



HOLE-IN-ONE MILLION

Legislator Chan Meng Kam celebrated a most rare hole-in-one in a big way: he gave HKD1m to dozens of caddies and staff at a mainland golf club

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CASINO VIP SEGMENT CHANGED FOR GOOD

MGM Resorts' COO William Scott believes that Macau's VIP segment "has changed permanently," following the anti-corruption campaign

P5 G2E



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

WORLD BRIEFS



N KOREA Women activists including Gloria Steinem and two Nobel peace laureates says they may have to change plans to cross Korea's Demilitarized Zone because authorities can't guarantee their safety if they walk from the North to the South at Panmunjom, the symbolic but tense site where the Korean War armistice agreement was signed.

AFGHANISTAN At least a dozen Afghan police officers are killed in a series of insurgent attacks on checkpoints in the country's southern Uruzgan province.

PAKISTAN's military says its jets have carried out airstrikes against five militant hideouts in a tribal region bordering Afghanistan, killing 13 militants.

NEPAL must take lessons from earthquake-hit countries such as Mexico and strictly enforce existing building laws as it prepares to rebuild from two major quakes, a United Nations official says.

INDIA A train rams into tractor at unmanned railroad crossing in India, killing 10 and injuring 33.

JAPAN The governor of the southern Japanese prefecture of Okinawa says he will head to Washington to convey local objections to a plan to relocate a U.S. air base.



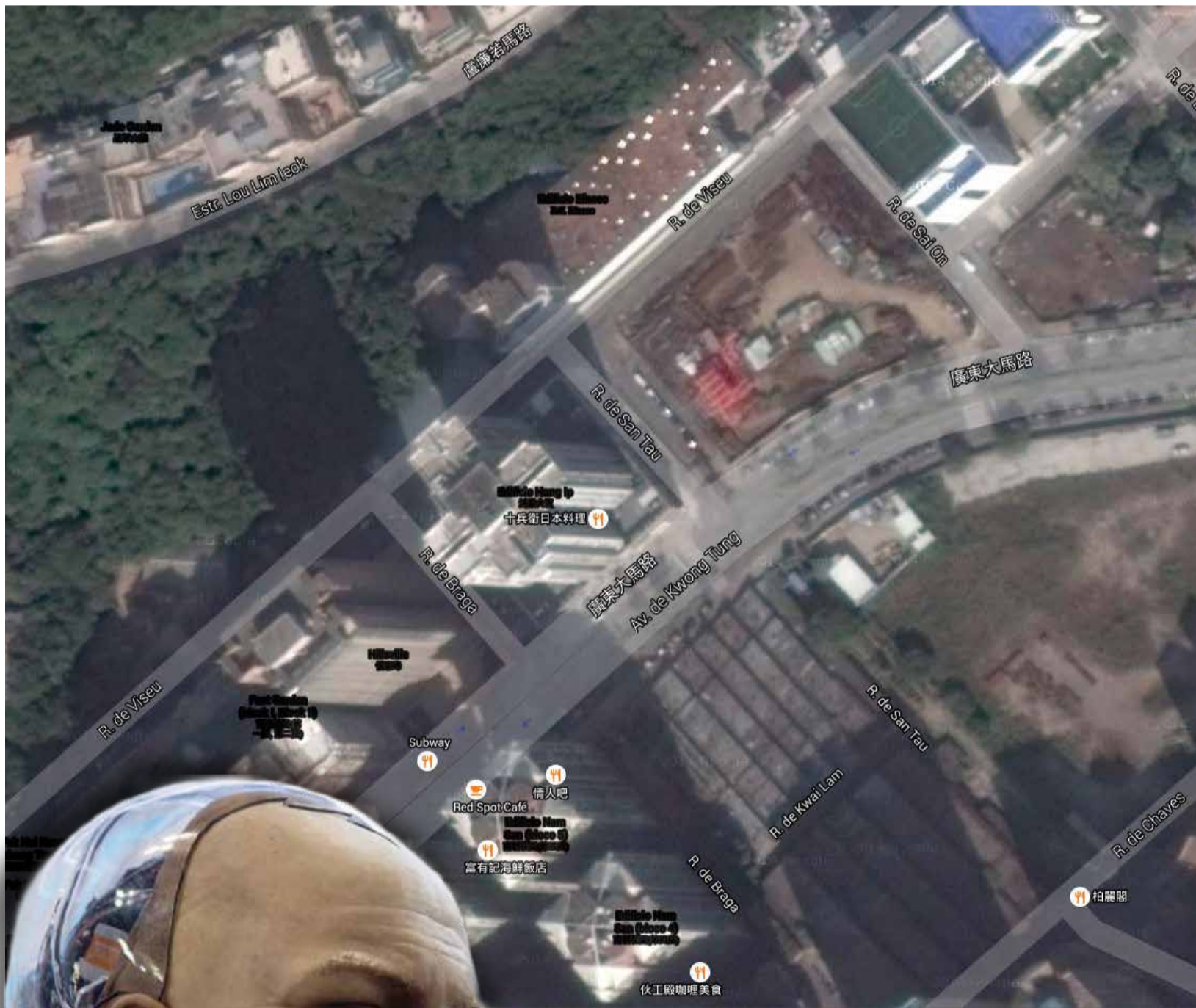
JAPAN Takata Corp. agrees to declare 33.8 million air bags defective, a move that will double the number of cars and trucks included in what is now the largest auto recall in U.S. history.

