

DISNEY'S 'BEAUTY AND THE BEAST' TO DEBUT IN TOWN

P5 MDT REPORT



REGION'S STATISTICAL SYSTEM EXPANDS
leong Meng Chao (pictured) took office as the Statistics and Census Service director yesterday

P7



NO CHANGES ON THE HORIZON
Lionel Leong doesn't envisage any substantial changes to be made to the factors affecting the gaming revenue downturn

P7

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Privacy watchdog office may turn into a commission

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WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA Education officials admonish a grade school teacher for letting a pupil bring a parasol for her. [More on p11](#)



NEPAL Rescuers were digging through piles of earth and snow on a popular trekking route in Nepal where an entire village was buried by a mudslide triggered by the earthquake that struck the region 10 days ago.

NEPAL Climbers who stayed in villages close to the Everest base camp have started packing their gear and are leaving the mountain because Sherpa guides have refused to rebuild a climbing route destroyed by an avalanche.

PHILIPPINES The Philippine military chief confirmed Monday that wanted Filipino bomb-maker Abdul Basit Usman, who has links to the Indonesian-based Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist network and is a suspect in deadly bomb attacks in the south, has been killed. Usman and five others were killed in a shootout allegedly with fellow members of his group. Washington has offered a USD1 million award for Usman's capture and prosecution.

More on backpage



Shanghai bans top officials' spouses from running businesses

P11

Ken Ritter, Las Vegas

LAS Vegas casino mogul Sheldon Adelson spent an entire day Monday [US time] denying that Las Vegas Sands officials had a hand in firing Steven Jacobs as Sands China Ltd. president in July 2010. He also denied any knowledge of an “exorcism strategy.”

“Never heard the phrase,” the chief executive of both Las Vegas Sands and Sands China Ltd. told Jacobs’ lawyer, James Pisanelli. “LVS (Las Vegas Sands) had nothing to do with his termination.” From that point forward, Adelson tried not to budge.

Adelson is facing a fourth day on the witness stand Tuesday [US time] before a Nevada judge considering a crucial question: whether she has jurisdiction to hear Jacobs’ claims of wrongful termination.

He derided questions: “Are you a standup comedian today?” he responded at one point. “Is there something about ‘no’ you don’t understand? I can spell it for you.”

“You’re talking about five years ago,” he said at another point. “I don’t recall. Period.”

He ranted about Jacobs and the “fabricated, outrageous, blackmailing” allegations of misdeeds that Jacobs says he was fired for attempting to expose.

Adelson and his legal team are trying to prevent a finding by Clark County District Court Judge Elizabeth Gonzalez that she has jurisdiction to hear the case. Such a finding could suggest that Las Vegas Sands violated Chinese regulations prohibiting companies abroad from controlling firms listed on that country’s stock exchanges.

But Adelson appeared Monday to relish the prospect of a legal brawl with Jacobs.

He and Las Vegas Sands President Michael Leven tallied 35 reasons to dismiss Jacobs before Adelson knocked one item from the list, Adelson said. “There were at least 34 good reasons,” Adelson said.

Pisanelli showed Adelson a 47-word letter of July 23, 2010, firing Jacobs. It was signed by Adelson, and it listed no reasons.

Pisanelli also showed an Aug. 5, 2010, list on Venetian Macau letterhead of reasons for the action. It contained 12 items.

Pisanelli and Jacobs’ lawyer Todd Bice later told the judge that among the tens of thou-

AP PHOTO



Las Vegas Sands Corp. Chairman and CEO Sheldon Adelson testifies in court Monday, May 4

Adelson denies Vegas executives had hand in Macau CEO firing

sands of documents turned over to them in the case, they’ve never received a 35-item or 34-item list.

“I wanted him to be fired for many months for many reasons. Period,” Adelson declared on the stand. “When this case gets to the merits, and there are ... (people) sitting in the jury box, the reasons will be discussed. And they’ll be backed up by experts that will say that any one of those reasons was sufficient.”

Adelson accused Jacobs, sitting at the plaintiff’s table, of building a file titled “outrageous,” into which he slipped notes about Sands officials’ actions.

“He was pompous. He was arrogant. He was condescending. He thought he was the be-all and the end-it-all,” Adelson said.

Pisanelli asked if Adelson ever considered making Jacobs chief executive of Las Vegas Sands.

“Over my dead body,” Adelson

answered.

Adelson, 81, maintained during his third day of testimony that Jacobs’ dismissal was handled by Leven, who also served as a Sands China Ltd. board member, and that key

“He [Jacobs] was pompous. He was arrogant. He was condescending. He thought he was the be-all and the end-it-all

SHELDON ADELSON

decisions and documents could have been handled anywhere but Las Vegas.

All Leven had to do was telephone Jacobs and fire him, Adelson fumed. But Leven wanted to go to Macau and do it face-to-face.

Adelson is chairman of the Sands China Ltd. board, Pisanelli noted. Did Leven ever counsel him that board approval was needed to fire Jacobs?

“I can’t tell you what Mike Leven thought when he was outside Las Vegas,” Adelson responded.

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Pisanelli put Adelson on the defensive when he posted a July 21, 2010, draft email on makeshift Sands China Ltd. letterhead titled “Leadership and Governance of Sands China Ltd.”

It detailed how Jacobs would be asked to resign or would be dismissed, and it was apparently circulated among four Las Vegas Sands lawyers and executives, including Leven. Adelson’s name wasn’t on the email recipient list.

Adelson spent several minutes with a magnifying glass poring over the document before looking up. He pointed to a paragraph noting that two Sands China Ltd. executives were removed from audit and remuneration committees in response to what Adelson called intrusive Hong Kong Stock Exchange regulations.

Was the document prepared in Las Vegas? Pisanelli asked.

“It could have been prepared in Timbuktu,” Adelson replied. **AP**

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Privacy watchdog may become Commission for Privacy and Data Protection

Catarina Pinto

A proposal to restructure the Office for Personal Data Protection (GPDP) and turn it into a Commission for Privacy and Data Protection is currently being drafted and should be completed by June, GPDP coordinator Vasco Fong revealed yesterday. He acknowledged that the department has been facing challenges to be recognized as an independent entity by similar overseas institutions.

"Many entities do not recognize the GPDP as an entity entitled to handle certain [data protection-related] cases. That's why Macau only holds an observer status within some [data protection] organizations," he told a press conference yesterday.

Looking to overcome those challenges and make the GPDP a recognizable independent entity outside Macau, Mr Fong added that they're working on a piece of



Vasco Fong speaks

legislation that should be completed by June this year, before it is handed to the Executive Council and the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Fong stressed that his department has stepped up its coordinating efforts to complete the draft as soon as possible. He explained that their proposal not only entails reshuffling measures, but also the restructuring of the department.

Yesterday's press conference also served to present the findings of a study commissioned from

the Educational Research Center of UM's Faculty of Education. The study looked at how secondary school and higher education studies see and handle their personal data.

Surveyed students revealed that ID theft (64.7 pct), CCTV systems (64.5 pct), internet services and social media (58.8 percent), and information leakage (56.6 percent) represent a great privacy risk.

Students chose not to hand personal data to enterprises or associations when they were asked about information concerning their families (64.5 pct), financial situation (56.7 pct), address (53 pct) and DNA (52.8 pct).

A total of 51.8 pct of the students expressed concerns regarding the transferring of personal data beyond Macau's borders. With regards to data protection, 17.2 pct of the students said they refused to provide their personal information to public services or

departments; 52.4 percent of the students refused to share their personal data with private entities.

Furthermore, 76.7 pct of the students acknowledged that mobile apps do collect personal data from their users; 47.4 pct of those surveyed said they regretted sharing data within social media networks.

Finally, 67 pct of the students acknowledged they do not read websites' privacy policies.

Most teachers surveyed stated

that issues surrounding data protection should be detailed in the civic education subject, as it would be "too difficult" to create a specific subject addressing only data protection. They also highlighted that there's a lack of textbooks on data protection.

Teachers acknowledged that they have little knowledge of data protection rights. Only 28.6 pct of the surveyed teachers said they have undergone training on data protection matters.

The research center handled 3,271 questionnaires in total, after they were handed to students across 12 secondary schools and five higher education institutions. In addition, 15 professors participated in in-depth interviews, addressing data protection matters.

Mr Fong revealed that an initial project to launch textbooks on data protection has already been developed. "We're hoping to complete this project by year-end," he said.

GPDP PROVIDES GUIDANCE ON CCTV SYSTEM OPERATION

GPDP IS providing advice on the way CCTV cameras are installed, said the office coordinator, Vasco Fong. Asked whether a plan to install 1,620 CCTV cameras around town might represent a violation of residents' privacy, Mr Fong argued that these concerns are not an issue. "GPDP has to provide suggestions on how the camera should be positioned, so that it is not installed pointing directly in a specific direction, such as a window," he stated. Mr Fong added that, at times, authorities are requested to change the surveillance cameras' positions so that they don't violate people's privacy.

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GAMING

Dividends in danger as MGM China, rivals yield to Macau slump

Christopher Palmeri

MGM China Holdings Ltd. is reconsidering its special dividends, which totaled USD1.4 billion over the past three years, because of the gambling slump in Macau.

While MGM China will continue to distribute semi-annual payments, which have been limited to 35 percent of profit, special dividends paid annually in March are under review, Jim Murren, chairman and chief executive officer of parent MGM Resorts International, said Monday in an interview.

"I don't expect many people to have special dividends at the level we've had in recent years," Murren said.

Investors in Macau casinos enjoyed fat dividends as gambling revenue in the market soared. Now, with betting in the region, the world's largest gambling hub, falling for 11 months, the companies are pulling back. The slump comes as all six of



James "Jim" Murren, chairman and chief executive officer of MGM Resorts International,

the casino operators build new, multibillion-dollar resorts.

Wynn Resorts Ltd. Chairman Steve Wynn slashed his company's quarterly dividend by two-thirds last week to 50 cents a share. His Wynn Macau Ltd. subsidiary omitted a final dividend at the end of March.

Three U.S. controlled opera-

tors, Sands China Ltd., MGM China and Wynn Macau, won't make enough money this year to cover their dividends if they keep their regular and special payouts at current levels, according to Tim Craighead, a Bloomberg Intelligence analyst in Hong Kong.

"If other Macau casino opera-

tors hold to Steve Wynn's mantra of not wanting to borrow money to pay dividends, we could see more dividend cuts on top of what's already happened," Craighead said.

MGM China paid a special dividend of USD400 million this year, down from \$500 million in each of the past two years.

I don't expect many people to have special dividends at the level we've had in recent years

JIM MURREN

While Las Vegas Sands raised its quarterly payout by 30 percent to 65 cents a share in January, the company's Macau division, Sands China, didn't pay a special dividend as it had a year earlier.

