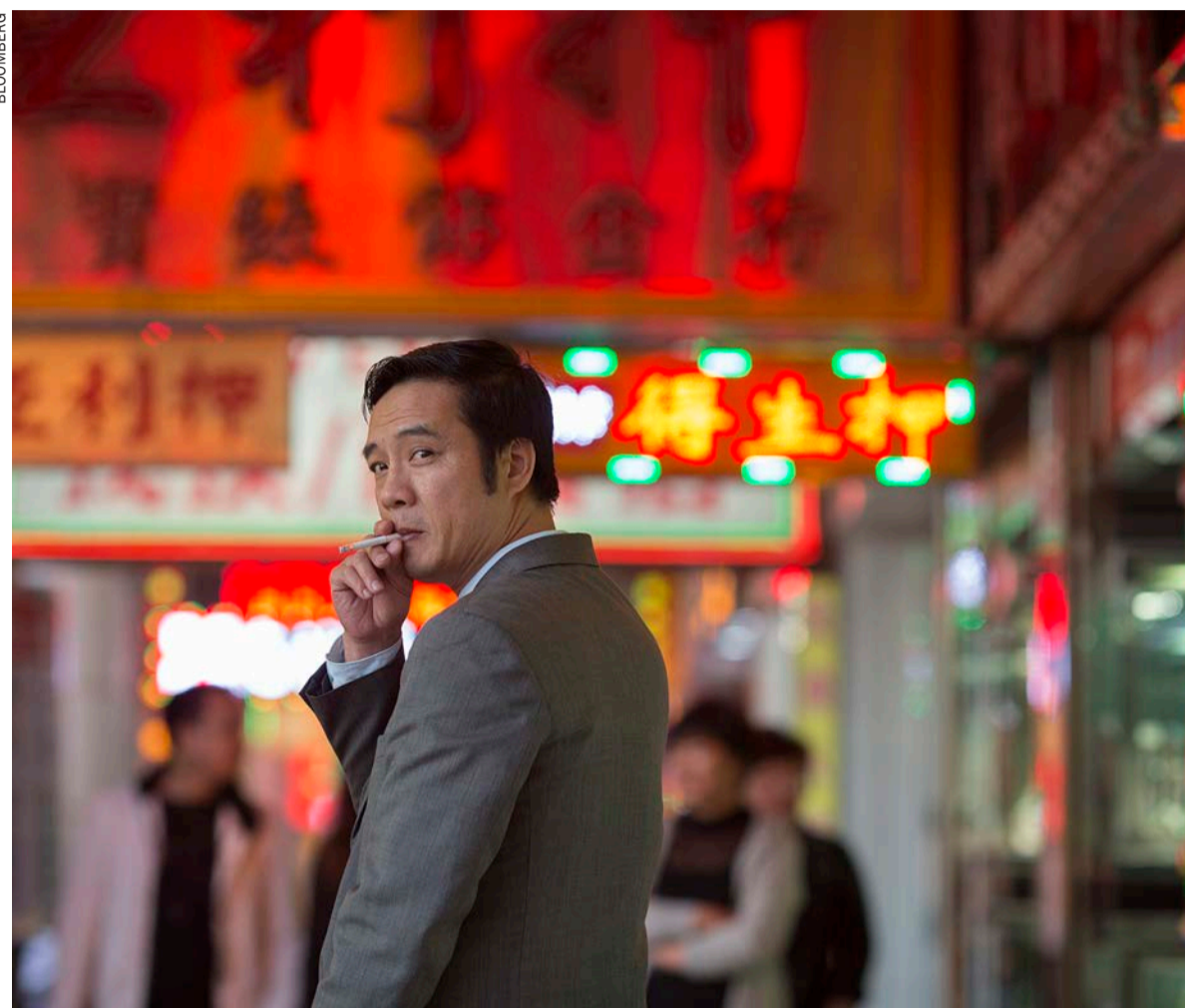
ANALYSIS

Can smoke-free casinos still cash in?

THE boom times are over in Macau. The Chinese gambling hub's gross domestic product plunged a horrifying 17.2 percent in the fourth quarter, and the government has curbed its projected casino revenue for the year by 27 percent. China's slowing economy and the government's anticorruption campaign are largely being blamed for fewer big spenders hitting the casinos. But there's another factor contributing to the woes of casino operators such as Sands China and Wynn Macau: a ban on smoking on the main floors of Macau casinos.

The policy took effect last October, and it's leading some casino guests to go outdoors to light up. For casino operators, that lost playing time "is crucial," says Tim Craighead, an analyst in Hong Kong with Bloomberg Intelligence. "If I have to get off the table every hour to smoke a cigarette, that's 20 percent of the time I would be playing that I'm not." For now, the restriction on cigarette smoking is limited to the main gaming floors, with people still allowed to light up in VIP rooms and smoking lounges. The government is readying a proposal for lawmakers to implement a complete ban next year.

The policy is a victory for Macau casino workers, who were fed up with breathing secondhand smoke hour after hour. Workers in casinos often suffer much higher exposure to secondhand smoke than other types of workers, according to a 2007 report published in the Tobacco Control Legal Consortium. The exposure level in casinos "can be 2.4 to 18.5 times



higher than in offices and 1.5 to 11.7 times higher than in restaurants," the report said.

Macau's policy isn't exactly setting a trend in Asia: Singapore allows smokers to light up in designated areas of the city-state's two casinos, and the Philippines and other Asian gambling hubs are smoker-friendly.

But it does reflect a move that's been affecting casinos across North America. In the U.S., 19 states, along with Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, ban smoking in all state-regulated casinos and other gambling venues, according to Americans

for Nonsmokers' Rights. Ohio prohibited smoking indoors, including casinos, in 2006, and North Dakota prohibited smoking in public (casinos included) in 2012. Last month, Montana's Supreme Court ruled that "smoke shacks," structures that casino operators had added to buildings to provide gamblers with indoor smoking venues, violated state law. In Canada, the Caesars Windsor casino in Ontario is smoke-free following a 2012 provincial government ban.

There's still plenty of opposition to clearing the air in U.S. casinos. Smokers can puff away

in Las Vegas and other Nevada cities, and Pennsylvania casino operators are encouraging lawmakers to "reject any legislation prohibiting smoking at casinos." While a ban on smoking in New Orleans bars, restaurants, hotels, and other workplaces is scheduled to go into effect on April 22, Caesars Entertainment-owned Harrah's New Orleans hasn't given up on getting permission to operate a smoking section.

It's unclear how big of an impact smoking bans have on casino revenue. In a report published by the Federal Reserve

Bank of St. Louis in 2009, economists Thomas Garrett and Michael Pakko argued that a statewide ban in Illinois, implemented in 2008, led to a \$200 million loss in tax revenue during its first year and a 20 percent to 22 percent decline in casino turnover. They blamed the revenue drop on a combination of lost gambling time due to smoking breaks and former attendees opting not to come to casinos at all. Other research corroborates those findings, but not all studies do: According to the Tobacco Control Legal Consortium's 2007 study, smoking bans don't hurt business. Citing a report on the impact of smoking restrictions on racetrack casinos in Delaware, they wrote "going smoke-free did not adversely impact gaming revenues."

In Macau, given the drag on revenues from the anticorruption campaign and the Chinese economy's slowdown, the smoking ban is the least of casino operators' problems, says Aaron Fischer, an analyst with CLSA in Hong Kong. "When people decide to go to Macau, they are fairly focused on gambling," he says. "They're not there for retail, shows, other things. They are really there to gamble." The visitors will still travel to Macau. They'll just "smoke outside the casino," he says.

That will still hurt venue operators, Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Craighead and his colleague Margaret Huang argued in a report published last week. "Even if smokers continue to gamble at baccarat," they wrote, "hourly 10-minute cigarette breaks could cut playing time by about 20 percent, directly impacting gaming activity." **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

LOCAL BAKERY & COFFEE SHOP GO ONLINE



Nata Bakery and Cuppa-Coffee have partnered for an online venture that was advertised on their social media pages last week and went live this Monday 23rd March. The online store is now available in English with a Chinese version planned for release by April



20th. The largest online full-scale bakery and coffee store in Macau, Nata Bakery & CuppaCoffee Online Store offers a wide selection of bread, pastries and cakes, and also carries healthier options such as sandwiches and salads. Coffee and a variety of other

drinks are also available, while specialty coffee beans can be ground to customers' wishes and coffee machines are even available for purchase. Payments can be made by credit card or at pickup locations listed on the online store.