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Expiring land leases seen as 'risk to social turmoil'

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Chan Meng Kam gives away HKD1 million after hole-in-one

LEGISLATOR and businessman Chan Meng Kam celebrated a rare hole-in-one, also known as an "ace", in a big way: he splashed out showering HKD1 million on dozens of caddies and staff at a mainland golf club.

Chan Meng Kam, president of the Golden Dragon Group, gave \$100,000 each to his five caddies and \$10,000 to eight others who were on the bags of his playing partners, Apple Daily reported yesterday.

And each of the 400 employees at the Chung Shan Hot Spring Golf Club in Zhongshan received \$1,000.

Chan, 52, legislator and executive councilor, also serves on the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the mainland's highest political advisory body. In the 2013 AL election, he received the highest number of votes.

Chan's contingent of 12

players teed off as several smaller groups on Saturday morning.

According to the Apple Daily report, Chan punched his tee shot on the par-three 11th hole straight onto the green, the ball rolling some distance before disappearing into the cup.

Cheers were ringing all around as Chan reached for his mobile phone and over the din instructed his driver to take cash and "lai see" envelopes from his car, and to bring them over, the report read.

Still, some caddies were not impressed, saying that Chan "is a mediocre amateur player."

Pro player Wong Woon-man, who has hit several "aces" in his career, said that they usually happen on par-three holes but that hitting one largely depends on luck. Experts put the odds of hitting a hole-in-one at 250,000 to one. **PC/Agencies**

Tech talent in need as electronic gaming trend persists

Brook Yang

GAMING technology service suppliers have foreseen a continuous growth in the demand for electronic gaming devices. With the Macau government's growth cap on gambling tables coming into force while new casinos are set to open up, some suggest that such a trend is more visible, and consequently local talent in technology innovation and maintenance will be in needed along the way.

"I think there's a big shortage of technical minded people in Macau in this industry that are qualified to repair and maintain the gaming equipment here as we grow," Mr Geoffrey McDowell, managing director of Suzo Happ APA,

told the Times.

"Obviously this year with table caps and more machines - even the table games there's more hybrid games and electronic tables - I think a lot of the operators are looking to streamline their business and use technology to help them do so. With that, there's a requirement to have more technical people to look after them both at the casino and from a maintenance perspective back in the workshop," he explained.

The executive said it's "still very early days" for Macau in terms of electric gaming but it has a great growth potential. Accordingly, at this stage, there isn't a gap in technician manpower.

"But if you were to add ano-

ther fifty percent of the devices to Macau, then there is a shortage," he added. "With the growth of four or five more properties opening, with the same amount of slot machines as in the previous properties that opened, it puts a big strain on the ability to maintain those, if we don't have a facility and don't have people that are trained locally to work with the concessionaires and the manufacturers."

A division of the Suzo Happ Asia Pacific and Australia Group, Transcity Asia, jointly set up an educational laboratory at the Macau Polytechnic Institute (IPM)'s Gaming Teaching and Research Centre this week.

Mr McDowell explained that the move was "a giant step" by the company in investing in research and development of new technology and innovative products, whilst nurturing local skilled talent by providing students with hands-on learning experience through practical projects.

"Involving the students, training more technical people in Macau, I think it's great for the industry overall," he said.

The IPM vice president Ms Yin Lei also acknowledged at the inauguration that establishing the new lab is a further step to match the university's gaming-related teaching with market needs.

"The gaming industry in Macau is undergoing adjustment and consolidation. More than ever we need to seize every opportunity to enhance our competitiveness through learning professional knowledge as well as upgrading our technical skills and service quality," she stated.