On a conference call last month with investors, Las Vegas Sands Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Sheldon Adelson said the parent company was targeting 10 percent growth in its regular dividend over the next three years. **AP**

STATISTICS

Money supply continued to decline in March

THE Monetary Authority of Macau released the monetary and financial statistics for March yesterday, and these show a continuing decline in money supply. As total loans increased while total deposits dropped, the overall loan-to-deposit ratio of the banking sector in March rose from a month earlier. Currency in circulation dropped 5.7 percent, whereas demand deposits grew 0.7 percent.

In comparison to the preceding month, total resident deposits decreased 0.7 percent to MOP466.2 billion, whereas total non-resident deposits dropped 3.4 percent to MOP236.5 billion. Public sector deposits with the banking sector increased 7.2 percent to MOP113.4 billion. As a result, total deposits with the banking sector dropped 0.5 percent from a month earlier to MOP816.1 billion.

Meanwhile, total domestic loans to the private sector increased 2.3 percent to MOP354.2 billion. Analyzed by economic sector, the



total value of loans granted to corporations dealing in "information technology", "education" and "restaurants, hotels and similar" increased by 29.3 pct, 21.1 pct and 16.7 pct respectively compared with a quarter ago. Meanwhile, "non-monetary financial institutions" and "electricity, gas and water" dropped 54.4 pct and 7.1 pct respectively.

Moreover, external loans dropped marginally by 0.1 pct to MOP354.6 billion.

As a result, the loan-to-deposit ratio of the resident sector at the end of March rose 0.9 percentage points from the previous month to sit at 61.1 percent; the ratio for both the resident and non-resident sectors grew by 1.3 percentage points to 86.9 percent.

Consultation on sexual harassment bill later this year

THE government is currently conducting a full review of the Penal Code, including an assessment of the legislation regarding sexual crimes, according to the Law Reform and International Law Bureau (DSRJDI) director, Chu Lam Lam. The bureau has also added the revision of the anti-drug trafficking law to this year's legislation agenda.

The director revealed, replying to lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong's written inquiry, that a public consultation will be launched on the criminal legislation against sexual harassment in the second half of this year.

Citing the current laws as "inadequate protection" for victims of sexual harassment, Ng criticized the DSRJDI – which is responsible for coordinating amendments to the Penal Code – for not actively responding to the outcry for related criminal legislation, despite public prompts from many lawmakers and the Prosecutor General.

In addition, the lawmaker questioned whether the revision of the anti-drug trafficking law would be included in this year's law reform agenda; the authorities had noticed that the last revision to



Chu Lam Lam

penalties, made in 2009, has caused a significant decrease in soft drug trafficking and drug abuse.

The previous revision hit harder on heavy crimes, but lightened the penalties on lighter offenses. In reply, Chu said that the Anti-Drug Committee has set up a review group to assess the effectiveness of the current legal system's enforcement in combatting drug crimes, and to study the necessity for law amendments.

Ng Kuok Cheong urged the authorities to improve the criminal procedural system that has been criticized for "lagging behind," in order to enhance judicial efficiency. However, the bureau replied that the Code of Criminal Procedure was amended in 2013, whereas the effectiveness of the amendment, which was enforced from the beginning of 2014, will be assessed under the government's sustained attention. **BY**

ARTS

Macau's Venice Biennale exhibition opens tomorrow



View of the Macau Pavilion

MACAU'S exhibition at the 56th International Art Exhibition: Biennale di Venezia entitled "Path and Adventure – Works By Mio Pang Fei", will be inaugurated tomorrow.

According to a press release issued by one of the co-organizers of the exhibition, together with the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau of Macau, a delegation from the museum arrived in Venice last week to prepare the event's opening.

The exhibition features eighteen paintings and installations by Mio Pang Fei, one of Macau's most prestigious artists, which showcase his experimental approach in the midst of China's Cultural Revolution, as well as his achievements from his research and practice of 'neo-orientalism', spanning decades.

The centennial Venice Art Biennale, which began in 1895, is the largest of its kind and remains one of the most important contemporary art events. It has attracted worldwide attention, aided by over 100 countries/regions represented by internationally-acclaimed or highly promising artists.

Macau was first invited to par-

ticipate in the event in 2007, and has since organized five exhibitions that have aimed to showcase local contemporary art to a global audience, with a total of 14 artists.

The 2015 Biennale theme, "All the World's Futures," curated by the Nigerian-born art critic, editor and writer Okwui Enwezor, seeks to evaluate and explore today's radical social changes.

The Venice Art Biennale includes exhibitions based on set themes, those at national pavilions and parallel exhibitions. The curator of this year's themed exhibitions has invited 136 influential artists from 53 countries to participate, including Chinese iconic artists like Xu Bing, Qiu Zhijie, Ji Dachun and Cao Fei. At each of the national pavilions, 89 nations will display artworks, while 44 collateral exhibitions will be presented by regions and artistic institutions invited by the Biennale – Macau's being one of them.

"Path and Adventure – Works By Mio Pang Fei" will be available for viewing from May 7 to November 22 (closed on Mondays), at the Macau Pavilion, located in the Castello district of Venice.

'Cultural and Creative Map' themed store unveiled



THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) is now opening a store called "Macau Cultural and Creative Maps", in order to display and sell a variety of local original products at the C-Shop in Nam Van, located on Avenida Doutor Mário Soares. This store also offers ticketing services for programs and activities

which aim to expose Macau's cultural and creative side to residents and visitors.

The themed store at C-Shop will stock a map of cultural and creative organizations (that can be obtained at the shop for free), and have local original products available for demonstration and sale. It will also provide information about cultural and creative activities.

According to a press release issued by the IC, the store features more than one hundred kinds of local original products, such as souvenirs, clothing and accessories, household items, books, visual arts and products which are connected to various local artistic and cultural events.



Darick Pead and Hilary Maiberger sing

ENTERTAINMENT

'Beauty and the Beast' cast amazed with Asian audiences

DISNEY'S musical extravaganza "Beauty and the Beast" is coming to the Venetian Theatre from June 13 to July 26 as part of its world tour, in celebration of the Broadway show's 20th anniversary. A media event was held yesterday to give both local and regional media outlets the opportunity to speak to some of the production's cast and crew.

Based on an 18th century French fairy tale, the love-story musical has been one of the longest-running and highest-grossing Broadway shows that has ever run, nominated for nine Tony Awards since its premiere in 1994.

"Beauty and the Beast" tells the story of Belle, a young woman in a provincial town, and the Beast, who is a young prince trapped by a spell placed on him by an enchantress. If the beast can learn to love and be loved in return, the curse will be broken and he will be transformed back into his former self.

Darick Pead, who plays the role of the Beast, told reporters about the hardships of love: "I think love is hard because I think love is about the other person. Love is not about me, love is not about you or you and me. Love is only about you. So if you find somebody who loves you like that, and you love

them back, yeah, I think you can find true love in your life."

Hilary Maiberger, who plays Belle, complimented: "I think it's so much about being comfortable with who you're with."

The pair, who shared the same notion on true love, also hit it off at the very beginning of their three-year collaboration. Nonetheless, Maiberger confessed to media that she felt "odd" and "nervous" during the cast audition, wondering whether she could develop chemistry and connection with a stranger to act in these intimate scenes.

"On the first day of the rehearsal, it was just complete trust. And we're very comfortable with each other. I think we jumped into one of the most intimate scenes, the death scene. It's a very comfortable workspace, and it just kind of clicked," said Maiberger.

Having been on an international tour for three years, both Maiberger and Pead admitted that their lives have also changed quite a lot. The former told media she has learnt to adapt herself to the new lifestyle and "figured out who she was," on such a long road.

Darick Pead, who became a stage actor right out of college, has come to realize how much family meant to him during those days away from

home, and understands more about the essence of life.

One of the aspects that most impressed the two North American actors on their tour was the overwhelming hospitality in Asia. "I had just never felt so welcome and I had never felt so much excitement," said Maiberger. And Pead joked that he never understood the phrase "my heart is full" until he came to Asia.

An enchanting musical can't do without fabulous scores, which was what both leading actors kept stressing in the interview as they believe the music has helped to lift the entire mood within the play. The piece that lingered in Maiberger's head most was "Home," while the diva's favorite was "Change In Me," as it describes the struggles in Belle's heart as she convinces herself that the castle she is coerced to live in is her new home.

Everyday vocalizing exercises and loads of water kept the pair's voices in good condition, but they also revealed that Chinese loquat-leaf-extract was also what they would drink to sharpen their voices.

The musical is jointly produced by Broadway Entertainment Group and Networks Presentations, with Garuda Indonesia as the official airline sponsor for the Macau show. **Staff reporter**



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LIONEL LEONG

No changes envisaged in factors affecting gaming slump

THE Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, said that he doesn't envisage any substantial changes to be made to the combination of factors affecting the gaming revenue downturn. As more non-gaming elements are being installed in casino resorts, he expects tourists to stay longer, following this enhancement to the city's attraction to tourism.

Leong told the media that tourism destinations such as Japan and South Korea tend to compete with Macau for visitors from the mainland, especially when they are looking to have a long vacation. He thus hopes that the new resort projects can attract tourists to stay longer.

As for how many gambling tables will be approved for Galaxy Macau's second-phase project, the secretary reiterated that the government would approve each application rigorously after comprehensive factors have been considered, including the annual growth cap of 3 percent.

Leong stressed that the administration's aim is to encourage casino corporations that drive the development of local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), especially those brands with Macau characteristics. He recognized Galaxy's Broadway project as an example of such an initiative, adding that those elements – also including corporate social responsibility and competitiveness – are important indicators for the gaming-license interim review.

Gov't building statistical system for emerging industries

THE Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) acting director, Ieong Meng Chao, took office as the bureau's director yesterday. He said that the bureau had started building a statistical index system for emerging industries earlier this year, covering MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), traditional Chinese medicine, and cultural and creative industries.

Ieong stated that society's demands for timely, suitable and accurate statistical information have increased so the bureau will actively develop new programs.

The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, also acknowledged during the inauguration ceremony that the city is entering a new stage of economic diversification, and that this implies more advanced requirements for official statistics.

Leong said that the government has included the



Lionel Leong (center) administrates the swearing-in ceremony of the director of the Statistics and Census Bureau, Ieong Meng Chao (left)

new statistical index system into its policy direction, as it will scientifically and systematically reflect the emerging industries' development and their contribution to the economy.

Furthermore, Ieong Meng Chao revealed that the bureau has begun cooperating with the mainland authorities in obtaining data on Macau enterprises' economic activities in the mainland. "These data will help systematically

measure the development of regional cooperation, and help assess those policies' effectiveness," he explained.

Ieong said that the DSEC would optimize the use of administrative data for statistics based on department collaboration, so as to enhance efficiency. Meanwhile, the bureau intends to reduce the number of questionnaires to be answered by residents.