With commercial rents in Macau still remaining high, small businesses must find creative ways to push forward and going online is a feasible diversification strategy. "We have been devising ways to adapt our business model so that it can still turn a profit in spite of rental prices", says business founder and managing director, Cristiana Figueiredo. "We had already planned an online store, so we just pushed it forward and decided to expand our brand this way".

I WANT MUSIC "ENERGY" CONCERT TAKES THE STAGE AT THE VENETIAN MACAO

Six groups of pop singers and bands from mainland China, Taiwan and Korea will jointly take to the stage at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Arena Saturday, April 11, 2015, for the I Want Music "Energy" Concert in Macau. Tickets go on sale today at all Cotai Ticketing box offices.

Riding on the success of last year's I Want Music "Cool" concert, the theme of this year's all-star concert is "energy." According to a press release from the organizers, "combining top-notch

production, an exciting line-up of performing musicians and fascinating stage design, the audience are in for a real treat and will be pumped up with the raw energy that is sure to flow from the stage".

Featuring all-male idol groups Infinite and Block B from Korea, Mandopop stars Aaron Yan and Calvin Chen from Taiwan and Mandopop singers Na Ying and Gary Chaw, I Want Music "Energy" Concert will celebrate the diverse range of popular music styles in a visual and aural spectacle.



New visa system makes Angola more attractive to investors and tourists

THE ongoing process of facilitating the allocation of visas by Angola makes the country more attractive to investors and tourists, creating new sources of revenue at a time when oil revenues are in decline.

Thanks to the modernisation process of its Immigration Service, Angola is starting to grant multiple-entry tourist and ordinary visas, a measure “warmly welcomed by visitors entrepreneurs and investors,” according to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

“Given the slow pace of business in Angola, a month is not always enough for an investor to meet with the relevant people in government and additional flexibility is certainly more attractive,” says the latest report from the EIU.

Currently, ordinary visas last only 30 days and can be renewed within the country twice, but the process is slow



Luanda

due to problems at the issuing bodies.

According to the EIU, the creation of a tourist visa is an important measure that can “help unlock the high tourist potential of Angola, which largely remains untapped.”

In the current difficulties, the diversification of the economy

has become urgent and the Tourist Development Institute of Angola (Infotur) estimates that tourism may represent an added value to GDP of at least USD4.7 billion annually from 2020.

Another modernisation announced by the authorities to facilitate entries into the country is the acceleration of

“Given the rapid decline of its oil revenue, [Angola] needs to do everything it can to become more attractive to investors

ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT

international arrivals, which are also time-consuming.

“These measures are welcome in a country that, given the rapid decline of its oil revenue, needs to do everything it can to become more attractive to investors and create new revenue

streams,” added the EIU.

In a cash crunch situation, caused by the breakdown of oil prices, which led to the introduction of austerity measures in the state and in the state oil company itself, the Angolan authorities have been trying to remove constraints to business activities.

In recent months, Angola announced the facilitation of business visas for Portugal and Brazil.

Under the agreement with Brazil, business visas are valid for multiple entries over two years, allowing the holder to stay up to 90 days that cannot be extended, in each period of one year.

In the face of current difficulties, said the EIU, Angola’s priority should be its relationship with international partners such as, “China, the United States and European Union,” and countries in the region. **MDT/Macauhub**

EAST TIMOR

Minister restates gov’t plans to process gas from the Greater Sunrise field

THE Minister of Petroleum and Natural Resources of East Timor, Alfredo Pires, restated in Dili the government’s plan to process liquid natural gas (LNG) from the Greater Sunrise field in Timorese territory, instead of the gas being piped to Darwin, Australia.

The Greater Sunrise field is located 150 kilometres southeast of Ti-

mor-Leste (East Timor) and 450 kilometres northwest of Darwin, Australia.

Processing LNG in Timor-Leste would cost USD13 billion while the Australian option would cost an estimated US\$20 billion in addition to the cost of the pipeline, according to the minister, cited by Portuguese news agency Lusa.

Pires said that when he

began to discuss options for the field in 2007, oil companies ‘sold’ the idea that the development in Timor-Leste was the most expensive option: \$19 billion compared to US\$15 billion in Darwin and \$12 billion for a floating platform.

“All the studies we have done show that the Timor-Leste option is the best, which is economically and technically

feasible,” he said, explaining that the studies included the work of a submarine, to 3,000 feet deep, to map the path of pipeline.

With 5.1 trillion cubic feet of gas, the field may represent revenue – between exploration and downstream revenues – of more than \$100 billion.

“It’s not just numbers. It is also a matter



Minister Alfredo Pires

of fairness. They (Australians) have a pipeline to Darwin, the Bayu Undan, which is giving many benefits, tangible and very positive benefits and we think it’s fair that we have the other

one,” he said.

Despite disagreements that have dragged on for eight years, Pires said he believed that in the oil sector, “everything can be solved” through negotiations. **MDT/Macauhub**

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IOC commissioners begin inspections of Beijing's 2022 bid

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

IOC evaluators began a five-day inspection tour of Beijing's bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics yesterday, in a key test of the city's status as a front-runner in the competition for hosting rights.

Following meetings, the 19-member Evaluation Commission was visiting Beijing's indoor sites for hockey, skating and curling, along with the iconic Bird's Nest stadium used for the 2008 Summer Games. Later in the week, they'll check proposed skiing and sliding venues further outside the city.

Beijing is competing against Almaty, Kazakhstan, and is seeking to become the first city to host both the summer and winter games.

Chinese organizers say Beijing hosting the games would be a boon for winter sports globally by raising their profile in the world's most populous nation. Most of the proposed venues are left over from the 2008 Games, leading to significant cost savings in keeping with the IOC's Olympic Agenda 2020 goals for a more frugal, athlete-oriented games adopted last year.

In all, Beijing plans to spend USD3.9 billion on infrastructure and operations, a small fraction of the \$51 billion spent by Russia on the 2014 Sochi Games.

Beijing is competing against Almaty, Kazakhstan, and is seeking to become the first city to host both the summer and winter games

The inspectors concluded a visit to Almaty last month, after which Kazakh organizers announced venue changes they say will make the games more efficient and save more than \$500 million.

The International Olympic Committee will select the host city on July 31 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Chinese government has pledged full support for the 2022 bid and will provide solid financial and legal guarantees, Vice Premier Liu Yandong told evaluators at a ceremony yesterday morning.

Evaluation Commission Chairman Alexander Zhukov noted the bid's incorporation of some of the Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms.

"You have maximized the use of existing world-class sports venues; you have taken advantage of your experience," Zhukov said in a speech at the ceremony.

In a reminder of Beijing's serious air pollution problems, the benchmark PM2.5 air quality reading topped 150 around midday yesterday, more than six times what the World Health Organization considers safe.

Beijing organizers plan to tackle the problem by closing factories and coal-fired power plants, and junking heavily polluting vehicles. Holding the Olympics will put added momentum behind those efforts, they say.

Other concerns include a lack of natural snow and the roughly 200-kilometer distance between Beijing's indoor venues



In this photo taken Friday, Jan. 16, a Chinese girl waves the Chinese national flags and wears the 2022 Olympic bid logo to show her support at the ski resort in Yanqing, a suburb of Beijing, where the speed mavens of Alpine skiing and the sliding events - bobsled, skeleton and luge - have been proposed to be held in the bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics

and those where Nordic skiing and other outdoor events will be held. Work has already begun on a high-speed rail line that will reduce travel time from Beijing's northern suburbs to just 50 minutes.

Pro-Tibetan and human rights groups also argue that China's record of abuses should rule Beijing out as candidate, citing the IOC's strengthened support for basic human rights embedded in the 2020 Agenda. Rights groups have also called for Kazakhstan's record to be scrutinized.