According to Mr Yin, the lab will also promote industry-research collaboration where the faculty members can jointly conduct applied research with Transcity Asia experts in technology innovation, product development, manufacturing and maintenance.



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Local casino operator allegedly purchases robotic dealer

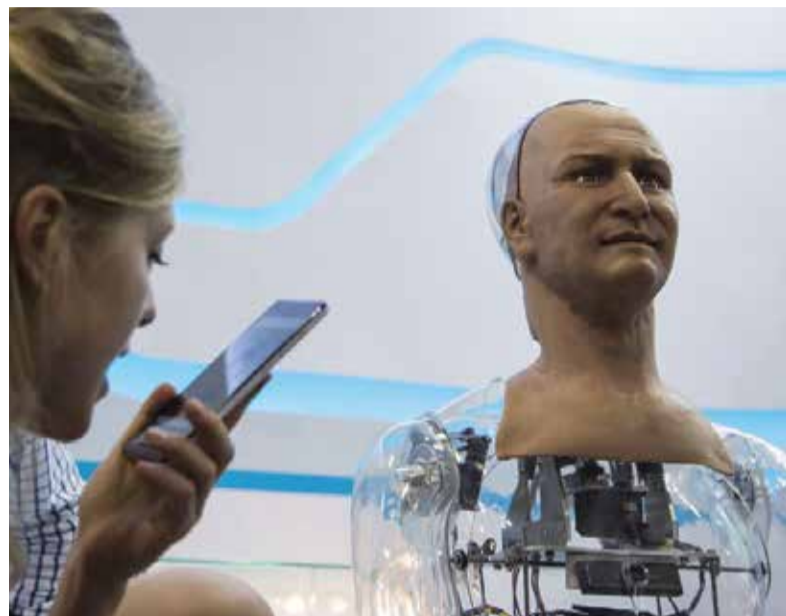
A Hong-Kong-based humanoid robot developer called Hanson Robotics is reported to have sold its latest product to a local casino operator for at least HKD200,000.

The human-like device with lifelike artificial intelligence (AI), which could be unveiled later this year at the earliest, will purportedly serve as a croupier to deal cards inside the casino.

The news emerged from a financial program aired by Hong Kong broadcaster TVB on Sunday. Part of the footage featured an AI robot on display in the "Robotics Experience Zone" at the Global Sources Electronics 2015 fair held at the city's AsiaWorld-Expo last month.

The humanoid robot called "Han," which has reportedly been purchased by a local gaming operator, is able to determine people's speech, emotions, gender, age and race with its built-in recognition software and advanced technology, including the ability to make responsive facial expressions.

The English-speaking machinery took around one year to develop and has become



Humanoid 'Han' is able to interact with humans, as MDT's reporter verified in a video posted on Wired website

a "truly intelligent robot," according to the company's product manager Grace Coppleson. Its manufacturer is reportedly considering the possibility of renting out its

products to clients on a monthly basis.

The company's CEO, Jong Lee, was interviewed on the program, where he said that the robots could be used to

cope with tedious work that people might be unwilling to take up. He also believed that the AI machinery could find a use in hospitality-related industries.

The Korean-American said: "We have a global crisis already; our elderly are rapidly outnumbering our young. The future goal is to have the ability to hire the robots on a monthly basis like a worker who works 24 hours a day for jobs that are not good for people. Imagine having a 24-hour nurse or assistant for USD3,000 - no headache, no problems."

The release of the news has triggered debate online over the possible threat that this idea poses to local croupiers. However, some still rest assured that real people cannot be replaced by lifeless machines. The Times approached the American-founded company for more details and confir-

mation yesterday, but had received no response by the time the newspaper went to press.

Last year, Lee also stressed in an interview with the South China Morning Post that the android machines have the potential to assist in hospitals without much difficulty, as they would be able to enhance nurses' productivity by 30 percent.

According to Wired UK, the robot developer would adapt the technology developed for "Han" for a different model, a Eurasian female called Eva, which would go on sale later this year. Hanson Robotics was founded and led by an American robotics designer and researcher, Dr. David Hanson, who is best known for creating realistic human-looking androids. To date, the company owns at least seven kinds of robots with different features and characteristics. **Staff reporter**

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DSAT opens bidding for 200 taxi licenses

The Transport Bureau (DSAT) yesterday opened bidding for 200 eight-year taxi licenses, according to the government's Official Gazette (BO). Tenders must be submitted before June 18. The minimum tender is MOP200,000 and the official bidding opening ceremony will be held on June 23 at the Macau Polytechnic Institute's multi sports pavilion. Once granted, the eight-year license cannot be extended or transferred to other parties, DSAT said in a statement. DSAT recalled that 230 taxi licenses will expire between this year and 2016. Therefore, "the Macau government is committed to plan and move forward with the granting of new taxi licenses, while timely complementing the existing number of taxis." Further information on the bidding process is available at www.dsat.gov.mo.