Having served at DSEC

for three decades, Ieong pledged that the bureau would provide true and accurate statistics for scientific decision-making. He went on to stress the importance of training personnel and cultivating fresh specialists to whom incumbents can eventually pass the relay baton, indicating that "the bureau is entering a peak period for retirement after three decades' implementation." **BY**

AD



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Paul Wiseman
Economics Writer, Washington

CHINESE companies are shielding themselves from lawsuits in America, denying U.S. businesses and investors their day in court, a report from a federal watchdog says.

The report published yesterday by the U.S.-China Economic Security Commission says that Chinese companies operating in the U.S. have built a legal firewall that keeps them largely immune from the jurisdiction of U.S. courts and regulatory agencies.

They use complicated corporate structures that protect their China-based parent companies from U.S. lawsuits. And they often claim that Chinese secrecy and banking laws exempt them from turning over evidence and responding to U.S. court documents.

The report calls on Congress to establish that Chinese companies fall under the jurisdiction of U.S. courts and require that Chinese firms assign agents to accept subpoenas and other U.S. court documents.

For now, anyone suing a Chinese company can find it "almost impossible" to deliver court papers to the defendants in the United States, according to the report.

That forces plaintiffs into a cumbersome international process for delivering legal documents and pursuing evidence in China. The paperwork must be translated into Chinese, then presented to China's government, which often rejects the cases for alleged errors.

The report, written by commission researcher Kevin Rosier, studied several cases involving state-owned Chinese banks and other financial firms.

In a 2011 suit against Chinese companies that allegedly

Report: 'Legal firewall' shields Chinese firms from lawsuits



■ Anyone suing a Chinese company can find it 'almost impossible'

sold counterfeit handbags for instance, Gucci America tried unsuccessfully to force the state-owned Bank of China to turn over financial records related to the sales of the disputed goods. Bank of China argued that Chinese law barred it from delivering the information. The case has been bogged down in U.S. courts for more than four years.

Beijing-based Harvest Fund Management has so far mana-

ged to fend off a lawsuit filed last year by U.S.-based Krane Distribution. Krane alleges that Harvest reneged on an agreement to jointly market mutual funds in the U.S. But Harvest argues that only its shell company, Harvest USA, falls under the jurisdiction of U.S. courts and that Krane cannot collect evidence from Harvest operations in China, the report says.

The problems reflect the complications that arise as China seeks to expand internationally, bringing to the U.S. companies that are often owned at least partially by the Chinese government.

"It really puts American companies at an economic disadvantage," says Frederick Longer, a lawyer with the

Philadelphia law firm Levin, Fishbein, Sedran & Berman, who has pursued cases against Chinese companies. "They are subject to American laws and American standards and American judicial jurisdiction. Chinese companies contend they have these high standards, but they basically hide behind Chinese walls."

The Chinese government requires the Chinese enterprises investing in the U.S. to abide by U.S. laws and regulations, a spokesman for the Chinese embassy in Washington said.

"At the same time, we hope that the U.S. government will provide equal treatment for the Chinese enterprises under related U.S. legal framework," the spokesman, Zhu Haiquan, said.

Chinese direct investment in the United States has risen from virtually nothing before 2010 to more than USD10 billion in each of the last two years, according to the Rhodium Group consultancy.

As investment increases, "U.S. businesses will be increasingly vulnerable without the protection of the U.S. judicial system" when they do business with Chinese firms operating in America, the report warns.

The commission, created by Congress in 2000 to monitor the national security implications of the U.S.-China economic relationship, is publishing the report "to promote greater public understanding" but does not necessarily endorse its findings. **AP**

corporate bits

MGM MACAU HOLDS SECOND "MGM DEALER OLYMPICS"



MGM Macau held its second "MGM Dealer Olympics", with the objective to enhance the vocational skills and customer service standards of the Table Games team members, while promoting team spirit. The competition was organized by the Casino Operations Team, with the winners: Samuel Lei of Blackjack, Ivan Cheong of Baccarat and Jimmy Lim of Roulette, who were announced on April 29, after final rounds of the contests.

The participants were mainly the su-

pervisors and dealers of table games such as Baccarat, Roulette and Blackjack. Nearly 100 candidates participated in three different categories of the game, while pre-rounds and semi-finals took place by phases since March. Only 15 of the participants (five from each category) qualified for the finals. Divided into two parts – simulated game and mental calculation, the final contests were designed to test the team members' professional knowledge of the respective table games, their response to impromptu incidents, their capability in handling situations and providing quality customer service.

Mr. John Shigley, Chief Operating Officer of Gaming, said: "We value each of our team members who contribute to casino operations. Since dealers are the most fundamental element of the casino operation, we place an emphasis on their skill enhancement through different training programs, activities and competitions so as to give them the confidence while promoting team spirit."

LAMBORGHINI SUV MOVES CLOSER TO REALITY AS ITALY SEEKS JOBS DEAL



Automobili Lamborghini SpA may finally be moving closer to producing a high-performance sport utility vehicle for the world's wealthy, as Italy's job-hungry government offers incentives, according to people familiar with the matter.

In exchange for Lamborghini's plan to hire as many as 300

people, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's government is prepared to offer as much as 100 million euros (USD111 million) in tax breaks and other benefits for a new Italian assembly facility for the crossover, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the discussions are private. Talks on the incentives were scheduled to resume yesterday in Rome, the people said.

Lamborghini unveiled a prototype of the high-riding Urus SUV in 2012. The Italian supercar brand has since been refining a business case for the vehicle in an effort to win approval from its parent, Volkswagen AG's Audi. If it gets the green light for production, the car will vie with the upcoming Aston Martin DBX as the world's sportiest crossover.

PHILIPPINE TELEPHONE REVAMPS FOR DATA PUSH AS ITS REVENUE FALLS



Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. has hired top executives and expanded the roles of some existing ones in a revamp designed to boost data revenue as subscribers increasingly turn to Facebook Inc. and Viber for calls and messages.

The carrier appointed Winston Damarillo, founding partner at Global Gateway Venture Capital, as chief strategy officer, according to a statement in Manila

yesterday. It may spend more than 39 billion pesos (USD875 million) this year as the company puts in place infrastructure to provide a "digital spine," Chairman Manuel Pangilinan said at a press conference after reporting that first-quarter profit was little changed.

Pangilinan said the carrier has to prepare itself as customers increasingly use the Web for shopping and entertainment on their mobile devices. The Philippines' largest telecommunications company posted its first drop in revenue in 13 quarters, while operating profit margin narrowed from the year-earlier period. "Either we pivot or we perish," Pangilinan said. "It's very clear that we can't think and behave like a telco of the past."

China gains importance in Angola and Mozambique

CHINA, as well as consolidating its position as a major buyer of Angolan oil and as a destination market for Mozambique's natural gas, is emerging as an increasingly important financier of both countries.

The latest official data for Angolan oil exports, recently released, indicated that China bought more than 116 million barrels of oil last year, four times more than the second largest consumer, India.

The Economist Intelligence Unit said this data showed the "importance of the relationship with China," because it is based on an energy supply and is therefore strategic, at the same time as trade with the United States has been losing its importance as it bought only 7 million barrels of oil from Angola in 2014.

The figures, according to the EIU also show a "shift to Asian markets" from customers in Angola.

At a time when the Angolan authorities are struggling with lack of revenue due to persis-



tently low oil prices, which caused a shortfall of USD14 billion in the state budget, emerging partners, particularly China, are also taking on an increasingly important role as financiers.

The same trend was also noted by the Angolan Economy Minister, Abraão Gourgel, in a recent interview with the Financial Times, in which he pointed to China as one of the preferred partners for new financing li-

nes, after state oil company Sonangol had recently obtained a credit of US\$2 billion from Chinese banks.

"The main goals of Angola's foreign policy will be the consolidation of relations with key strategic partners," such as Portugal and China, and "diversification of access to international financing," said the EIU in its latest report on the Angolan economy.

"Angola will continue to increase lines of credit and financing available from its partners, especially China and Brazil," along with trying to issue debt through Eurobonds of between US\$1 billion and US\$2 billion," Gourgel said.

The Financial Times recently reported that Angola had been granted a loan of US\$500

The large gas reserves will attract more foreign investors, especially among Asian gas importing countries

EIU REPORT

million from the World Bank for the first time, and that it had been resisting the possibility of requesting funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

As finance minister, the current governor of the National Bank of Angola, José Pedro Morais, was noted for resisting involvement with the IMF, preferring to establish credit lines of billions of dollars with China and Brazil, backed by oil exports, that were applied in infrastructure projects.

Given the current difficulties of the Brazilian economy, the probability of support coming from that country is more remote, so the importance of Beijing as a funding source is even greater.

Also in the case of Mozambique, analysts expect a strengthening of ties with emerging countries, particularly China as a source of liquidity.

"The investment by Brazil, India, Australia and China will strengthen ties with these countries," and in the Chinese is also a "major donor to the Mozambican state," said the EIU in its latest report on the Mozambican economy.

"The large gas reserves will attract more foreign investors, especially among Asian gas importing countries on a large scale," it added. **MDT/Macauhub**

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THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'



Xi Jinping plays soccer after visiting a sports association in Ireland on Feb.19, 2012

Soccer stocks trouncing the market on Xi's stimulus

XI Jinping's plan to make China a soccer superpower is winning over fans in an unlikely place: the nation's USD7.7 trillion stock market.

Nine listed companies with ties to the country's soccer league have surged an average 158 percent since the Chinese president first signaled plans in March 2014 to revive a sport plagued by match-fixing and an 82 ranking in FIFA's international league. The gains, which outpaced the benchmark index by 42 percentage points, have accelerated in the past two months as Xi outlined a 50-point road map for soccer reform and put a member of the ruling Politburo in charge of the effort.

For Xi, who showed off his soccer skills to photographers during a 2012 state visit to Ireland, the campaign is part of a wider push to both curb corruption in the world's second-largest economy and project Chinese power on the international stage. Ledman Optoelectronic Co., a partner of China's top soccer league, and Leshi Internet Informa-

tion & Technology (Beijing) Co., which broadcasts league games through the Internet, are among Minsheng Securities Co.'s top picks for investors who want to bet on a turnaround for the sport.

"To invest in China, you need to follow policies," said Tao Ye, a sports-industry analyst at Minsheng Securities in Beijing. "Soccer reform is getting a big push from the top and that's why relevant stocks have gained so much."

In a country with the world's

Soccer reform is getting a big push from the top and that's why relevant stocks have gained so much

TAO YE,
ANALYST, MINSHENG SECURITIES

largest population, an expanding role in international financial markets and growing military clout, the inability to produce a world-class soccer system has been a sore point for a domestic fan base estimated at 600 million by local media.

China has qualified for the World Cup only once in its history, compared with five times for Japan and nine for South Korea. The national men's team is ranked lower than Haiti and Mali in FIFA's latest scorecard of 209 nations and regions. The 11-year-old Chinese Super League has been marred by sub-standard play, match-fixing and bribery scandals.

With soccer reform, Xi is mixing his personal affection for the game with a zeal for fighting corruption that has ensnared more than 100,000 Communist Party cadres.