The Beijing 2022 Bid Commi-

tee says it's natural for groups to raise issues, but wants to separate politics from sports.

The Communist Party-backed newspaper Global Times was less diplomatic, accusing bid critics of stirring up trouble and "ignoring Chinese reality."

"These groups need to understand the majority Chinese view about human rights," the paper said in an editorial yesterday. "Chinese people are already tired of their constant manipulation and quibbling and the day can't be far off when the Western world gets sick of them too." AP

Kelvin Chan
Business Writer, Hong Kong

CHINA'S manufacturing fell to the lowest level in nearly a year as new orders shrank, according to a report yesterday that underscored the weakening outlook for the world's second biggest economy.

HSBC's preliminary manufacturing index based on a survey of factory purchasing managers dropped to an 11-month low of 49.2 in March from February's 50.7. The index is based on a 100-point scale on which numbers below 50 indicate contraction in activity.

The numbers signaled a "slight deterioration" in Chinese manufacturing, said the report, which found decreases in sub-indexes for new orders, new export orders and employment. It was the first report since the Lunar New Year holiday, which tends to distort

Report says mainland manufacturing at lowest in nearly a year



A man checks on a shirt at a garment factory in Jinjiang in southeast China's Fujian province

economic data because it falls at a different time in January or February each year.

"A renewed fall in total new business contributed to weaker expansion of output while manufacturing companies continued to trim their workforce numbers," said Annabel Fiddes, an economist at Markit, which conducted the survey.

The weakness in China's massive manufacturing industry, which employs millions, is a challenge for Beijing as it tries to prevent the economy from slowing too sharply.

China's economy expanded 7.4 percent last year, its slowest pace in nearly a quarter century, and economists predict growth will slow further

this year and the next.

"Today's weaker-than-expected PMI reading is the latest in a string of disappointing data out of China and strengthens our view that the economy likely slowed sharply" in the first quarter, said Julian Evans-Pritchard, an economist at Capital Economics.

Policymakers have acted in recent months to counter slowing growth by cutting interest rates and lowering minimum reserve levels for banks and Evans-Pritchard said he expected more of the same in coming months.

The preliminary results of HSBC's survey covers 85-90 percent of responses from more than 420 manufacturers. The final version is due out April 1. AP

Authorities execute 3 over Kunming knife attack that killed 31

AUTHORITIES in southwestern China yesterday executed three men convicted of masterminding a knife attack a year ago that killed 31 people outside a railway station in the city of Kunming.

Iskandar Ehet, Turgun Tohtunyaz and Hasayn Muhammad were put to death after China's Supreme Court upheld their convictions for the crimes of murder and organizing and leading a terrorist organization, the Kunming City Intermediate People's Court said in a notice.

Five knife-wielding assailants hacked 31 people to death and injured 141 on March 1, 2014, an act of violence that shook the country as tensions between the Uighur Muslim minority and the majority Han ethnic group spread beyond the Uighurs' homeland of Xinjiang.

Four of the assailants were shot dead at the scene and the fifth, a pregnant woman, Patigul Tohti, was captured alive and later sentenced to life in



In this March 3, 2014 file photo, a man holds up a poster with slogans urging fights against terrorists on a square outside the Kunming Train Station after an attack by knife wielding men left 31 people dead, in Kunming, in western China's Yunnan province

prison on the charges of joining a terror group and murder.

Authorities said Ehet, Tohtunyaz and Muhammad were arrested two days before the attack while attempting to flee across the Chinese border. Having lost contact with the three men, the other five members of the group mounted the attack as planned, the Kunming court said.

Beijing has blamed Uighur separatists and religious fanatics for a spate of recent violence that has caused hundreds of deaths over the past year.

Critics say heavy-handed Chinese rule and economic disenfranchisement have pushed some Uighurs toward extremism.

Dilxat Raxit, spokesman for the Germany-based World Uyghur Congress, said he did not believe the defendants had a fair trial. "China is evading the root cause for the problem through the political means of the death sentence," Dilxat Raxit said. "The defendants were not granted a dignified trial." AP

Ai Weiwei, Joan Baez honored by Amnesty International

Isolda Morillo and Jack Chang, Beijing

HUMAN rights group Amnesty International awarded its top honor yesterday to Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei, who has spent years shining light on his country's restrictive political atmosphere, and to U.S. folk singer Joan Baez for her civil rights activism.

Both were named recipients of Amnesty's Ambassador of Conscience Award, which recognizes lifetime human rights leadership.

Ai told The Associated Press that the award reminded him of his social responsibilities as an artist, especially as the Chinese government tightens its grip on free expression and activism.

He noted that the repression was affecting "ordinary people



Ai Weiwei

around us concerned about basic issues" while answering a question about five women's rights activists who remain in custody for planning anti-sexual harassment protests. "I think as an artist, I use my own way to fulfill my responsibility to society," the bearded 57-year-old said. "Whether we have compassion for our own people or other countries, we all have to take responsibility." Baez was cited by

Amnesty for her involvement in the U.S. civil rights activism since the 1960s.

Over the past four years, Ai has paid a high price for his activism, having been beaten by the authorities, imprisoned and blocked from leaving the country. In the process, he's become one of China's most internationally known figures, a fame that has partially protected him.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying declined

comment on the award, but said China hopes Amnesty can regard China "objectively."

Ai made his first big splash by helping design Beijing's iconic Bird's Nest stadium for the 2008 Summer Olympics. He fell afoul of Chinese authorities after taking up causes such as those of parents angry over what they said was shoddy construction of schools that collapsed in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, killing hundreds of children.

Ai said yesterday that he hasn't had a passport since his 2011 arrest for tax evasion, which he has called politically motivated, but still hoped he would be able to attend the May 21 award ceremony in Berlin.

Previous award winners include Myanmar dissident Aung San Suu Kyi and Irish rock band U2. AP

Christian pastor stands trial over cross removals

A Christian pastor who questioned authorities in eastern China over the forced removal of rooftop crosses went on trial yesterday in Zhejiang province.

Huang Yizi was charged in the city of Pingyang with gathering crowds to disrupt the social order, lawyer Zhang Kai said. If convicted, Huang could face up to seven years in jail.



Authorities in Zhejiang tore down about 400 rooftop crosses last year

A woman who answered the court's phone and gave only her family name, Li, confirmed that the trial began yesterday afternoon. It's unclear how long it will last.

Authorities in Zhejiang tore down about 400 rooftop crosses last year in a campaign against building-code violations, but religious ri-

ghts advocates say the Christian faith was being targeted because its rapid growth in China unnerves the ruling Communist Party.

Huang, an outspoken pastor, brought some parishioners to a local government building last summer to demand answers about a clash in which police attacked congregation members who had been keeping a night vigil over their cross atop their sanctuary. Police took him away after that incident.

He also had urged local church leaders to put back the toppled crosses.

Zhang said before the trial that Huang would plead innocent. Noting that he was surrounded by police, he declined to elaborate. AP

AFGHANISTAN

Thousands protest woman's mob killing in Kabul

THOUSANDS marched through the Afghan capital yesterday, demanding justice for a woman who was beaten to death by a mob after being falsely accused of burning a Quran.

Men and women of all ages carried banners bearing the bloodied face of Farkhunda, a 27-year-old religious scholar killed last week by the mob. Farkhunda, who went by one name like many Afghans, was beaten, run over with a car and burned before her body was thrown into the Kabul River.

Organizers of yesterday's march estimated 3,000 people took part, calling it one of the biggest demonstrations in Kabul's history. Marchers chanted "Justice for Farkhunda!" and "Death to the killers!"



Afghan women chant slogans during a protest demanding justice for a woman who was beaten to death by a mob after being falsely accused of burning a Quran last week, in downtown Kabul

Police say 18 people have been arrested and 13 police officers have been suspended, though many suspect that figure will rise as the investigation continues.

The demonstrators also called for action against officials and religious leaders who had initially supported the attack on Farkhunda by saying her killing was justifiable if she had burned pages of a Quran.