Local maritime sovereignty discussions in full swing

THE chief of the Macao Customs Service, Lai Man Wa, stressed on a TDM show that the significance of delimiting local marine sovereignty lies in how the local economy could benefit from its implementation. The official further disclosed that the authorities have been in discussion with the relevant mainland departments and experts to hammer out the most productive scheme while research and investigations are underway.

"How the water resources off the city's coast could be better exploited by the government



to support this tiny city's development is a good direction to go in," said the department head. "And the research and inquiry are in full swing."

She also described the current situation using a Cantonese slang phrase – "barely touch it even in eyesight" – to highlight that the marine authorities' work was only conducted within the nautical area currently under local government supervision.

Lai's department has also initially prepared itself for any possible adjustments when the water sovereignty scheme, which might require broader resources for security force patrols, finally comes into force. Moreover, maritime security remained a matter for collaboration with related departments from the mainland, said Lai. **Staff reporter**

Hundreds of dead fish wash ashore over past two days

ABOUT 2.5 tons of dead fish have been discovered floating off the Inner Harbor, Canal Dos Patos, Patane North Bay and Doca da Ilha Verde over the past two days, as vessels sent out by the Marine and Water Bureau scrambled to clear the carcasses out of the water.

According to a press release issued by the

bureau yesterday, the initial analysis of the water conditions in the above locations suggested that dissolved oxygen levels in the water remained low, and that no peculiar issues related to pollution have so far been detected. It also reported that the inclement weather over the past few days could be linked to the mass fish death.

The authority said that it cannot rule out the possibility of carcasses remaining in the above rivers and bays, despite the conclusion of the clearance operation yesterday. The department also appealed to the public to report any similar cases to them, and urged citizens not to collect the fish for consumption.

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Catarina Pinto

CONDUCTING market research and catering specifically to customers in a particular jurisdiction is key to the further development of the non-gaming segment, casino resort executives acknowledged at a panel discussion titled "Asian Tourism: Gaming Leads the Way," which was held at G2E Asia (Global Gaming Expo) yesterday.

Casino executives from Las Vegas Sands Corp., Studio City Macau and Solaire Resort looked into the success of the integrated resort model and how amenities are being structured around gaming. At a panel session moderated by David Rittvo from The Innovation Group, representatives of the leading operators elaborated on factors crucial to the casino resorts' success.

Andrew MacDonald, Corporate Senior Vice President and Chief Casino Officer of Las Vegas Sands Corp., recalled that MICE has been vital to the company's success: "From our perspective, MICE is critical in any jurisdiction," he stated.

Nevertheless, Mr MacDonald stressed that market research is equally important in order to make sure that the non-gaming components, and other amenities in place, fit the requirements of the current market. He believes that having a comprehensive understanding of the market will assist operators in finding what best suits the jurisdiction in question, be it Manila, Singapore, Japan or Macau.

In Macau, casino operators are currently under pressure to step up their efforts to provide further non-gaming elements in their resorts, as gaming concession contracts will soon be reviewed. The central government has also made it clear that it wants Macau to diversify its economy.

Thomas Arasi, president and Chief Operating Officer of Solaire Resort and Casino, located in Manila, acknowledged that "it doesn't really matter what we think. Governments that give these treasured gaming licenses are requiring us to do that [offer more non-gaming components]." However, he stressed that developing non-gaming amenities is no easy task when high numbers of visitors continue to fly to a particular destination mostly just to gamble. "It's very hard for non-gaming industries to make a lot of money if people don't fly to your destination for purposes other than gaming," he reiterated.

He also, however, pointed out, "If we look at Las Vegas, there are a lot of people who-

Market research is key to non-gaming segment



Grant Govertsen (right) and William Scott (left)

se primary reason for flying there is not the gaming [sector] (...) In Singapore, they are also making a lot of mo-

From our perspective, MICE is critical in any jurisdiction

ANDREW MACDONALD
COO, LVS

ney with non-gaming."

JD Clayton, president of Studio City Macau, Melco Crown Entertainment's new development due to open in Cotai later this year, also acknowledged the need to "broaden the scope of products" currently being offered by operators. But he too thinks that it is crucial to cater specifically to the kind of customer who usually visits Macau.