As state leader, he has visited soccer stadiums on overseas trips, met with star athletes and toured Chinese youth soccer training camps.

The national government has pledged more funding for

the national team, two new training camps and the establishment of 50,000 soccer schools by 2025. Authorities are also considering a regulated betting system for super league games and new ways to improve the compensation system for players.

Last month, Xi put Liu Yandong in charge of a group to oversee the reforms, the first time a Politburo member has been entrusted with developing a sport.

The president's interest in soccer has "a direct link" to the release of the reform plan, said Ren Hai, a professor of sports culture at Beijing Sport University.

"It's much faster than expected," said Ren, who's also chief researcher at the China Institute of Sport Science under the General Administration of Sport. "It only took Xi less than three years to roll out a comprehensive reform plan."

There are already signs of change. Local clubs have gotten bolder in their spending plans, signing top foreign players such as Brazil national team striker Diego Tardelli. This year, the national team delivered its best Asian Cup performance in a decade, advancing to the knock-out stage after defeating all the three group rivals.

Stock investors are betting on more good news to come. Ledman Optoelectronic, which has the right to use the super league logo as its sole supplier of light-emitting diodes, has jumped 336 percent

over the past 12 months on the ChiNext board of smaller companies. Its per-share earnings may double this year, according to the average estimate of five analyst estimates compiled by Bloomberg.

Leshi Internet has surged 147 percent, while Jiangsu Sainty Corp Ltd., whose parent owns a super-league club, has climbed 128 percent. Shanghai International Port, whose soccer club now tops the league table, has advanced 60 percent. Calls to the board secretaries of the four companies went unanswered.

Ledman Optoelectronic trades at 117.9 times estimated profit, more than four times the multiple for Sanan Optoelectronics Co., China's biggest listed LED company by market value, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Leshi Internet is valued at 192.9 times earnings.

The rally in soccer-related stocks may not be sustainable because valuations have surged and it's too early to judge if the reforms will be successful, according to Yu Jun, a strategist at Bosera Asset Management Co. in Shenzhen.

"It's difficult to tell at the initial stage whether it's a good investment," Yu said in a phone interview on April 2. "There are lots of optimistic expectations and huge room for imagination."

The Shanghai Composite Index fell 4.1 percent to 4,298.71 at the close yesterday amid valuation concerns and speculation the government will introduce measures to cool the market.

While Chinese stock traders are known for chasing investment themes that don't always pan out, GF Securities Co. says an improvement in the nation's soccer system will have a tangible impact on some businesses.

"Ledman Optoelectronic may benefit from the reforms," said Li Yinlin, an analyst covering the sports industry at GF Securities, the nation's sixth-largest brokerage, in Guangzhou. "That's not purely speculation. Soccer will bring real profits."

Earnings for China's super league may double to about 800 million yuan (USD129 million) this year, as the government makes competition more market oriented by cutting red tape and reducing intervention, according to Minsheng Securities.

"The potential for the industry is big enough - even bigger than those western countries - because of China's large population base," Zhang Tao, an analyst covering culture and sports industries at Shanghai Securities Co., said by phone. "The investment theme has already gained recognition."

Bloomberg

Shanghai bans top officials' spouses from running businesses

BLOOMBERG



Pedestrians walk through the Lujiazui Financial District in Shanghai. China treats the municipality of Shanghai as a province

Ting Shi

SHANGHAI banned spouses and children of senior officials from private business, making the Chinese financial hub the first to impose such strict controls over the family wealth of Communist Party cadres.

The husbands and wives of ministerial and provincial-level officials are prohibited from starting companies or getting involved in any business operations, according to regulations passed Monday at the Shanghai municipal government's general meeting. Children of local officials and their spouses cannot conduct business within the municipality, which in China carries the same status as a province.

The controls are among the most concrete announced in China since President Xi Jinping took power in November 2012 and launched an anti-corruption campaign that has ensnared more than 100,000 party officials. In many cases, such as the high-profile prosecution of former domestic security chief Zhou Yongkang, officials have been accused by anti-graft authorities of directing illicit gains to close family members.

More details about funding and enforcement are necessary to make sure the Shanghai rules

don't become another toothless measure, said Ren Jianming, a governance professor at Beihang University in Beijing.

"Who is going to implement the rules? The municipal disciplinary agency? The municipal party organization? Or the municipal government itself?" said Ren, who has advised the party's graft-busting agency, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. "There is this conspicuous lack of clarity on the executive body, and then whether they will have enough resources to implement it. This is actually a fatal weakness of many of China's anti-corruption mechanisms."

The Shanghai regulations were first approved in late February at a meeting of Xi's top reform group. Xi, who was briefly Shanghai party boss before becoming head of the Communist Party, said at the National People's Congress in March that the municipality should be a test case for nationwide controls.

The ban also applies to spouses of senior officials in the local judicial system, heads of the state-owned companies based in the municipality and district party chiefs. Their children and children's spouses are prohibited from operating businesses in the areas or jurisdictions they oversee to avoid potential conflict of

interests, according to the rules, which were published on the Shanghai government's official Weibo account.

Relatives of senior officials have great potential for rent-seeking and other forms of corruption, Shanghai deputy party chief Ying Yong said Monday, according to the Weibo posting. The rules aim to make clear that officials need to choose between keeping their jobs and making money in the private sector, Ying said.

That might be a difficult prospect for many party officials, who make a fraction of their peers in the private sector and their counterparts overseas. China's leaders awarded civil servants their first pay raise since 2006 earlier this year, with Xi seeing his salary rise to 137,000 yuan (USD22,000) a year. U.S. President Barack Obama makes \$400,000.

On the national level, efforts to regulate officials' outside business activities date back to at least 1995, according to Ren. Nearly all of the measures have eventually ended up "gathering dust on the shelves" because they lacked a clear course of implementation and punishment.

"Even if you've got some very detailed mechanism, it might well end up being a piece of blank paper," Ren said. **Bloomberg**

Regulators to lift price controls on most drugs starting June 1

CHINESE regulators will lift price controls on most pharmaceutical drugs starting June 1 in hopes that the market-driven pricing system will keep medical costs in check, the National Development and Reform Commission announced yesterday.

Beijing has vowed to ease government controls in favor of market competition in as many areas as possible to improve efficiency, and experts say the upper-limit drug prices set by the government have become irrelevant because market prices are typically much lower.

"The new policy is merely a symbolic move," said Shi Lichen, a Beijing-based medical services consultant.

The country's most powerful regulating agency said on its official website it would abandon the decades-long practice of price controls, except for narcotics and some psychiatric drugs, as part of drug price reform.

The commission said it will leave the setting of drug prices to market competition while shifting to a role of supervising market behavior.

The statement said regulators would establish a price monitoring system and focus on detecting and punishing unlawful behaviors.

Chinese consumers have long complained of high drug costs. Authorities have in the last couple of years cracked down on rampant bribery by pharmaceutical companies which had inflated drug prices.

Experts said drug prices would fall when insurance companies get a bigger say.

"There won't be any real changes in the pharmaceutical industry in China until a new medical price-setting mechanism is introduced where medical insurance plays a bigger role in the price control," said John Cai, director of the Centre for Health Care Management and Policy at China Europe International Business School. **AP**

Education officials warn teacher who let student hold parasol for her

A Chinese grade school teacher was admonished yesterday for letting a student hold a parasol for her on a school outing after photos of the incident drew overwhelming criticism on social media.

The Baoshan district education bureau in Shanghai said in a statement that it was reminding teachers that they must discipline themselves and care for their students.

Chinese officials have long had the privilege of having underlings hold umbrellas to shield them from the elements, but the practice — once seen as a symbol of status — has been derided by people who see it as an act of arrogance indicative of an authoritarian regime.

Last year, a photo of President Xi Jinping holding his own umbrella in the rain won a top journalism prize, as it portrayed him as a normal person.

The photos of the small boy stretching up his arm to hold the parasol over his teacher's head on a sunny day as she walked and then sat on a bench touched a nerve among the Chinese public, who responded with torrents of sarcasm and criticism, even after local media reported that the boy did it willingly.

Responding to public opinion, local education officials swiftly launched an investigation and announced their decision. **AP**

AFGHANISTAN

Poppy farmers say new seeds will boost opium output

Mirwais Khan and
Lynne O'Donnell, Zhari

IT'S the cash crop of the Taliban and the scourge of Afghanistan — the country's intractable opium cultivation. This year, many Afghan poppy farmers are expecting a windfall as they get ready to harvest opium from a new variety of poppy seeds said to boost yield of the resin that produces heroin.

The plants grow bigger, faster, use less water than seeds they've used before, and give up to double the amount of opium, they say.

No one seems to know where the seeds originate from. The farmers of Kandahar and Helmand provinces, where most of Afghanistan's poppies are grown, say they were hand-delivered for planting early this year by the same men who collect the opium after each harvest, and who also provide them with tools, fertilizer, farming advice — and the much needed cash advance.

To the villagers, the shadowy men are intermediaries for drug lords and regional traffickers working with or for the Taliban, underscoring the extensive web that fuels the opium trade and keeps the poppy farmers in a clasp of terror and dependency. The impoverished farmers have little recourse but to accept the seeds and other farming materials on credit, to be paid back when they harvest the crop, continuing a never ending cycle of debt.

Afghanistan's poppy harvest, which accounts for most of the world's heroin, is worth an estimated USD3 billion a year, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Production hit a record high in 2014, up 17 percent compared to the year before, as opium and the drugs trade continued to undermine security, rule of law and development, while funding both organized crime and the Taliban — often one and the same.

The trend is expected to continue in 2015, in part thanks to the new poppy seeds, according to officials tasked with overseeing the eradication of poppy crops.

This upcoming harvest in late spring is expected to surpass last year's country-wide record of 7,800 metric tons by as much as 7 percent and 22 percent in Kandahar and Helmand provinces respectively,

AP PHOTO



Afghan farmers collect raw opium as they work in a poppy field in the Zhari district of Kandahar, South of Kabul

local officials said.

Experts say the Taliban, who have been waging war on the Kabul government for more than a decade, derive around 40 percent of their funding from opium, which in turn fuels their insurgency.

■ The plants grow bigger, faster, use less water and give up to double the amount of opium

Fierce fighting in recent months in poppy-growing regions shows the Taliban's determination to protect their trafficking routes and the seasonal workers who come to earn money at harvest time from government forces under orders to eradicate the crop.

Gul Mohammad Shukran, chief of Kandahar's anti-narcotics department, said the new seeds came with the drug traffickers, but he did not know exactly where from. They yield "better drug plants, which require less water and have a faster growth time."

"This is a big threat to

everyone," he said, adding that Afghanistan's central authorities had failed to act on his warnings.

Growing poppy for opium is illegal in Afghanistan and forbidden under Islam, the country's predominant religion. But Afghan farmers feel they have no choice. For more than a decade the government and its international partners have pleaded with them to grow something else — wheat, fruit or even saffron.