The country's Interior Ministry said the spokesman for the Kabul police, Hashmat Stanikzai, had been fired over comments he made on social media supporting Farkhunda's killers. Stanikzai could not be immediately reached for comment.

Among the crowd were prominent rights activists, including Fatana Gailani, the head of the Afghanistan Women's Council, who said she hoped the incident would be a catalyst for change in a society traumatized by war, corruption and lack of leadership.

"We are getting fed up," Gailani said. "The new generation has known nothing but war, they are not educated, and now they have no jobs." AP

MYANMAR

Police reject lawsuit against government minister

POLICE in northwestern Myanmar have rejected a lawsuit filed by two Buddhist monks against Myanmar's home minister and police chief, saying they are protected by law.

In declining to accept a first information report, which is needed for a lawsuit to proceed, the police said no lawsuit can be brought against any officer who carries out acts in good faith.

Human rights lawyer Aung Thein said yesterday that the two Buddhist monks, among scores seriously burned during a 2012 police crackdown on protests at a Chinese-backed copper mine, registered the first information report at the Hsalingyi police station.

Aung Thein, who works with Justice Trust, said a letter was also sent to President Thein Sein asking that the lawsuit to be opened against government ministers.

He said the purpose of the lawsuit was "to fight for justice and to highlight human rights violations and the lack of rule of law in Myanmar."

More than 100 monks suffered serious burns from smoke bombs that reportedly contained white phosphorous when police dispersed the protesters at the Letpadaung copper mine



In this March 16, 2015 file photo, lawyer Aung Thein speaks during a press conference in Yangon

in northwestern Myanmar.

The protest in November 2012 drew international attention. Authorities say police used only tear gas and smoke grenades.

This past December, a villager was shot dead during a confrontation as police and Chinese workers erected a fence on land that villagers say is theirs.

The Letpadaung mine is a joint venture between a Myanmar military-controlled holding company and China's Wanbao Mining Copper Ltd., a unit of weapons manufacturer China North Industries Corp. Villagers say the mine causes environmental, social and health problems, and want it closed. AP

PHILIPPINES

Trial begins of US Marine charged with murder

Jim Gomez, Manila

A U.S. Marine charged with murdering a transgender Filipino after allegedly discovering her gender when they checked into a hotel went on trial in a Philippine court Monday.

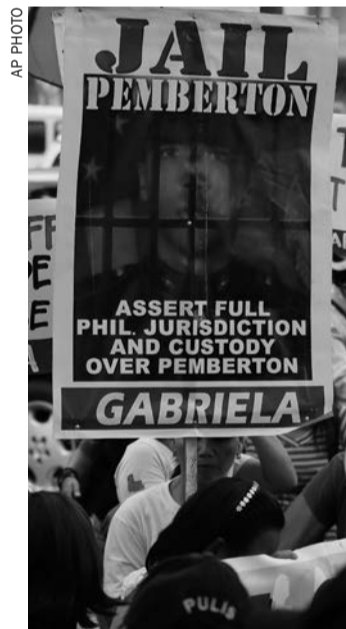
U.S. security escorts brought Marine Pfc. Joseph Scott Pemberton, wearing handcuffs, into a heavily secured courtroom in Olongapo city, northwest of Manila, for the trial after an earlier plea-bargain negotiation with the family of the victim, Jennifer Laude, reportedly collapsed, lawyers for Laude's family said.

Pemberton is charged with murder, which carries a maximum penalty of life in prison. The court registered a not guilty plea for him last month after he refused to enter a plea.

Government prosecutors expressed confidence they could win a conviction.

"We will prove the elements of murder," state prosecutor Emilie de los Santos told reporters, referring to what she has described as "treachery, abuse of superior strength and cruelty" in the attack on the victim, who was formerly known as Jeffrey Laude.

Pemberton, an anti-tank mis-



Protesters from the militant women's group Gabriela display placards during a rally at the US Embassy yesterday in Manila

sile operator from New Bedford, Massachusetts, is accused of strangling Laude and then drowning her in a hotel toilet last October after discovering she was a transgender woman. Prosecutors say they checked into the hotel after meeting in a bar in a red-light district.

Pemberton was bar-hopping with fellow Marines at the time after participating in joint U.S.-Philippine military exercises.

Government prosecutors presented their first wit-

ness, hotel worker Elias Gallamos, who identified Pemberton as the man who was with Laude shortly before she was found dead, according to Ethel Avisado, a lawyer for Laude's family.

The case reignited a debate over custody of American military personnel accused of crimes in the Philippines. The dispute was eased after Washington agreed to move Pemberton from a U.S. warship to the Philippine military's main camp in metropolitan Manila, where he is held under American custody but with an outer ring of Filipino guards.

Weeks before the trial, there was talk that the two sides were quietly discussing a possible plea-bargain agreement in which Pemberton would reportedly plead guilty to a lower charge in exchange for money for the Laude family. Both sides on Monday denied initiating the talks.

Laude's mother, Julita, told reporters she would not drop the case against Pemberton even if she was offered a million dollars.

"What they did to my child was gruesome," she said. "Just because we are poor doesn't mean we can't fight for justice." AP

Katy Daigle, New Delhi

INDIA

Court rejects ban on 'offensive' Internet messages

INDIA'S top court affirmed people's right to free speech in cyberspace yesterday by striking down a provision that had called for imprisoning people who send "offensive" messages by computer or cell-phone.

The provision, known as Section 66A of the 2008 Information Technology Act, had made sending such messages a crime punishable by up to three years in prison.

In its ruling, the Supreme Court said the provision was "clearly vague" in not clarifying what should be construed as offensive. It also said the provision violates people's freedom of speech and their right to share information.

"The public's right to know is directly affected," the judges said in deeming the provision unconstitutional.

A law student who filed the challenge in 2012, Shreya Singhal, applauded the court's rejection of a provision she said was "grossly offensive to our rights, our freedom of speech and expression."

"Today the Supreme Court has upheld that, they have supported our rights," Singhal said. "I am ecstatic."

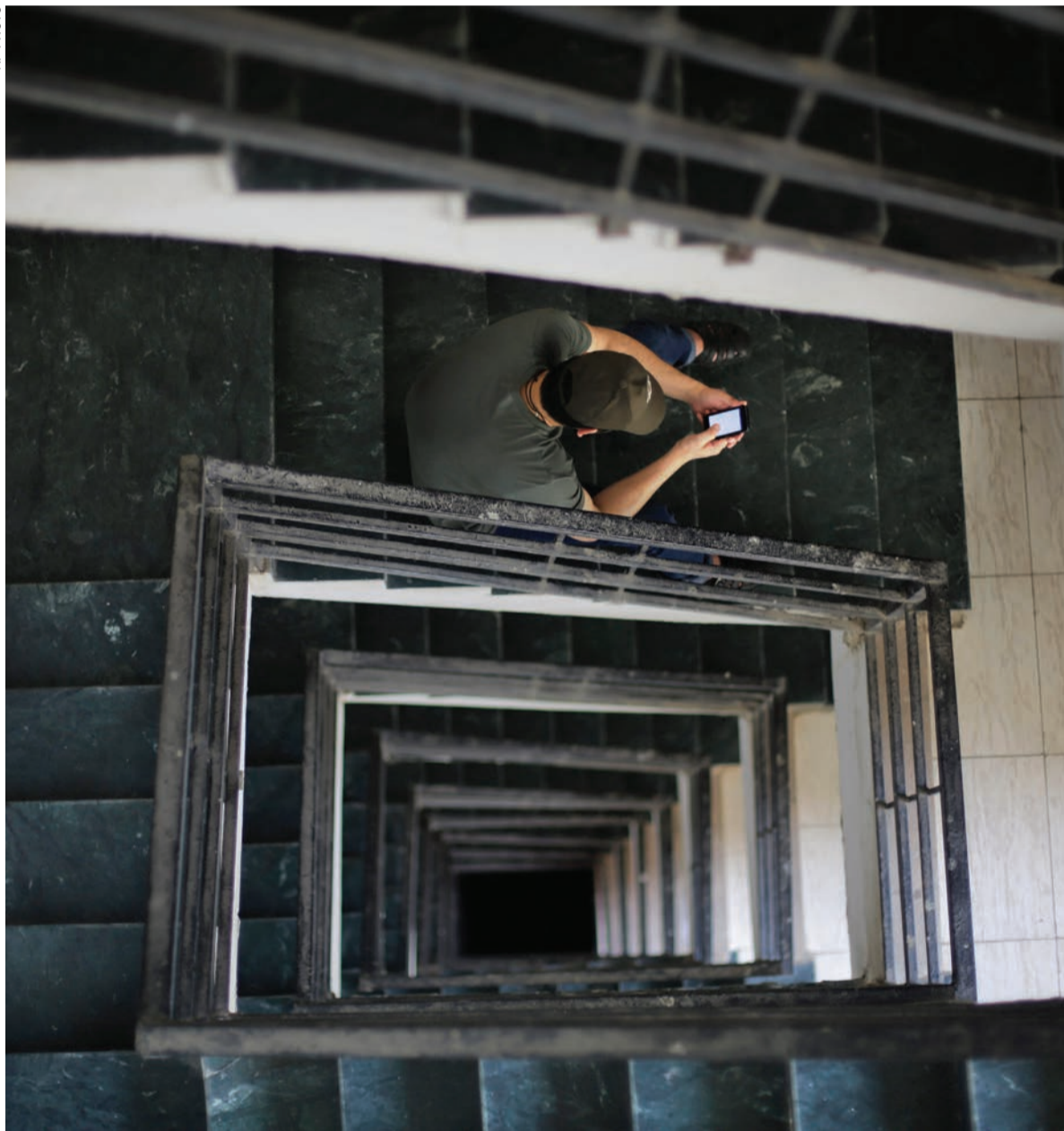
The law has been invoked in at least 10 recent cases, most often involving criticism of political leaders.