At the same time, it is essential that operators provide the usual non-gaming elements in a special way, so

as to give visitors a different experience, he said, recalling, for instance, the company's retail strategy. "We are building something at Studio City where we are virtually transporting shoppers to different shopping destinations - New York, Hollywood, Beverly Hills - and it's all through a virtual experience," he stated, adding that the company is trying to create an environment around shopping to really make it a different experience.

The G2E Asia, which this

VIP SEGMENT
'CHANGED
PERMANENTLY'

MGM RESORTS senior executive William Scott believes that Macau's VIP segment "has changed permanently," following China's anti-corruption campaign. "It may be years before we go back to where we were. But from the mass market it's not so bad. We see a pretty healthy mass segment," Mr Scott said yesterday when delivering his keynote address at the Global Gaming Expo (G2E Asia).

Mr Scott served as executive vice president of corporate strategy and special counsel at MGM Resorts and is currently the executive director and general manager of Diaoyutai MGM Hospitality, which operates luxury hotels in mainland China.

The senior executive stressed that the VIP gaming market changed with China's anti-corruption drive, and he does not expect "there will be an immediate turn."

"It's the Chinese customers' attitude that's changed. It's not a good time to show off your wealth. It makes sense to be a little bit more reserved," he acknowledged, adding that this might benefit other jurisdictions such as Las Vegas or South Korea.

year has gathered about 9,000 attendees, comes to an end today. The event is organized by Reed Exhibitions and the American Gaming Association. A total of 180 exhibitors have been displaying their gaming products and services, while industry experts have been discussing the future of gaming.

MGM Resorts 'would like to increase its stake' in Macau

MGM Resorts' senior executive, William Scott, has hinted that reducing or selling off the company's interest in MGM China Holdings Ltd would be a bad idea. Mr Scott, who currently holds the positions of executive director and general manager of Diaoyutai MGM Hospitality, told reporters yesterday, "We would like to make broader investments [in MGM Macau]."

On the sidelines of a G2E Asia keynote address, when asked whether MGM Resorts would consider selling down or selling off its 51-percent stake in MGM China Holdings, he stated: "Your question is would we consider

it? And the answer is yes. Of course we consider all ideas. But some ideas are not good ideas and selling down the interest we have in Macau (...) I think the reverse would be true. MGM would like to increase its stake."

He reiterated, "We would like to make broader investments. But would we consider it? Sure. We would consider it because we consider all ideas."

Mr Scott, who also served as executive vice president of corporate strategy and special counsel at MGM Resorts International, recalled: "The question I was asked this morning was, 'Is MGM committed to this market?' Yes, we are abundantly committed to this market.

We're spending USD3 billion on a resort next door [in Cotai]."

MGM China Holdings Ltd owns and operates the MGM Macau, which is now building the MGM Cotai. Mr Scott said yesterday that the construction works "are pretty far along and on schedule." The resort is due to open late next year. He added that the new development will entail "a substantial retail component."

Last year, MGM Resorts revealed its plan to build a resort in Japan, should gambling be legalized there. Bloomberg reported that MGM Resorts International had said it was ready to spend between USD5-10 billion in Japan. **CP**



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Brook Yang

5 MORE PLOTS RECOVERED

Expiring land leases seen as risk to social turmoil

THE MSAR government recovered five more idle land plots yesterday, bringing the total number to 18. These newly recovered land parcels – located in Avenida de Kwong Tung in Taipa – were intended to be used to build residential buildings covering an area of 18,400 square meters.

Likewise, a sizable number of private land plots slated for construction are facing a chance of being recovered this year, as their leaseholds are about to expire but are ineligible for renewal.

Many land concession contracts to the private sector were granted during the late 1980s and early 1990s, whereas their lease term is generally 25 years. Consequently, the city is anticipated to experience a peak period of land concession expiration in the coming years.

Concerns have risen in society, as construction projects on some of these land plots are more than halfway to completion, while some have even already been capped.

At the latest Legislative Assembly (AL) plenary session held Monday, lawmakers Leonel Alves, Vong Hin Fai and Tong Io Cheng warned that relentlessly recovering these land lots in accordance with the new Land Law “would inevitably cause huge social turmoil.”

“As we all know, most of the transactions for new buildings in Macau are made by pre-sale of uncompleted flats. Moreover, these pre-sales would be made with mortgage loans from banks. If that happens by then, we can imagine that tens of thousands of small proprietors and their families, as well as the banks’ credit business will all suffer a tremendous hit,” indicated Alves.