When that didn't work, the police were sent to destroy crops. And when that failed, the Americans and the British tried handing out free wheat seeds, an enterprise that found little fertile ground.

This spring, the opium fields have again erupted in a sea of bright pink poppy flowers.

The new poppy seeds allow farmers to almost double the output from each plant, said Helmand's provincial police chief Nabi Jan Malakhail. At harvest, collectors cut the bulb of the plant, allowing the raw opium to ooze out. This resin dries and is collected the following day.

Malakhail said the new seeds grow bulbs that are bigger than usual and can be scored twice within a few days, thus doubling the quantity of raw opium. The plants mature in three to four months, rather

than the five months of the previous seed variety, allowing farmers to crop three times a year instead of just twice.

In Kandahar's Zhari district, farmer Abdul Baqi said he knows poppy growing is illegal and that, given a choice, he would "rather eat grass." But, he added, "I cannot feed my kids with nothing but the air."

Baqi said the Taliban and associated crime gangs make it easy for the farmers to produce opium, and difficult — even deadly — not to.

Without government support, it's impossible to grow food crops as the cash-strapped farmers would have to pay for the seeds, tools, fertilizer and irrigation themselves. No one would come and collect their crop, even if their landlords allowed them to grow wheat or other food.

If the government took charge and provided irrigation and power, Hismatullah Janan, another Zhari poppy grower, said he would gladly change to growing wheat or similar crops "so we could make an honest and decent living, and leave this so-called dirty work behind."

Afghan anti-narcotics officials say they need international assistance to proceed with poppy eradication.

Yet since 2002, the United States has spent at least \$7

billion "on a wide variety of programs to reduce poppy cultivation, prevent narcotics production, treat drug addiction and improve the criminal justice system to combat drug trafficking," John Sopko, the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, told the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control in January.

Afghanistan supplies 90 percent of the world's opium and opiates originating from there find their way to every corner of the globe, Sopko said.

The Taliban will also likely be emboldened, since for the first time this year, there are no international combat troops on the battlefields of Afghanistan after the NATO drawdown at the end of 2014.

Many anti-narcotics officials also left, fuelling concerns that Afghanistan's economic addiction to opium, worth around 15 percent of its gross domestic product, would only grow, Sopko added.

Almost 90 percent of Afghanistan's poppy cultivation is in the south and the west — and provinces such as Helmand and Kandahar, longtime Taliban strongholds, have become synonymous for poppy cultivation.

As opium production rises, so does Afghanistan's own drug addiction problem. Estimates put the number of heroin addicts in the country at between 1.5 million and 2 million in a population estimated at around 30 million. And the unchecked Afghan opium production is also blamed for rising drug addiction in neighboring countries, including the former Soviet republics to the north, Iran to the west, and China and Pakistan to the east.

The UNODC can do little beyond encouraging the government to curb opium production, said the organization's chief in Afghanistan, Andrey Avetisyan.

Kabul, with the support from the international community, he said, needs to find a way to introduce "crops that can be a serious competition to opium."

But for now, finding something more lucrative than the mystery poppy seeds is a daunting task, so the vicious opium cycle continues. **AP**

USD3b

The value of
Afghanistan's poppy
harvest each year

Thanyarat Dokson, Padang Besar

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Thai police find new prisoner camps; crackdown intensifies

POLICE found two more camps yesterday believed to have held human trafficking victims in southern Thailand — one recently abandoned and the other containing a buried skeleton — days after the grim discovery of 26 bodies at a separate location exposed a thriving human smuggling network in the country.

“We will keep searching, because this means the traffickers are still on the run and taking people with them,” said police Maj. Gen. Amphon Buarubporn, the commander of police for Songkla province, who joined dozens of officers in a trek up Khao Kaew mountain followed by reporters and camera crews. Teams of police dismantled the camp’s eight huts and shelters made of freshly cut bamboo, where a cellphone charger and clothing were strewn about in signs of what appeared to be a recent evacuation.

Yesterday’s discovery was part of a mission to find survivors — or bodies — that activists say are hidden in the mountains, five days after authorities dug up the 26 corpses at a nearby camp along the Thai-Malaysian border. Authorities say the camps are believed to have been used by a transnational network that smuggled ethnic Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar and migrants from Bangladesh and then abused them and held them captive until their families could pay ransoms.

Separately, in Phang Nga province, a skeleton was found in a mangrove forest and was believed to be the remains of an ethnic Rohingya woman, said Gov. Prayoon Rattanasanee, who was led to the location by a Rohingya who said there were more camps in the area.

The coastal province is one of several known entry points



Border patrol police officers dismantle an abandoned migrant camp on Khao Kaew mountain near the Thai-Malaysian border in Padang Besar, Songkhla province

used to smuggle Rohingya, who often flee Myanmar in overcrowded boats, into Thailand.

The discoveries have publicly shamed Thailand, which is already under pressure from the United States and the European Union to crack down on human trafficking.

Last June, the U.S. downgraded Thailand and Malaysia to its lowest category — Tier 3 — in an annual assessment of how governments handle human trafficking. Thailand promised action to get off the blacklist, but its reputation suffered more following recent re-

lations by the AP that some Thai fishing vessels kept men from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos on board as forced labor or slaves.

Thai authorities say they are investigating the complicity of police and local officials in the trafficking network, an alliance that human rights groups say has long fueled the smuggling industry.

Critics say the rush of arrests, VIP visits to the south and media tours to suspected trafficking camps are part of a dog-and-pony show that should not be mistaken for an actual

crackdown. In an editorial yesterday, The Nation newspaper said the government’s “pledge to combat human trafficking has been diverted into a public relations exercise.”

National police chief Gen. Somyot Poompanmoung ordered the transfer late Monday of more than 15 police and border patrol officers, including a senior commander in southern Thailand he said was suspected of close association with a prime trafficking suspect. They were moved to what Thailand calls “inactive posts” pending an investigation.

The suspected collusion of local officials, six of who have been arrested, prompted the Department of Provincial Administration to issue an internal order warning civil servants “not to get involved in any human trafficking activities.”

“In addition, every province and every district must raise awareness among the local public to oppose human trafficking and to cooperate with the government in solving the issue,” said the order, calling for regional TV and radio stations to make announcements on the subject. **AP**

THAILAND

87-year-old king makes rare public appearance

Jocelyn Gecker, Bangkok

THAILAND’S revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej made a rare public appearance yesterday to mark the 65th anniversary of his coronation.

All television stations carried the event live, as the 87-year-old monarch emerged in a wheelchair from a Bangkok hospital, where he has taken up residence, and was driven through the capital’s historic district to the Grand Palace.



Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej, left, and Thai Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn, right, leave Siriraj Hospital in Bangkok

Buddhist monks led prayers as the king watched, before an audience of government and royal

officials.

Thais lined the roads along the route, chanting “Long Live the King!” The

palace had not announced if Bhumibol would appear for the ceremony, but crowds had gathered in anticipation of seeing the monarch. Yesterday was a national holiday.

Bhumibol has been hospitalized since last October when he had his gallbladder removed. It was the latest ailment and hospitalization for the king, who has faded from public life over the past several years and on the rare outings looks visibly frail and does not speak publicly.

Thais hold great affection for Bhumibol, the world’s longest-reigning monarch. He was crowned on May 5, 1950, after coming to the throne in 1946 following the death of his elder brother.

While he is constitutional monarch with no formal political role, Bhumibol is widely revered and regarded as the country’s sole unifying figure. Many regard him as a father figure, and his December birthday is also designated as Father’s Day in Thailand.

Bhumibol’s near-disappearance from public life has coincided with a decade of political instability in Thailand. Worries about the king’s health and succession have contributed to the instability.

The heir apparent, Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn, does not command the same respect and affection as the king.

Open discussion of the monarchy is constrained by a strict lese majeste law that makes criticism punishable by up to 15 years in prison. **AP**

USA

Islamic State claims responsibility for Texas cartoon attack

Maamoun Youssef, Cairo

THE Islamic State group claimed responsibility yesterday for a weekend attack at a center near Dallas, Texas, exhibiting cartoon depictions of the Prophet Muhammad.

An audio statement on the extremist group's Al Bayan radio station said that "two soldiers of the caliphate" carried out Sunday's attack and promised to deliver more in the future.

The statement did not provide details and it was unclear whether the group was opportunistically claiming the attack as its own. It was the first time the Islamic State, which frequently calls for attacks against the West, had claimed responsibility for one in the United States.

Two suspects in Sunday's at-



FBI crime scene investigators document evidence outside the Curtis Culwell Center

tack in the Dallas suburb of Garland were shot dead after opening fire at a security guard outside the center.

It was unclear whether the

group, which has captured large swaths of territory in Syria and Iraq, had an actual hand in the operation, or whether the two suspects had pledged

allegiance to the group and then carried out the attack on their own.

The suspects have been identified by officials as Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi. They opened fire in on an unarmed security officer stationed outside the contest center featuring cartoons of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad.

According to mainstream Islamic tradition, any physical depiction of the Prophet Muhammad — even a respectful one — is considered blasphemous, and drawings similar to those featured at the Texas event have sparked violence around the world.

The IS statement was read on the Al Bayan radio, which is based in the Syrian city of Raqqa, the group has proclaimed the capital of its self-styled caliphate.

"We tell ... America that what is coming will be more grievous and more bitter and you will see from the soldiers of the Caliphate what will harm you, God willing," it said.

There have been numerous attack in Western countries believed related in some way to the group, which holds roughly a third of Iraq and Syria.

In October, Canada was hit by two terror attacks by so-called "lone wolves" believed to have been inspired by the Islamic State group. In Ottawa, a gunman shot and killed a soldier at Canada's National War Memorial and then stormed Parliament before being gunned down. Two days earlier, a man ran over two soldiers in a parking lot in Quebec, killing one and injuring the other before being shot to death by police. **AP**

SYRIA

Rights group condemns atrocities in city of Aleppo

SYRIAN government forces and insurgents have both committed abuses in the contested northern city of Aleppo, but some of the government's actions amount to crimes against humanity, an international rights group said yesterday.

Aleppo, once Syria's largest city and commercial capital, has been a major battleground in the country's civil war since rebels launched an assault there in mid-2012 that ultimately left the city carved into government- and opposition-held halves. The fighting over the past three years has leveled neighborhoods, touched off a humanitarian crisis and forced hundreds of thousands to flee.

In a new report, Amnesty International sharply condemned the government's reliance on barrel bombs — large canisters packed with explosives and scrap metal — against rebel-held neighborhoods in Aleppo.

The military's campaign has brought "sheer terror and unbearable suffering," Amnesty said, and forced many civilians "to eke out an existence underground to escape the relentless aerial bombardment."

Amnesty said barrel bomb attacks have killed more than 3,000 civilians in Aleppo governorate last year, and more than 11,000 in the country since 2012.