In 2012, a chemistry professor and his neighbor in Kolkata were arrested for forwarding a cartoon that made fun of West Bengal's top elected official, Mamata Banerjee.

Police arrested a man last year for saying on Facebook that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, then still a candidate, would start a holocaust in India if elected to office.

And last week, police in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh arrested a teenage student for pos-

AP PHOTO



An Indian man sits on a staircase and looks at his smartphone in New Delhi

ting comments on Facebook he attributed to a top state minister.

The student, jailed for two days before being released on bail, told reporters he was happy the provision was scrapped, though he was still recovering from "a very rough time."

Former finance and home minister P. Chidambaram welcomed the court's ruling, although his son had filed a police complaint in 2012 against a businessman for allegedly disparaging him in Twitter messages.

"The section was poorly drafted and was vulnerable," Chidambaram said of the law, which was passed while his Congress party was in power. "It was capable of being misused and, in fact, it was misused."

Cyber analysts said the ruling marked a positive step in ensuring that the Internet would be governed by the same norms and laws as newspapers, TV commentary and other forms of communication as India's Internet users increase from today's 100 million online.

"This sets the tone for the future of India's democracy and participation in this medium," said Samir Saran of the New Delhi think tank, Observer Research Foundation. "It's the ethos around freedom of expression that is being reaffirmed. It tells us that arbitrary executive infringements of the constitution will be struck down."

He and other analysts said, however, that there was still more work to be done in guaranteeing the Internet was governed fairly, including a provision that allows the government to block websites without announcing or explaining its decision to do so. The Supreme Court yesterday upheld that part of the law.

"That's wrong. That's bad," Saran said, calling for a review to decide criteria for "why something should be blocked and when it should be blocked." AP

AFGHANISTAN

Gunmen kill 13 as suspected US drone strike kills 9

Amir Shah and
Ishtiaq Mahsud, Kabul

GUNMEN in eastern Afghanistan killed at least 13 people during a midnight assault yesterday on a highway as a suspected U.S. drone strike near Pakistan killed at least nine militants, authorities said.

The highway attack happened in Wardak province's Sayad Abad district, where Taliban fighters hold much territory and launch frequent attacks on security forces. However, no group immediately claimed responsibility for the assault,



Wounded Afghani men and children lie on the ground in a tent after a deadly attack targeted a checkpoint, in Lashkar Gah, capital of the southern Helmand province, Afghanistan, Tuesday, March 10, 2015

which comes after several recent attacks targeting

The gunmen opened fire on three separate vehicles in the attack, including a

bus traveling from Kabul and heading to Ghazni province, said Attahullah Khogyani, a spokesman for the provincial governor. He gave the death toll and said the gunfire wounded at least two civilians.

Last month, gunmen in southern Afghanistan kidnapped 30 members of the Hazara ethnic community traveling on a highway in Zabul province. Security forces have been trying to secure their release ever since the attack, the latest to target Shiites in the predominantly Sunni country.

Meanwhile, two intelli-

gence officials in Pakistan said the suspected U.S. drone strike in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province killed at least nine militants with the Pakistani terror group Lashkar-e-Islam. That group recently announced it would join forces with the Pakistani Taliban to fight government forces in that country.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they weren't authorized to discuss the strike.

It wasn't immediately possible to corroborate the officials' claims about the strike in the rural, mountainous region.

Drone strikes have killed civilians in the region in the past.

Ahmad Zia Abdula-zai, a spokesman for the provincial governor in Nangarhar, said he was only aware of an airstrike Monday afternoon that killed two suspected insurgents.

U.S. officials rarely discuss their drone strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan as many are run by the CIA. Afghan forces have taken the lead in securing their country after U.S. and NATO troops formally ended their combat missions in the country at the start of this year. AP



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Lori Hinnant, Paris

A passenger jet carrying 150 people crashed yesterday in the French Alps as it flew from Barcelona to Dueseldorf. As search-and-rescue teams struggled to get to the remote, snow-covered region, France's president warned that no survivors were expected.

There was no obvious reason why the Germanwings A320 plane should have crashed in the middle of its flight and German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged people not to speculate on the cause.

The crash left officials and families across Europe in shock. Sobbing, grieving families at both Barcelona and Dueseldorf airports were led away by airport workers and crisis counselors.

"We still don't know much beyond the bare information on the flight, and there should be no speculation on the cause of the crash," Merkel told reporters at a briefing in Berlin. "All that will be investigated thoroughly."

The plane left Barcelona at 9:55 a.m. Germanwings CEO Thomas Winkelmann said it began descending again shortly after it reached its cruising height of 38,000 feet following takeoff from Barcelona Airport. The descent lasted eight minutes, he told reporters in Cologne. Radar and air traffic control contact with the plane broke off at 10:53 a.m. at an altitude of about 6,000 feet.

The plane crashed in a mountainous zone in the French Alps at an altitude of about 2,000 meters, said Pierre-Henry Brandet, the French Interior Ministry spokesman.

Winkelmann said the pilot had more than 10 years' experience working for Germanwings and its parent airline Lufthansa. Airbus said the A320 was delivered to Lufthansa in 1991.

Germanwings said Flight 9525 carried 144 passengers, including two babies, and 6 crew members. Officials believe there were 67 German nationals on board.

The crash site was at Meolans-Revels, near the popular ski resort of Pra Loup, according to Eric Ciotti, the head of the regional council in southeast France. The site is 700 kilometers south-southeast of Paris. But with mountains all around and few clear trails into the area, access to the crash site was expected to take time.

Brandet told BFM television he expected "an extremely long and extremely difficult" search-and-rescue operation because of the area's remoteness. The weather in the area deteriorated yesterday afternoon, hours after the crash,



In this Oct. 16, 2014 an Airbus A320 belonging to the German airline Germanwings is parked at the airport in Cologne, Germany

AVIATION

Jet crashes in Alps with 150 aboard; no survivors expected

with a chilly rain falling.

Germanwings is a lower-cost unit of Lufthansa, Germany's biggest airline, and serves mostly European destinations. It has been operating since 2002, part of traditional national carriers' response to competition from European budget carriers.

Family members arriving at Dueseldorf airport were taken from the main terminal to a nearby building, which airport employees partially covered with sheets for privacy. At Barcelona airport, police escorted several crying women to a secure part of the airport. One woman held a jacket over the head of another woman, who was sobbing.