According to the current Land Law that came into force last March, a leased land plot won’t be issued a “defini-



The five recovered plots are located in this area in Taipa (Google Maps)

te concession” until the land is utilized. Furthermore, leaseholds without definite concession cannot be automatically renewed after expiry. Accordingly, the land plot can be recovered by the government.

In order to prove the land’s utilization, the developer needs to not only complete the construction but also obtain its occupation permit. “But they cannot finish the acceptance procedure and be issued the occupation permit in a short time,” said the lawmaker, referring to parcels undergoing construction.

“When submitting the draft bill, the administration should have expected that these situations were imminent, the-

refore [it] should’ve suggested handling it with an appropriate transitional norm,” he said.

The lawmaker further argued, “the authorities had slowed down and even shelved the urban planning and project approving over recent years,” which is partially the reason why many property projects are at a standstill.

“When the leaseholder is not accountable for the construction delay, it will cause serious injustice and affect the social stability if those land plots [are] recovered for the reason of lease expiry.”

“The problem is that neither the new law nor the previous one stipulated treatment for [construction delay] situa-

tions that the leaseholders are not responsible for. Thus we can see such situations as a legal loophole,” he stressed.

The three lawmakers jointly made an oral inquiry at the AL, urging the government to decisively enact a transitional remedy to resolve the dilem-

ma, and then conduct a review on the Land Law.

According to the Official Gazette, the five plots recovered yesterday were held by five different companies, while four of them have their head office located on the Hotel Lisboa’s second floor.

OWNERS AND PLOTS AREA

SOCIEDADE FOMENTO PREDIAL PREDIFIC, LIMITADA	7,731 km ²
SOCIEDADE FOMENTO PREDIAL SOCIPRÉ, LIMITADA	3,177 km ²
COMPANHIA DE INVESTIMENTO PREDIAL HAMILTON, LIMITADA	2,795 km ²
COMPANHIA DE INVESTIMENTO PREDIAL PAK LOK MUN, LIMITADA	2,209 km ²
COMPANHIA DE INVESTIMENTO PREDIAL HOI SUN, LIMITADA	2,510 km ²

Northern district faces month-long roadworks for power network extension

MACAU’S sole electricity supplier, CEM, is set to launch a month-and-a-half-long roadwork project in the city’s northern district in order to expand its 66kV high-voltage power network in the area. It is expected that the excavation and cable installation stages of the project will result in restricted access for traffic.

The first phase of the expansion and reinfor-

cement work, according to the company’s Senior Engineer Ernesto do Rosario, will commence at the end of this month. Mr Rosario also said that the project is necessary for Macau to meet rising demand for electricity in the future and ensure overall power stability for the city.

“The purpose of laying power cables in the Areia Preta district is to expand our 66kV high-voltage power network. By the

time it is completed, the entire city’s power stability will be strengthened,” said Rosario, adding that the company would do its best to minimize the possibility of outages in the coming summer.

Also attending the media briefing yesterday was a representative from the Transport Bureau, Leong Kei Yiu, who expressed the authorities’ support for the works, saying that they understand the

urgency of the project because the season of high-peak power consumption is around the corner.

“As the summer vacation is coming up, during which time everyone knows that electricity consumption is high. Considering that CEM’s power networks need to reach certain levels of stability, it’s urgent to coordinate with them and allow them to carry out the required work as soon as possible

for the sake of local livelihood,” Mr Leong said.

In 2009, five government departments formed a cooperative panel with local utility companies in order to discuss potential roadwork projects. The group pledged to avoid launching repetitive excavation works on the same road in a short period of time. However, some of the roads involved in the network expansion have already expe-

rienced similar projects last year.

During the construction period, one lane of the avenue near the Victoria Hotel Macau in the Areia Preta region will be temporarily closed. Vehicles will only be allowed to travel in the direction of Iiha Verde under the provisional traffic arrangement. Parking spaces on about 10 streets in the district will also be limited or reduced.

To lessen the impact of the roadworks, the company has ordered four contractors to start their operations simultaneously in a bid to shorten the time required for the project.

Burberry lowers outlook as China shoppers shun Hong Kong



Andrew Roberts

BURBERRY Group Plc, the British maker of USD1,895 trench coats, lowered its earnings forecast after the strong pound and decelerating sales in Hong Kong weighed on last year's profit, sending the shares down the most in seven months.

Earnings in the period through March 2016 will

be about 40 million pounds (\$62 million) less than previously anticipated, London-based Burberry said yesterday. Adjusted pretax profit fell 1 percent to 455.8 million pounds last fiscal year, the first decline since 2009.