"Widespread atrocities, in particular the vicious and unrelenting aerial bombardment of civilian neighborhoods by government forces, have made life for civilians in Aleppo increasingly unbearable. These reprehensible and continual strikes on residential areas point to a policy of deliberately and systematically targeting civi-



Syrians inspect a destroyed car after an airstrike, in Ansari neighborhood in Aleppo

lians in attacks that constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity," said Amnesty's Philip Luther.

"By relentlessly and deliberately targeting civilians the Syrian government appears to have adopted a callous policy of collective punishment against the civilian population of Aleppo," he added.

Insurgent groups have also committed abuses in Aleppo by using imprecise weapons such as mortars and improvised rockets against government-controlled neighborhoods, the report said. At least 600 civilians were killed in such attacks in 2014, according to Amnesty.

Armed actors on both sides of the conflict also have committed widespread abuses through torture, arbitrary detention and kidnapping.

Amnesty called on the government and its opponents to end deliberate attacks on civilians, as well as the use of arbitrary arrests, detention and torture. **AP**

SOMALIA

Kerry visits Mogadishu; 1st such trip for a secretary of state

Bradley Klapper and Andrew Harnik, Mogadishu

SECRETARY of State John Kerry made an unannounced trip to Somalia yesterday in a show of solidarity with a government trying to defeat al-Qaida-allied militants and end decades of war in the African country. He is first top U.S. diplomat ever to visit Somalia.

Kerry arrived at Mogadishu's airport shortly before noon local time, greeted by Somalia's president and prime minister on the tarmac. He immediately entered a series of planned meetings that include both of them along with regional leaders and civil society groups.

"I'm glad to be here," Kerry said.

"This is a great moment for us. Thank you for the time to be with us," President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said as they sat down together.

The trip was made under tight security conditions. Somalia's gover-



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry

ment only found out a day ago that Kerry would join the State Department's top Africa official, Linda Greenfield-Thomas, on the voyage. And the fact that he was only dipping his toe in Somalia, and not venturing past the airport, highlighted just how dangerous and instable the country remains.

"The next time I come, we have to be able to just walk downtown," Kerry told Somalia's president. Mohamud replied, downtown "is very different now."

Top of the agenda is the

fight against al-Shabab. African forces and U.S. drone strikes have crippled the organization's leadership in recent years and left the extremists without much of the territory they once controlled or the cash flows needed to reverse their losses.

But as al-Shabab has decentralized, the militants in some ways have become even more dangerous, expanding their activities in Kenya and other neighboring countries. Last month's massacre at Kenya's Garissa University College killed 148 people, mostly students, and underscored the group's capacity to carry out relatively unsophisticated but extremely deadly terrorist attacks far from its bases of operations.

Kerry's trip is designed "to reinforce the United States' commitment to supporting Somalia's ongoing transition to a peaceful democracy," spokeswoman Marie Harf said in a statement. **AP**

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* about the picture may be different from Macau specifications



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what's ON

KID'S FUN LAND ON TEA-THINGS
TIME: 9am-7pm
UNTIL: May 31, 2015
VENUE: 2/FI., Macau Tea Culture House
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

TEA CULTURE HOUSE
TIME: 9am-7pm daily
 (Closed on Mondays, open on public holidays)
VENUE: Macau Tea Culture House, Lou Lim Ioc Garden, Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 7103 / 2858 6250

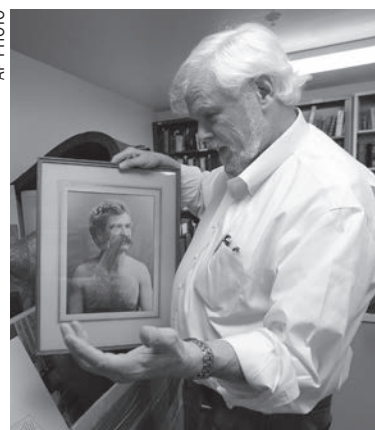
LI CHENG HSUN X HUANG PO HSUN
GROUP EXHIBITION
TIME: 10am-7pm
UNTIL: June 30 (Closed on May 25)
VENUE: Flugent ART Gallery, Rua S. Paulo 54-58B
ADMISSION: free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2872 3429

GALLERY COLLECTION
TIME: 9am-6pm (Mondays to Fridays)
UNTIL: June 30, 2015 (Closed on May 25)
VENUE: Macpro Gallery, Avenida da Praia Grande, no.417-425, Centro Comercial Praia Grande, 2º andar, Macau (nearby the Old Court)
ADMISSION: free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2833 7828

'THE SPRING TROPICAL ORCHID EXHIBITION'
TIME: 9am-6pm
UNTIL: May 10, 2015
VENUE: Taipa Houses-Museum
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8504 1218

Offbeat

US: UC BERKELEY'S MARK TWAIN PROJECT FINDS CACHE OF NEW WRITING



Scholars at the University of California, Berkeley have pieced together a collection of dispatches written by Mark Twain when the author was a young newsman in San Francisco.

In the letters, the man who would write *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and its sequel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, likened the city's police chief to

a dog chasing its tail and accused city government of rascality. Some of the letters carried his flair for embellishment and may not be entirely true.

"This is a very special period in his life, when he's out here in San Francisco," said Bob Hirst, general editor of the Mark Twain Project. "He's utterly free, he's not encumbered by a marriage or much of anything else, and he can speak his mind and does speak his mind. These things are wonderful to read, the ones that survived."

Twain was likely 29 years old when he started filing near-daily columns for the Territorial Enterprise newspaper in Virginia City, Nevada, in 1865. He wrote a 2,000-word story, or "letter," six days a week for a salary of USD100 a month, Hirst said.

Many of the letters were in back issues lost to fires, but Twain scholars picked through archives of other Western U.S. newspapers for copies. They have found about 110 columns written in 1865 and 1866.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
18:10	Brazil Avenue (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Interview (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Montra do Lilau
21:40	ISIS Terror in Iraque
22:10	Brazil Avenue
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Champions League Highlights
23:45	Documentary Serie

cinema

CINETEATRO

01 MAY - 06 MAY

THE AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON

ROOM 1

(3D) 2.15, 7.15 pm

(2D) 4.45, 9.45 pm

Director: Joss Whedon

Starring: Robert Downey Jr., Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 141min



HELIOS

ROOM 2

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Longman Leung, Sunny Luk

Starring: Jacky Cheung, Nick Cheung, Shawn Yue, Ji Jin-hee

Language: Chinese (Chinese/English)

Duration: 118min



MURMUR OF THE HEARTS

ROOM 3

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Sylvia Chang

Starring: Isabella Leong, Joseph Chang, Lawrence Ko, Lee Sinje

Language: Mandarin (Chinese/English)

Duration: 119min

MACAU TOWER

23 APR - 20 MAY

THE AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON

2.00, 4.30, 7.00, 9.30 pm

Director: Joss Whedon

Starring: Robert Downey Jr., Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 141min

this day in history



1994 PRESIDENT AND QUEEN OPEN CHANNEL

The Queen and France's President Francois Mitterrand have formally opened the Channel Tunnel during two elaborate ceremonies in France and Britain.

After travelling through the tunnel, which took eight years and billions of pounds to build, the Queen said it was one of the world's great technological achievements.

The tunnel is the first land link between Britain and Europe since the last Ice Age about 8,000 years ago.

The first leg of the Queen's journey took her from London's Waterloo station through the tunnel by high-speed Eurostar passenger train.

She arrived at Calais at the same time as the President Mitterrand's train which had travelled from Paris' Gard du Nord via Lille.

The two locomotives met nose to nose - a computer that prevents two trains travelling on the same track was switched off for the occasion.

The two heads of state cut red, white and blue ribbons simultaneously to the sound of their respective national anthems played by the band of the French Republican Guard.

They were accompanied by their Prime Ministers John Major and Edouard Balladur and other government ministers to the Eurotunnel terminus.

Eurostar will not start carrying passengers until July at the earliest and private cars will have to wait until October.

After lunch, the Queen and President Mitterrand took the royal Rolls-Royce on Le Shuttle for the 35-minute trip to Folkestone.

There was a similar ribbon-cutting ceremony on English soil. Among those present were joint Eurotunnel chairmen Sir Alastair Morton and André Bénard as well as Frenchman Philippe Cozette, who drilled the hole that first joined the two ends of the tunnel in December 1990.

Behind today's celebrations lies the reality that the tunnel has run up huge debts. It cost £10bn to build, more than double the original forecast in 1987 - and there are serious doubts about its long-term financial viability.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

At first the Channel Tunnel looked like it was going to be a financial disaster. A year after the official opening, the tunnel operator Eurotunnel announced a loss of £925m, one of the biggest in UK corporate history at the time.

To add to its woes, freight traffic was suspended for six months in 1996 after a fire broke out on a lorry in the tunnel. A scheme in which banks agreed to swap billions of pounds worth of loans for shares saved the tunnel from going under and in 1999, Eurotunnel was able to announce its first net profit - £64m.

It still has huge debts - to the tune of £6.4bn in 2004. But it has become an accepted and popular mode of transport, not least among illegal immigrants trying to get into Britain from Europe.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Renewal won't happen any time soon. If only this phase would go by fast, you say? Don't waste time daydreaming. You knew you were in it for the long haul, and this is it.

Taurus April 20-May 20
The stock market is starting to feel like a bad relationship. And like one, you should know it's the market, not you. That knowledge won't help your bank account, but it will help your emotional bottom line.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21
Cut corners and still not in the black? Then it's time to do even more calculating. There are plenty of ways to stay healthy without belonging to a gym, for instance, so get creative.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Investing is not for the risk averse. You're used to emotional intensity and upheaval by now, but what's new to you is the more prudent and cautious side of you that is emerging. Consider that your new pearl.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Watching for plotters, looking for motives beneath the surface -- don't let tension make you paranoid. Take your mind off of your accounts for a while. Focus on antiques or nurturing your family instead.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22
It's possible to analyze the unseen economy but way less likely to regulate it. But even so, steer clear of underground money, no matter how restless you feel about the above-board variety.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22
It's a day to consider the oxymoron. Cut backs are going deep, and that means they're going up. If even the top ten percent think it's a bad time to be acquisitive, then you should, too.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
The pull of money is intense, and so the power of its sudden loss. Don't get sucked into a black hole trying to hang onto it. Keep your self respect and hold out for a financial rebirth of sorts.