The Germanwings logo, normally maroon and yellow, was blacked out on its Twitter feed.

The owner of a campground near the crash site, Pierre Polizzi, said he heard the plane making curious noises shortly before it crashed.

"At 11.30, I heard a series of loud noises in the air. There are often fighter jets flying over, so I thought it sounded just like that. I looked outside, but I couldn't see any fighter planes," he told The Associated Press in a phone interview. "The noise I heard was long — like 8 seconds — as if the plane was going more slowly than a military plane. There was another long noise

after about 30 seconds."

Polizzi said the plane crashed about 5-to-8 kilometers from his place, which is closed for the season.

"It's going to be very difficult to get there. The mountain is snowy and very hostile," he said.

The municipal sports hall of Seyne-les-Alpes, 10 kilometers from the Val d'Allos ski resort, was being set up to take bodies from the crash, according to Sandrine Julien

“The crash of the German plane with more than 140 people on board is a shock that plunges us in Germany, the French and the Spanish into deep sorrow

ANGELA MERKEL

of the town hall.

"The plane is disintegrated," Gilbert Sauvan of the local council told the Les Echos newspaper. "The largest debris is the size of a car."

Capt. Benoit Zeisser of the nearby Digne-le-Bains police said there were some clouds in the morning but the cloud ceiling was not low.

In addition, the safest part of a flight is when the plane is at cruising elevation. Just 10 percent of fatal accidents occur at that point, according to a safety analysis by Boeing. In contrast, takeoff and the initial climb accounts for 14 percent of crashes and final approach and landing accounts for 47 percent.

In a live briefing yesterday in Paris, French President Francois Hollande called the crash "a tragedy on our soil."

Merkel told reporters she would travel to the crash site region today, and that Germany's foreign and transport ministers were already en route. She said her thoughts were "with those people who so suddenly lost their lives, among them many compatriots."

"The crash of the German plane with more than 140 people on board is a shock that plunges us in Germany, the French and the Spanish into deep sorrow," Merkel said.

The aircraft was delivered to Lufthansa in 1991, had approximately 58,300 flight hours in some 46,700 flights, Airbus said. Airbus technical advisers were being sent to assist the French Accident Investigation bureau.

The A320 plane is a workhorse of modern aviation. Similar to the Boeing 737, the single-aisle, twin-engine jet is used to connect cities between one and five hours apart. Worldwide, 3,606 A320s are in operation, according to Airbus.

The A320 is certified to fly up to 39,000 feet but it can begin to experience problems as low as 37,000 feet, depending on temperature and weight, including fuel, cargo and passengers.

The A320 family also has a good safety record, with just 0.14 fatal accidents per million takeoffs, according to a Boeing safety analysis. AP

The last time a passenger jet crashed in France was the 2000 Concorde accident, which left 113 dead — 109 in the plane and four on the ground.

Merkel spoke with both Hollande and Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy about the crash, immediately canceling all other appointments.

what's ON



'CLASSIC RECURRENCE • CENTENNIAL EVOLUTION' — EXHIBITION OF WOMEN'S FASHION

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

UNTIL: May 10, 2015

ADDRESS: Macau Fashion Gallery / No. 47,
Rua de S. Roque, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853)2835 3341

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

"SEE AND TOUCH" - TOUCHABLE ARTS EXHIBITION

TIME: 12pm-7pm (Closed on public holidays)

UNTIL: March 31, 2015

VENUE: Artistry of Wind Box Community

Development Association / Rua Tomas Vieira 3A R/C

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 6685 9215

EXHIBITION 'FOAM TIP BY ARLINDA FROTA AND TRANSMUTATION BY CAROL KWOK'

TIME: 12pm-8pm (Closed on Tuesdays)

UNTIL: March 31, 2015

VENUE: SIGNUM Living Store, Rua do Almirante

Sérgio, no. 285, R/C, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 8925

19TH AND 20TH CENTURY PORTRAIT OIL PAINTINGS — MAM COLLECTION

TIME: 10am-7pm

(Closed on Mondays, No admission after 6:30 pm)

UNTIL: December 31, 2015

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,

Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE

ADMISSION: MOP5

(Free on Sundays and public holidays)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

VENETIAN CARNEVALE

TIME: 2:30pm-10:30pm

UNTIL: March 29, 2015

VENUE: Outdoor Lagoon Area, The Venetian Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ORGANIZER: The Venetian Macau

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 8888

Offbeat

CANADIAN SET TO PLEAD GUILTY IN FLORIDA SEX TOURISM CASE

A Canadian man is scheduled to plead guilty to charges he traveled to Florida to have sex with someone investigators say he believed was an underage boy and also planned a similar trip to Texas.

A change of plea hearing is set for today (Macau time) for 47-year-old Rene Roberge of Sherbrooke, Quebec, who had previously pleaded not guilty. Roberge's lawyer had said a plea deal was likely to end the case without a trial.

Authorities say Roberge flew to Florida after making contact on the Internet with undercover investigators posing as a 14-year-old boy and his father to arrange a sexual encounter. Agents also allegedly found child pornography on Roberge's tablet computer.

Roberge is also accused of planning to travel to San Antonio, Texas, to have sex with a teenage boy.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
19:00	TDM Interview (Repeated)
19:30	Brazil Avenue (Repeated)
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	Documentary Series
00:00	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:30	RTPi Live

cinema

CINETEATRO

19 MAR - 25 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



THE DIVERGENT SERIES: INSURGENT

ROOM 2

(2D) 2.30, 4.45, 9.30 pm

(3D) 7.15 pm

Director: Robert Schwentke

Starring: Shailene Woodley, Ansel Elgort, Theo James

Language: Cantonese (English and Chinese)

Duration: 119min



RUN ALL NIGHT

ROOM 3

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Jaume Collet-Serra

Starring: Liam Neeson, Ed Harris, Joel Kinnaman

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 114min

MACAU TOWER

19 MAR - 1 APR

THE DIVERGENT SERIES: INSURGENT

2.30, 4.30, 7.00, 9.30 pm

Director: Robert Schwentke

Starring: Shailene Woodley, Ansel Elgort, Theo James

Language: Cantonese (English and Chinese)

Duration: 119min

this day in history



1975 NATIONAL FRONT RALLIES AGAINST EUROPE

Members of an extreme right-wing UK party, flanked by 2,000 police officers, have marched through north London in protest against integration with Europe.

Beating drums and chanting "we're going to get the reds", National Front members marched through Islington waving placards.

Extra police were drafted in amid fears violence may flare as on previous National Front demonstrations.

The march, held in protest of the EEC, drew about 400 National Front supporters.

There were fears of a counter-demonstration against the far-right protesters but there were no violent outbursts.

But about 300 protesters gathered opposite Islington Town Hall shouting at the main march - they stood where the Labour Council had refused to allow the National Front to hold a rally.

They were cordoned off from the main march by police but could be seen waving banners and shouting abuse at the National Front demonstrators.

Police led the National Front march to Exmouth Market, a mile away, to allow the rally to take place in a deserted street.

No members of the public were allowed access to the rally.

This blanket-covering by the police has become a successful strategy in curbing violence and troubles during marches.

Police clamped down after the Red Lion Square riot last June at Holborn when the National Front was protesting against the government's plans for immigrants, and violence flared as other protesters demonstrated against the rally.

One demonstrator died, the first death at a demonstration in 55 years, and many policemen and protesters were injured.

Police horses were used to clear a way through and a large number of arrests were made.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The National Front movement was at its most vocal and active in the 1970s and many more demonstrations followed. It fielded hundreds of candidates at the 1979 General Election but failed to translate its support into votes.

In-fighting began to cripple the movement and a splinter group - the British National Party - was formed.

The BNP has grown steadily and in the 2001 General Election it won more votes than expected.

For the first time the party had saved its deposit in an election in the north of England.