Hong Kong remains "challenging" with store visits down significantly, Chief Financial Officer Carol Fairweather said on a call with reporters.

She said the island city's waning appeal to Chinese shoppers is an industry wide problem.

"Today's news provides little if any reassurance," wrote Keith Bowman, an analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown Stockbrokers. The consensus for pretax profit will probably decline 5 percent to 7 percent, according to Thomas Chauvet at Citigroup.

The stock fell as much as

5.9 percent, the steepest intraday decline since Oct. 14. The shares traded 4 percent lower at 1,735 pence as of 9:19 a.m. yesterday in London.

The Americas "has been a little softer, still growing," in the first seven weeks of fiscal 2016, while Europe, the Middle East, India and Africa "remains strong," Fairweather said.

Burberry said it now forecasts exchange-rate movements to boost earnings this year by 10 million pounds. Currency shifts wiped 38 million pounds off last year's profit. The pound has gained 13 percent against the euro and 10 percent against the yen in the past year.

The 159-year-old company adjusted some prices in China, Hong Kong and Europe in April to reflect moves made by peers and account for currency fluctuations, Fairweather said. According to Sanford C. Bernstein, these include lowering the price of some coats in China and raising the amount it charges for select handbags in Paris.

"As we go into each market for each new season, we look at prices in the light of FX and will make changes and adjustments as we have always done," Fairweather said.

Bloomberg

Disney opens first mainland retail store in Shanghai



Customers shop for Walt Disney Co. products at a shopping mall in Shanghai

Anthony Palazzo

THE Walt Disney Co. opened its first Disney Store in China, getting started on a major expansion into the world's second-largest economy.

The store, at 9,257 square feet, is Disney's largest in the world, the company said yesterday in a statement. It is located in Shanghai's Pudong district, where Disney plans to open a 34 billion yuan (USD5.5 billion) theme park next year.

The store, at 9,257 sq ft, is Disney's largest in the world

Disney, the world's largest entertainment company, is betting China's emerging middle class will embrace brands such as Marvel, Pixar and Star Wars, and boost the company's international revenue. The country's rapid economic growth has made it a prime target for Western brands, though cultural and bureaucratic challenges increase the risk.

"We're most excited about what we see in terms of the prospects outside the U.S.," Chief Executive Officer Robert Iger said on May 5. "With the opening of Shanghai Disney Resort next year, that should drive growth well into the future."

Disney, the world's biggest theme-park operator, has parks in Japan and Hong Kong. It has 46 Disney Stores in Japan, though none in Hong Kong.

The Shanghai store has a castle at its center with an hourly music and projection show, a Marvel-themed area and a plaza outside with Disney characters hidden in the tree-covered landscape.

The date and time of the store opening correspond with Chinese characters used in social media to symbolize love and long-term commitment, the Burbank, California-based company said in a statement. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

SANDS MACAO CELEBRATES 11TH ANNIVERSARY WITH COMMUNITY AND STAFF



With Sands Macao turning 11 this month, the hotel and entertainment complex is celebrating – with its team members and with the handing out of complimentary meal gift packs to Macau taxi drivers.

On Monday, the special meal gift packs were offered to taxi drivers arriving at the hotel. It is an annual tradition for Sands Macao to show appreciation to local cab drivers as part of its anniversary celebrations – a custom in place

since the opening of the hotel and entertainment complex in 2004.

Sands Macao team members marked the anniversary behind the scenes as well, with a celebration that included the first semi-final of a new self-learning platform - "Because We Know" Sands China Product Knowledge Competition. Through an online quiz game, team members have been increasing their knowledge about the company. Six team members won a prize of a Sands

Macao 11th anniversary gold-plated pixiu (a feng shui charm resembling a winged lion) by correctly answering questions about the company.

A lucky draw session also gave out additional prizes to team members that included food and beverage vouchers, show tickets and accommodation at Sands Macao. The celebrations ended with a cake-cutting ceremony.

Ciaran Carruthers, Senior Vice President and Director of Venetian and Plaza Operations, Sands China Ltd said: "It's been 11 years since Sands Macao first opened and marked the start of a new era in Macau. We have come as far as we have because of the hard work and dedication of you, our team members. Sands Macao continues to be a success because of your efforts, and the entire company thanks you for it."

MELCO ANNOUNCES IN-HOUSE CASINO MANAGEMENT DIPLOMA



Melco Crown Entertainment Limited yesterday announced that its in-house Learning Academy, in collaboration with the University of Macau, will offer a free Casino Management Diploma Program for its employees.