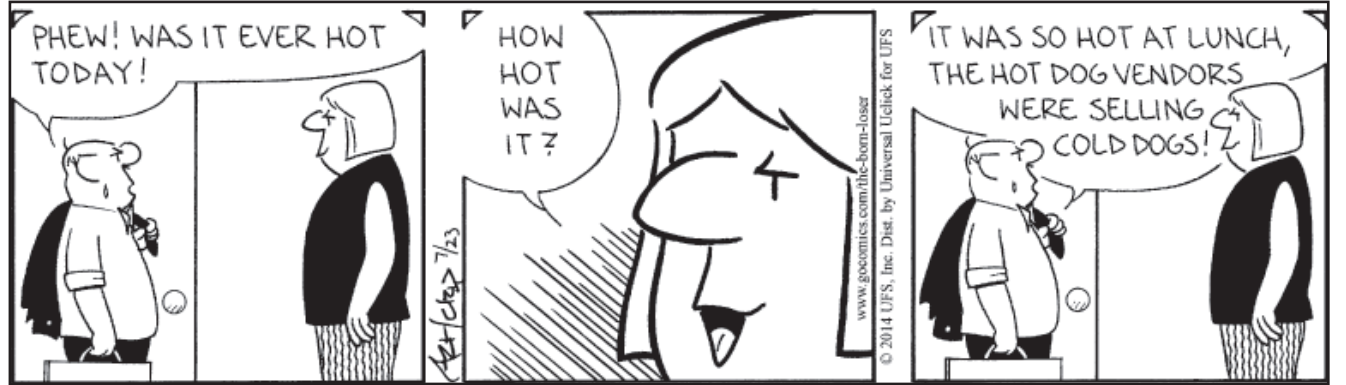
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21
The big picture and your internal one are matching up. In fact, you have so much in common with the overall population that you may just want to be alone, and not to count your money.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Don't let market turmoil get to you. Taking a deep breath is your first step. Figuring out your objective and going after it systematically is still the best approach to profit.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Your profits may have slowed down but your ambition is still going gangbusters. Don't let this disparity make you trip over yourself. Focusing on deeper feelings than greed will help you settle into the right pace.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20
Business isn't the only thing changing drastically. You used to be one of the sharks, but now you feel like a worm on a hook. Just how you get into this position is not crystal clear, but it's not too fuzzy to learn from, either.

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

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Lists weather forecasts for various cities in China and the World.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Operation memento; 5- Lip-curling facial expression; 9- Swiftness; 14- I cannot tell...; 15- That's ___ haven't heard; 16- Skirt style; 17- McNally's partner; 18- Propriety; 20- Island in SW Japan; 22- Kyoto currency; 23- Employs, consumes; 24- Breaks bread; 26- Nervous twitches; 28- Growing on rocks; 32- Nonsense; 36- "The Waste Land" monogram; 37- Lathers; 39- Tusks; 40- Sicilian smoker; 42- Japanese-American; 44- Thames town; 45- Hotelier Helmsley; 47- Norwegian name of Norway; 49- Corner key; 50- Verdi opera; 52- One of the 12 tribes of Israel; 54- Taylor of "Mystic Pizza"; 56- Very small quantity; 57- ___-deucey; 60- Leary's drug; 62- Tire type; 66- Small rattlesnake; 69- Part of FYI, briefly; 70- Clarinetist Shaw; 71- Traditional prayer ending; 72- Spots; 73- ___ Perot; 74- Suffragist Carrie; 75- Sounds like a kitten;

DOWN: 1- One of the Channel Islands; 2- Modeling material; 3- Hokkaido native; 4- It had a part in the Bible; 5- Style of speech; 6- Ambient music composer Brian; 7- Start of a counting rhyme; 8- Metal pin; 9- ___ Francisco; 10- Applauding; 11- Half of zwei; 12- Suffix with exist; 13- Poor grades; 19- City west of Tulsa; 21- Toppers; 25- Killed; 27- Dernier ___; 28- Inscribed pillar; 29- Late bloomer?; 30- Chemically inactive gas; 31- ___ salts; 33- Elects; 34- Jagged; 35- Execute illegally; 38- Turkish palace; 41- Resolution into simple elements; 43- Unlearned; 46- Singer DiFranco; 48- I could ___ horse; 51- Misfortunes; 53- Extreme cruelty; 55- Designer Mizrahi; 57- Eastern nanny; 58- Singer Vikki; 59- This, in Tijuana; 61- Russian parliament before 1917; 63- Arrow poison; 64- Three or four; 65- A pitcher may take one; 67- DDE opponent; 68- Acquire

Yesterday's solution crossword grid with filled-in letters.

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-75 indicating starting points for clues.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 1990 992
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
IACM 28 387 333
Tourism 28 333 000
Airport 59 888 88



FOR SALE/RENT advertisement for JML Property with contact information.

Real estate listing for Bauhinia Court, HG, Coloane, 1,660 sq ft.

Real estate listing for Designer Apartment, Perfect weekend home Macau, 849 sq ft.

Real estate listing for Manhattan Penthouse Unit, Taipa, 2,305sq ft.

Real estate listing for Roof Top Investment Apartment, Macau, 799 sq ft.

JML Property logo and contact information.

ROTARY CLUB OF MACAU 68TH ANNIVERSARY

'A Touch Of Green' Eco-Friendly Charity Ball



Truly 'environmentally-friendly'



'Plants for Charity'



Amazing 'Butterfly' greeting green-clad guests

'A touch of Green' Ball ready to welcome over 400 guests



Rotary District Leaders gracing the occasion



Exciting Green Percussions opening act by Rotarians



Assistant Governor Synthia, President Kevin and Ball Chair Elizabete with guests from Sands China Limited



Donation check presentation from Major Sponsor, Sands China Ltd.'s Mr Dave Horton, Global Chief Marketing Officer of Las Vegas Sands Corp. and Sands China



Donation check presentation from Major Sponsor, Sai Hang Telecom's Mr Chong



Rotary family photo with district leaders, Taipei sister clubs, Rotaractors and RC Macau Rotarians



"Eco-friendly" Fashionista with Rotarians and Rotaractors modeling their creative designs made from recycled materials



Donation check presentation from Major Sponsor, Macau Fair & Trade Association's Vice President Ms Synthia Chan



Evening's centerpiece made from recycled wooden pallet baskets with packaged food donated by Rotarians and Sands China employees



District Governor Belinda Yeung presenting to Fashionista winner pair Fatima and Andy



Donation of the evening's food baskets to Cradle and Fountain of Hope Association



Entertaining performance by Filipe Tou and 'Tacho' duet



ROTARY CLUB of Macau's 68th Anniversary Charity Ball was held recently at The Venetian Macao with over 400 attendees gracing the evening dressed with an element of green in support of the eco-friendly theme of 'A touch of Green'.

Rotary Club of Macau Ball Chair and President-elect Elizabete Fong remarked in her opening speech that all funds raised during the Charity Ball would be donated to humanitarian service projects for those in need both in Macau and internationally.

Echoing the new Rotary Year 2015-16 theme 'A Gift to the World', new eco-friendly sustainable service projects will be dedicated to improving the lives of special needs children and elderly residents in Macau. The club will continue to host the 16th 'Joy to the World' Xmas Night with the Macau Mentally Handicapped Association as well as the 'Light up Rotary Great Gondola Grab' fundraiser to support local charitable organizations. Internationally, the Guangxi Education project for under-privileged students will be in its 16th year, witnessing students pursuing their dreams to go to university.

During a donation check presentation ceremony, Ball Chair Ms Fong received a MOP100,000 check from Mr. Dave Horton, Global Chief Marketing Officer of Las Vegas Sands Corp. and Sands China Ltd., to support ongoing education projects in Guangxi as well as MOP100,000 from Ms Synthia Chan, Vice President of the Macau Fair & Trade Association and MOP150,000 from Sai Hang Telecommunications.

The evening was highlighted with a line-up of 'go green' programs such as corsages made from recycled materials by the Concordia School for Special Education; 'Tacho' duet performing unplugged music; music singer Filipe Tou leading Rotarians in a percussion act using utensils/pots and pans, and a 'Green Fashionista' contest with Rotarians and Rotaractors displaying their costumes made from recycled materials. The Venetian Macao also prepared organic food and ingredients for the buffet.

FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE PREVIEW

Barcelona faces Bayern, old coach Guardiola in semifinal

Joseph Wilson, Barcelona

Thu 2:45am

Barcelona v Bayern Munich
H 1.75, D 4, A 5.4

PEP Guardiola, the former player who coached Barcelona to 14 titles including two European Cups, makes his highly anticipated return to Camp Nou today [Thursday, 2:45am] at the helm of new club Bayern Munich in the Champions League semifinals.

Many Barcelona fans will have mixed feelings when the man hailed as the club's greatest coach will now be scheming to derail its quest for a treble from the opponents' dugout.



The trousers of Bayern's head coach Pep Guardiola are seen torn at the hip during the soccer Champions League quarterfinal second leg match between Bayern Munich and FC Porto at the Allianz Arena in Munich, southern Germany

Guardiola won six titles in a glorious first season at Barcelona and 14 of a possible 19 titles from 2008-2012, before he stunned club and fans alike by leaving. Last week, Bayern clinched its second consecutive Bundesliga crown under the Catalan.

First-year coach Luis Enrique has Barcelona back to playing its most dominant football since Guardiola's departure.

Barcelona's trio of attacking stars in Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez have combined for 108 goals this season as Barcelona leads the Spanish league with three games to play and has also reached the Copa del Rey final against Athletic Bilbao.

"Details. In series as evenly

matched as this one, the details will determine who gets the advantage," Barcelona midfielder Javier Mascherano said about Bayern.

Bayern slumped to a 2-0 defeat to Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday, but at least avoided any further injuries.

Arjen Robben is out for the rest of the season and Robert Lewandowski is doubtful after suffering a concussion and facial fractures in last week's loss to Borussia Dortmund in the German Cup. Franck Ribery is still nursing an ankle injury he sustained in March.

Former Barcelona midfielder Thiago Alcantara is back from injury and will also make his return to Camp Nou. **AP/Odds by Betfair**

OLYMPICS

Small nations like New Zealand could host games

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach says there's no reason a small nation such as New Zealand shouldn't aspire to host the Olympics.

Bach, who is on a tour through the South Pacific, received a powhiri — or traditional welcome — from indigenous Maori in Auckland yesterday before saying: "The Olympic Games are universal and we should open doors and windows" to allow all nations that wish to host the games to try to do so. "I think the Olympic Agenda is opening doors for other countries than the traditional host countries," he said. "We think you cannot reserve the right to host the Olympic Games just to 20 countries in the world."

Bach oversaw the implementation of the Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms in December to make the requirements on potential host cities less onerous and allow for the possibility of two countries co-hosting the games.

New Zealand, which has a population of nearly 4.5 million, has never hosted the Olympics, but neighboring Australia has twice staged the Summer



International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, center, poses for a photo with local men in Suva, Fiji

Games, most recently at Sydney in 2000. A few countries with small populations such as Norway and Greece have hosted the games recently, but none outside Europe.

"What we are doing now is we are asking potential host countries, how do you think the Olympic Games would fit best into your long-term planning with regard to sports, socially, financially, ecologically?" Bach said. "Then give us your ideas and we can discuss together whether we can make it happen."

Bach earlier visited cyclone-damaged sporting facilities in the island nation of Vanuatu and discussed how the \$500,000 aid money pledged by the IOC might be spent to repair the venues.