It sent shock waves through the country that it signalled the far right movement was gaining supporters despite the country's increasing multi-culturalism.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 The situation calls for action, but just what that action is remains a mystery.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Circumstances might make some feel rushed into doing something, but not you.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 With all arrows pointing down, everyone needs a boost. Why not host an old-fashioned bash?

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Someone is in a hurry for you to decide, and that's raising your suspicions.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You'll meet someone who changes your opinion, and not a moment too soon.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Being combative has its advantages. You're fighting for every penny, tooth and nail.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 You may think the most important subject is business, but today is all about relationships.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You're not out for gain, at least not today. Just keep giving and giving.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Don't be childish. You have a lot of chores to do, and there's no point in pouting about them.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Things are shifting. Pendulums have a way of doing that.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Being cut loose is not all bad. You have all of your freedom to enjoy.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 What was once certain is now bewildering to you. You're not the only one who suddenly feels like you're in a financial maze.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

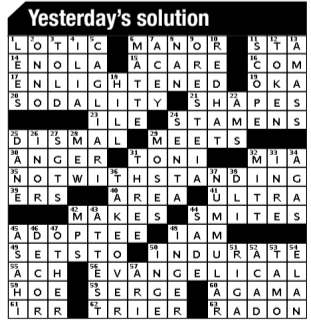
WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Bishop's headdress; 6- Back talk; 10- Chatter; 13- Accustom; 14- Inter...; 15- Periodic movement of the sea; 16- Bell-shaped flower; 17- Tooth; 18- Mild oath;

DOWN: 1- Intro to physics?; 2- Busy; 3- Oklahoma city; 4- Asmara is its capital; 5- Agent, briefly; 6- Adventurous expedition; 7- Banned apple spray; 8- Vocalize melodically;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Table of useful telephone numbers including Emergency calls, Fire department, PJ (Open line), PJ (Picket), PSP, Customs, S. J. Hospital, Kiang Wu Hospital, Commission Against Corruption (CCAC), IACM, Tourism, and Airport.



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JML Property logo and contact information, including '卓雅物業' and 'since 1994'.

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Justin Bergman, Shanghai

FIGURE SKATING

Russian, American women square off at China worlds

RUSSIAN teenager Elizaveta Tuktamysheva is looking to cap a dominant season with a gold medal at the world figure skating championships starting today in China, while Gracie Gold and Ashley Wagner are attempting to bring home an individual medal for the American women for the first time in nearly a decade.

In the men's event, Yuzuru Hanyu of Japan returns to the Shanghai arena where he was bloodied in a frightening collision with another skater several months ago to defend his title against chief rivals Javier Fernandez of Spain and Denis Ten of Kazakhstan.

Despite being at the tail end of an exhausting season, the 18-year-old Tuktamysheva is the heavy favorite in the ladies' competition after sweeping to victory at the European Championships and Grand Prix Finals.

Overall, she has won seven of the nine events she's entered this season — a year after failing to make the Russian team for the Sochi Winter Olympics.

Besides the fatigue factor, the main question for Tuktamysheva is whether she decides to attempt a triple axel she's been working on in practice.

"I hope that after the European championships, I've managed to recharge my batteries," she told Russia's R-Sport agency last week. "It seems like I've got myself psychologically prepared, so I'm not feeling too much tiredness just yet. My body understands that there's no choice and that it's got to work."



Elizaveta Tuktamysheva of Russia

Her main competition could come from 16-year-old countrywoman, Elena Radionova, who handed Tuktamysheva her only two defeats this season at Skate America and the Russian championships. She also fell just short of capturing her first European title in January, finishing second to Tuktamysheva by less than a point.

Gold and Wagner head a strong American squad that will be looking for its first worlds medal since Kimmie Meis-

ner and Sasha Cohen finished first and third, respectively, in 2006.

Gold has struggled with her form since pulling out of the Grand Prix Finals in December with a stress fracture in her foot. She failed to defend her title at the U.S. Championships, finishing second to Wagner, and then turned in a poor performance at the Four Continents Championships in South Korea, placing fourth at a competition she was favored to win.

"It was a disappointment, just because I set high expectations for myself," the 19-year-old Gold told reporters via telephone before departing for Shanghai. "I just kind of crumbled under my own pressure."

"I've just been sort of all over the place this year," she added. "I just need to finish the season on a really good note at the world championships."

Wagner, the 23-year-old veteran of the team, is coming off a career-rejuvenating performance at the U.S. nationals, where she produced a flawless long program to capture her third title. She believes the U.S. is in good position to get back on the podium.

"It's just a natural process for different countries to be stronger at different times," she said. "For the U.S., it's uncommon to have such a long drought, but I think we now finally have a very talented field we are sending to worlds."

On the men's side, the 20-year-old Hanyu will be competing for the first time since undergoing surgery on his bladder to alleviate abdominal pain in late December.

His season began in dramatic fashion with a scary accident at the Cup of China in November when he crashed into Chinese skater Yan Han during warm-ups. His head wrapped in gau-

ze, Hanyu recovered to finish second and went on to win the Grand Prix Finals weeks later.

In his absence from competition, however, Fernandez and Ten have emerged as serious threats to take the gold in Shanghai, with the Spaniard capturing the European Championships for the third straight year and the Kazakh skater taking the title at Four Continents.

Also in the field are Russian Maxim Kovtun, who has two quads in his short program and is the only man to win two Grand Prix events this season, as well as Americans Joshua Farris, second at Four Continents, and Jason Brown, the reigning U.S. champion.

Canada is favored in both the pairs and ice dancing events.

In the pairs, Meagan Duhamel and Eric Redford are undefeated this season, having captured titles at the Grand Prix Finals and Four Continents.

Their toughest competition will likely come from European champions Yuko Kavaguti and Alexander Smirnov of Russia, and the Chinese pair of Peng Cheng and Zhang Hao.

In ice dancing, Canadians Kaitlyn Weaver and Andrew Poje also come to Shanghai undefeated, with five titles in five international events this season. **AP**

ATHLETICS

Coach: Russia has turned over new leaf after doping scandals

RUSSIA has put years of doping scandals behind it and now has a clean team ahead of next year's Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, the country's new head track and field coach said.

Yuri Borzakovsky, the gold medalist in the 800 meters at the 2004 Athens Olympics, was appointed head coach last month after his predecessor, Valentin Maslakov, resigned following a doping scandal in which three Russian Olympic champion race walkers were banned.

"The guys now understand that the past should stay in the past," Borzakovsky said at a news conference in Moscow earlier this week. "Now we have a new team and everyone in it is clean."

Borzakovsky said his message was accompanied by more

intensive anti-doping enforcement and education programs.

"The athletes even have a certain fear of the management and of me personally because I've made sure the guys understand that it's finished, that that page has been turned," he said. "Already (doping scandals) are last century and we've started a new life."

Borzakovsky has been head coach in a temporary capacity since last month and is likely to be formally confirmed on a permanent basis by the end of the week after receiving public backing from athletics federation officials and Russia's influential Sports Ministry.

His appointment comes at a time when Russian track and field is in transition. The Russian athletics federation has

no president after Valentin Balakhnichev, who had been in charge since the breakup of the Soviet Union, resigned last month in connection with the race-walking doping scandal.

Russian success in track and field has long been dogged by doping cases. Of the 15 Russians who won individual athletics medals at the 2012 London Olympics, six have since been banned for doping, including discus thrower Darya Pishchalnikova, who was stripped of her silver medal.

Two other Russian medalists from London are under investigation as part of a World Anti-Doping Agency probe into allegations that the country operated a systematic doping program organized by Russian athletics federation officials. **AP**

FOOTBALL

UEFA chief Platini warns of rising extremism, hooliganism

UEF A President Michel Platini was warned that nationalism and hooliganism is threatening European football.

Rising extremism in European society is an "insidious trend (that) can also be observed in our stadiums," Platini told UEFA's annual meeting yesterday.

The France great, who witnessed the Heysel Stadium tragedy in 1985 playing for Juventus, said recent violent incidents revived "certain images that I thought were a thing of the past."

"We need tougher stadium bans at European level and, I will say it again, the creation of a European



FIFA president Sepp Blatter, right, and UEFA president Michel Platini

sports police force," Platini said.

The UEFA leader should be re-elected unopposed today (Macau time), though he ignored commenting on the upcoming FIFA election and President Sepp Blatter. **AP**

opinion

World Views

Philip Elliott, AP

CRUZ'S FIERY MESSAGE HAS LIMITED APPEAL TO SOME REPUBLICANS

As a messenger, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz has fire. It's the message that's the question for him.

Cruz opened his official campaign for U.S. president Monday, becoming the first Republican to formally enter what is expected to be a crowded race for the party's nomination. In a speech at a leading Christian university, the first-term senator sought not to build a coalition of voters, but instead rally into action those who share his deeply conservative beliefs. It's an approach that's gotten him nowhere in the Senate and puts added pressure on his rhetorical gifts to win over those who don't share his uncompromising ideology.

Cruz, 44, has become an effective spokesman for the small-government, less-tax tea party movement, but not one who has advanced an agenda in Congress, where he is a divisive figure even within his own party. He says he would disband the Internal Revenue Service tax collecting agency, scrap President Barack Obama's health care law and seek to overturn abortion rights.

Other Republicans expected to enter the 2016 race, including former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, are far more likely to secure support from the party leadership. Whoever wins the nomination would likely face Hillary Rodham Clinton, the heavy favorite for the Democratic nod who is expected to launch her campaign soon.

At Liberty University, Cruz demonstrated how he won debating titles while a student at Princeton University and court cases at the Supreme Court as the state of Texas' top lawyer.

Without a script or notes, he walked around a theater-in-the-round stage during a half-hour speech that gave no quarter on his conservatism. He's adept, too, at engaging smaller crowds. During his recent visit to the key early voting state of New Hampshire, he spent almost an hour working the room before his remarks. He promised a young student he would schedule an interview for the school paper, posed for lots of pictures and signed one woman's bright pink cowboy boots that she said reminded her of his home state of Texas.

"Whatever it takes," Cruz said with a smile. In the Senate, Cruz has found few natural allies. His fellow Texan, Sen. John Cornyn, declined to endorse him on Monday. Sen. John McCain of Arizona once called Cruz one of the "wacko birds" of the Senate. And after Cruz spoke in the Senate floor for 21 hours and 19 minutes straight in September 2013, in a quixotic attempt to starve the health care law of money, many colleagues considered it a stunt.

The ensuing partial government shutdown hurt the Republican Party's standing with the public. As well, the fiery rhetoric can come across as too harsh for many moderate, deep-pocketed and establishment-minded Republicans. They still make up the Republican majority, for all the influence that conservative activists wield early in the primary contests and beyond.

Cruz, the son of a Cuban immigrant and a U.S.-born mother, shows little interest in calibrating his views for moderates at this early stage of his White House run. For all the talk about the Republican Party being a big-tent coalition with many divergent corners, Cruz seems to be focused on convincing those who don't share his views that they are wrong. His outreach remains on the right, extending to Christian conservatives from his tea party roots.

He's hoping those blocs may be enough for him to cobble together the primary votes making him the nominee.

THE BUZZ IN 2018
RUSSIA TO RESUME SPACE TOURISM

Russia officials say they will resume space tourism in 2018 after years of sending into space only professional cosmonauts and astronauts.

Russia had sent seven paying guests to the International Space Station since 2001 before curtailing the program in 2009. Sending a tourist has been all but impossible since 2011 when the United States shut down its Space Shuttle program and had to rely on Russian

Soyuz rockets in order to get into orbit. Russia, however, has made an exception for British soprano Sarah Brightman who is due to blast off on Sept. 1.

RKK Energia, a state-controlled rocket manufacturer, said in a quarterly report released yesterday that it plans to make up for an expected drop in demand for manned flights by resuming space tourism in 2018.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	50-70 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	60-80 Moderate
Ambient	50-70 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

TUBE WAR

Are you willing to pay to watch video clips online?

Michael Liedtke
Technology Writer

WOULD you pay to see some of the Internet's best video clips first? Vessel, a new service trying to change the way that short video pieces make money on the Internet and mobile devices, is betting on it.

Instead of free-for-all distribution supported solely by advertising, Vessel will charge USD3 per month for exclusive early access to clips of musicians, sporting events, comedians and many other forms of entertainment not available on YouTube or any other digital video service for at least three days. CEO Jason Kilar, formerly head of Hulu Plus, believes Vessel's model will be able to pay video producers about \$50 per 1,000 views of their clips on the site. That compares with just \$2.20 per 1,000 views of ad-supported video at sites such as YouTube, Kilar says.

The extra money, in theory, will provide digital video producers with the means and incentive to create even better content that will prod more people to subscribe to Vessel. The same "virtuous cycle" has enabled Internet video service Netflix to finance more of its own original programming and pay more money to license compelling entertainment



Vessel CEO and co-founder Jason Kilar, right, and co-founder Richard Tom

while its audience has nearly tripled to 57 million customers from 20 million in the past four years.

"We think this is going to be a really big deal, like the advent of cable-and-satellite television in the 1970s," Kilar, 43, says of Vessel.

YouTube, which is owned by Google Inc., says Kilar's estimates are wrong, but declined to reveal its average payout per 1,000 views. Payments to YouTube partners have increased by at least 50 percent in each of the past three years, the company says. Research firm eMarketer Inc. estimated that YouTube's total ad revenue last totaled \$7.6 billion and about \$4.6 billion was paid out to YouTube's partners.

The concept, which has been in beta testing for two mon-

ths, debuts Tuesday. Anyone who signs up with Vessel by 3 a.m. EDT Friday will receive a one-year subscription for free.

Vessel's ambitions sound like wishful thinking to Forrester Research analyst Jim Nail, who doubts many people will pay to watch a video that will be available for free within a few days.

"That kind of restriction only works when you have content that people are really knocking down the doors to see," Nail says. "It is going to totally come down to what kind of content that they can get. Unless they have the content that justifies paying \$3 a month, nothing will save them."

Vessel so far has about 70,000 video clips separated into about 160 categories, including sports, comedy, music, video games and food. Many clips are free and supported by ads, just like most video on YouTube. Vessel's subscription side features videos from about 130 contributors.

Machinima CEO Chad Gutzstein anticipates a large audience will pay for early access to the video gaming specialist's clips because video game enthusiasts "are more engaged and more obsessed with what they are doing than anything I have ever experienced. They just want to be there first." AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Warrick Page, International Women's Media Foundation



This handout photo shows Heidi Levine in Jerusalem. A women's media group will honor freelance photographer Heidi Levine as the inaugural winner of an award for courage named after Associated Press photographer Anja Niedringhaus, who was killed on assignment in Afghanistan.

WORLD BRIEFS

PAKISTAN needs short-range "tactical" nuclear weapons to deter arch-rival India, a top adviser to its government says, dismissing concerns it could increase the risk of a nuclear war.

AFGHANISTAN Thousands march through the Afghan capital demanding justice for a woman who was beaten to death by a mob after being falsely accused of burning a Quran. More on p12

MYANMAR Police reject a lawsuit filed by two Buddhist monks against Myanmar's home minister and police chief, saying they are protected by law. More on p12

SYRIA The Nusra Front, Syria's al-Qaida affiliate, is quietly consolidating power in territory stretching from the Turkish border to central and southern Syria as the Islamic State group gets most of the world's attention.



USA Utah became the only state to allow firing squads for executions when Gov. Gary Herbert signed a law Monday approving the method for use when no lethal injection drugs are available, even though he has called it "a little bit gruesome." The Republican governor has said Utah is a capital punishment state and needs a backup execution method in case a shortage of the drugs persists.

VENEZUELA Doctors say that the economic crisis plaguing Venezuela revived a medical practice rarely seen in developed countries since the 1970s: the radical mastectomy. With radiotherapy machines in short supply, doctors are turning to the disfiguring surgery to save breast cancer patients' lives.

UK Researchers have found fossil remains of a previously unknown species of crocodile-like "super salamander" that roamed the Earth more than 200 million years ago. University of Edinburgh researchers say the species discovered in Portugal was among the Earth's top predators.