He also met with Va-

natu President Joe Natuman and sports leaders before departing on Monday.

Cyclone Pam swept through Vanuatu in March, killing 16 people. The country is located about 1,750 kilometers (1,100 miles) northeast of Australia.

"What surprises me the most is the confidence and (level of) optimism Vanuatu people have, and that is the true Olympic spirit," he said. "We hope that our contribution will give hope to the whole population."

Bach's trip to the South Pacific also included visits to Australia, where he met with Australian Olympic Committee officials, and Fiji, where he attended meetings of the Oceania National Olympic Committees. **AP**

BOXING

Pacquiao could face disciplinary action for shoulder

MANNY Pacquiao could face disciplinary action from Nevada boxing officials for failing to disclose a shoulder injury before his fight with Floyd Mayweather Jr. Nevada Athletic Commission chairman Francisco Aguilar said yesterday that the state attorney general's office will look at why Pacquiao checked "no" a day before the fight on a commission questionnaire asking if he had a shoulder injury.

"We will gather all the facts and follow the circumstances," Aguilar said. "At some point we will have some discussion. As a licensee of the commission you want to make sure fighters are giving you up-to-date information."

Pacquiao could face a possible fine or suspension for not answering the question accurately on a form he filled out just before Friday's weigh-in. He would go on to lose a unanimous decision to Mayweather in the richest fight ever.

Meanwhile, orthopedic surgeon Dr. Neal ElAttrache told ESPN.com that Pacquiao will undergo surgery later this week to repair a "significant tear" in his rotator cuff. ElAttrache examined Pacquiao on Monday at his Kerlan Jobe Orthopedics office in Los Angeles.

Pacquiao's promoter put out a statement on behalf of the fighter saying that the injury was disclosed to the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, which approved the use of an anti-inflammatory shot for the fight. But USADA was only a third party to the fight, charged only with tes-



Promoter Bob Arum, left, talks with trainer Freddie Roach as Manny Pacquiao answers reporter questions during a press conference following his welterweight title fight on Saturday

ting the fighters for banned substances in training and the night of the bout.

"We had no medical information, no MRIs, no documents," said Travis Tygart, who heads the USADA. "It was not an anti-doping issue."

"Our job is to protect the health and safety of fighters and the integrity of the sport," Aguilar said. "We expect our fighters to be forthright."

Pacquiao said after the fight that his shoulder had improved and he was hopeful of fighting with the shot. He said it didn't bother him until the fourth round, when he hit Mayweather with a big left hand and went after him with a series of punches. **AP**

opinion

World Views
 Editorial, Financial Times

BRAZIL IS SUFFERING FROM RECESSION AND SCANDAL

In a world of near-zero interest rates, how about this? Last week, Brazil's central bank increased its main interest rate to 13.25 per cent. The 50 basis-point rise is part of Brazil's efforts to put its house in order. The economy is expected to shrink by 1 per cent this year, the deepest recession in 25 years; unemployment is rising; while inflation is running at over 8 per cent - almost twice the official target, hence the rate rise. After years of fast growth and easy credit, Brazil is on its back.

Latin America's biggest economy is also reeling from a corruption scandal at Petrobras, believed to be the largest in national history. Release of the state-controlled energy company's long-delayed results last month estimated losses, due to corruption, of more than USD2bn - much of them due to political kickbacks. Combined with the recession, this has savaged President Dilma Rousseff's standing. Even in a region of weak leaders, her dismal approval rating stands out. At 13 per cent, it is lower even than that of Nicolás Maduro, the president of Venezuela.

There are three main reasons for Brazil's gloom. China's slowing economy has punctured the commodity price boom forcing Brazil, and other commodity countries in the region, to tighten their belts. The prospect of higher US interest rates threatens to suck international liquidity out of the country. Most of all, it is paying the cost of Ms Rousseff's mistaken faith during her first term in so-called "developmentalism".

This belief in state intervention included artificially low interest rates, fiscal expansionism, limited returns for private investment in much-needed infrastructure, and petrol and electricity prices fixed below cost. Such measures were supposed to boost growth. Instead they proved toxic. Business investment collapsed. In March, industry confidence fell to its lowest level since 1998.

The good news is that Ms Rousseff has, at least partly, seen the error of her ways. She has handed the reins of economic policy to Joaquim Levy, a hawkish finance minister. The Chicago-trained economist is cutting costs to plug the hole in Brazil's fiscal accounts and so safeguard the country's investment grade rating (losing it would raise financing costs for both households and the government). The austerity is painful, but the price of not acting is even higher. Some growth-enhancing reforms, such as better terms in infrastructure concessions, have been tabled. Financial markets are no longer in a state of panic. There has even been a spate of large private equity deals. After a miserable 2015, growth prospects for next year look somewhat better.

More striking is how Ms Rousseff has allowed power to leach from her hands. Each twist in the Petrobras scandal has seen government allies in the ruling coalition erode the grip of the executive. The lower house of Congress is now controlled by a group of regional barons, the Brazilian Democratic Movement party (PMDB). Another PMDB chieftain is head of the Senate. Last month Ms Rousseff handed over the job of political co-ordination to Michel Temer, the PMDB leader and her vice-president.

Worryingly, all this comes as the isolated Ms Rousseff faces another four years in office. For now, economic pragmatism prevails. But it is an open question if she will be able to stick to the new orthodoxy, especially if recession deepens. The Petrobras scandal, pursued by an independent judiciary, may lap closer to the presidency. Social protest is rising. One thing is clear: the rest of Ms Rousseff's term will be gruelling indeed.

THE FRENCH FAR-RIGHT PARTY FOUNDER URGES DAUGHTER TO CHANGE NAME

The founder of France's far-right National Front, Jean-Marie Le Pen, has decried the decision to suspend his membership in the party and the attempts to take away his title of honorary president for life.

Twelve hours after the executive board announced his suspension, Jean-Marie Le Pen said yesterday he's ashamed that his daughter, party president Marine Le Pen, bears his name. He suggested on Europe 1 radio that

she marry her companion in order to change her name.

The running father-daughter feud escalated into a political crisis after the decision to suspend the senior Le Pen for reiterating anti-Semitic remarks that got him convicted in the past.

The 86-year-old Le Pen helped found the anti-immigration National Front party in 1972 and built it into a feared political force.

GAMING

Riviera casino closes doors after 60 years on Vegas Strip



A sign thanks customers outside of the Riviera hotel and casino Monday, May 4, 2015, in Las Vegas

Kimberly Pierceall, Las Vegas

If the ghosts of Frank Sinatra and Liberace were still hanging around the Riviera Hotel and Casino on Monday morning (yesterday in Macau), they wouldn't have found a seat at the bar.

Crowds squeezed onto barstools and milled about the casino floor saying goodbye to "The Riv," a classic that spent 60 years on the Las Vegas Strip and closed at noon.

It's an age reached by few properties along the four-mile stretch of hulking casino resorts mimicking other worldly landmarks or beckoning passers-by with all their wants in one place that have replaced Sin City's recent past.

The Riviera's only remaining elder was the often-renovated Flamingo that Bugsy Siegel debuted in 1947. The Tropicana, which opened in 1957, is close behind.

"The amazing thing about Las Vegas is how soon it forgets itself because it keeps reinventing itself," said Jeff Kutash, the dancer, choreographer and producer who brought the aquatic stage spectacle "Splash" to a Riviera stage for 21 years.

The 60-year-old casino-hotel's luster had faded, becoming the place to go for cheap drinks, cheap blackjack and a free photo-op in front with the ladies of topless revue Crazy Girls, posteriors immortalized with a bronze statue of their behinds.

But it wasn't always that way.

Long before the buns of bronze were loaded onto the back of a pickup truck's trailer Monday, the Riviera was among the first casinos to make this stretch of desert glitter. Like the others, mob money made sure the lights were always on at the Riviera.

Its star wattage started with bejeweled piano man Liberace, the property's first headliner, and its marquee eventually included Frank Sinatra, Engelbert Humperdinck, Tony Orlando and Dolly Parton.

Rat Pack member Dean Martin was a part-owner for a short time. Another former owner married frequent Riviera performer and Golden Globe winner Pia Zadora.

The long-running stage show "Splash" brought water, fountains and pyrotechnics to a Las Vegas stage starting in 1985, long before Cirque du Soleil did.

Eventually, the Riviera's casino became the set for "Casino," the 1995 movie featuring Robert De Niro, Sharon Stone and Joe Pesci and based on real-life Las Vegas mobsters Frank Rosenthal and Anthony Spilotro during their 1970s heyday at the Stardust and others.

It served as Hollywood's hangout for decades, from the Rat Pack in the original 1960 "Ocean's 11" to the groomsmen of "The Hangover" in 2009.

After Monday, the proper-

ty's history, cinematic or otherwise, is bound for rubble. But it's not clear when it might be leveled or how, either by demolition or the destination's favored pastime: implosion.

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority bought the 2,075-room building and 26 acres it sits on in February for USD182.5 million plus \$8.5 million in related transaction costs.

Furniture and fixtures inside the casino-hotel are expected to be auctioned by NCL, National Content Liquidators, starting May 14 until everything is sold.

The publicly-funded tourism agency plans to tear it down and expand the Las Vegas Convention Center to the Strip. The goal is to bring it down before the end of the year, said Heidi Hayes, a spokeswoman for the agency.

Kutash said he plans to watch when the Riviera turns to rubble. "And I'll be toasting probably a glass of champagne to a memory that was more of a memory. It was a piece of my DNA," he said.

He returned to the same stage one more time, a first since the show closed in 2006. "It was just a beautiful but ghostly experience," he said of being on stage again.

The property has struggled in recent years as the recession hobbled Las Vegas and development around it went dormant, deterring walk-in traffic. The property hadn't reported a profit since it emerged from bankruptcy in 2011. **AP**

Station	Air quality
Roadside	10-30 Good
High Density Residential Area	15-35 Good
Ambient	25-45 Good

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

A powerful earthquake rattled the South Pacific island nation of Papua New Guinea yesterday, generating a small tsunami near the epicenter, bringing down power lines and cracking walls, but causing no widespread damage.

BURUNDI The ruling party in Burundi says the country's constitutional court has validated president Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term.



USA Baltimore's mayor lifted a citywide curfew, six days after riots sparked by Freddie Gray's death, and faith leaders called for continued activism until justice is achieved.

SOMALIA Secretary of State John Kerry makes an unannounced trip to Somalia in a show of solidarity with a government trying to defeat al-Qaida-allied militants and end decades of war in the African country. *More on p14*



ITALY The Save the Children aid group reported another Mediterranean migrant tragedy yesterday, with survivors saying "dozens" of their fellow passengers fell out of their rubber boat and likely drowned as a rescue vessel neared.

BRAZIL Federal prosecutors in Brazil confirmed Monday that they are weighing whether to open a full investigation into former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's alleged overseas lobbying efforts for the scandal-plagued construction firm Odebrecht, the nation's biggest builder.