The Diploma has been brought in-house to the MCE Learning Academy as part of the company's commitment to develop local talents, while collaboration with the University of Macau enables employees both convenient

and access to learning.

A total of 43 employees are enrolled and participating in this program, which runs twice a week after work, 2.5 hours per session, and runs for a year.

Mr. Lawrence Ho, Co-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Melco Crown Entertainment Limited, said, "As a company with deep roots and heritage in Macau, Melco Crown Entertainment has always been dedicated to developing local talents. We constantly look for new initiatives to equip our people and prepare them for management responsibilities. We firmly believe that local talent development is essential to the Company, as well as to Macau as a whole as it is establishing itself to be a world center of tourism and leisure."

Brazil and China sign 35 cooperation agreements

BRAZIL and China signed 35 cooperation agreements in eight sectors involving investments of USD53 billion, during an official visit by the Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang to Brasilia, according to the Brazilian press.

With oil company Petrobras alone China signed three cooperation agreements involving at least \$7 billion at an event attended by President Dilma Rousseff and the Chinese Prime Minister, following an earlier meeting at the Presidential Palace.

The three agreements with Petrobras, one of them signed by the chairman of the oil company, Aldemir Bendine, and the President of the China Development Bank, Hu Huaibang are worth a total of \$5 billion. Another agreement, also signed by Bendine and the President of the Export Import Bank (ExIm) of China, involves \$2 billion.

Of the 35 agreements sig-



ned between the two countries, one worth mentioning relates to preparation of feasibility studies for a trans-continental railway project, which is intended to build a railway linking Brazil to Peru and the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Other agreements provide for construction of the metallurgical complex of Maranhão, financing for the purchase of 40 aircraft from

Embraer by China, cooperation in nuclear technology and creation of the automobile hub of Jacarei, in São Paulo as well as another related to funding for building 14 400,000-ton ships to transport iron ore.

Brazil, which in 2014 exported products worth over \$51.9 billion to China, has soy as its main source of business, with a total of US\$16.6 billion exported in 2014, according to

figures from the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade.

Iron ore accounted for US\$12.3 billion, followed by oil (\$3.5 billion), cellulose (\$1.4 billion) and sugar (\$880 million).

After Brazil, Li Keqiang is due to visit Colombia, Peru and Chile, where he is also due to sign a number of agreements related to investment projects. **MDT/Macauhub**

Tianjin Airlines buys 22 aircraft from Embraer

BRAZILIAN aeronautical company Embraer will supply 22 jet aircraft to Tianjin Airlines, a subsidiary of the HNA Group, under a final contract signed this week, the company said in a statement.

The contract, worth USD1.1 billion, includes 20 E195 aircraft and two E190-E2 models, which makes the HNA Tianjin Airlines group the first Chinese airline to purchase E2 E-Jets aircraft.

The first E195 will be delivered in 2015 and the first E190-E2 has delivery scheduled for 2018. Tianjin Airlines is the carrier with the largest fleet of E-Jets in Asia, with a total of 50.

Tianjin was the Embraer client that launched the E190 aircraft in China, as well as the first Chinese company identified as an Authorised Service Centre in the country. The airline recently announced it had contracted the Embraer AHEAD-PRO (system for aircraft analysis and diagnosis) becoming the first user of the system in China.

The air carrier was launched as the first truly regional airline in China in 2009 and the following year changed its exclusively regional operating focus to a combination of major and regional routes. **MDT/Macauhub**

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9-story building collapses with residents still inside



A nine-story residential building in southwest China collapsed following a landslide yesterday, and 16 people remained missing hours later, the city government said. The collapse occurred at about 11:30 a.m. in Guiyang city, leaving a pile of steel, bricks and other rubble. By early evening, the city government said 98 residents had been found safe. It was still trying to contact 16 others, and cellphone signals of 15 of them had been traced to the site. The government said in a statement that heavy rainfall led to the collapse of the building with 35 households and that people in the surrounding area had been evacuated. More than 100 rescuers were at the scene and no casualties had been found by mid-afternoon, it said. More than 100 rescuers were combing the debris with sniffer dogs and life detectors. Rescuers pulled out a man surnamed Zhang who lived on the ground floor. He told the state-run Xinhua news agency that he had been awoken by loud noises and was about to run from the building when he was buried by falling debris. Residents of nearby buildings were evacuated following the accident.

Xi: Religions must be free of foreign influence

President Xi Jinping has warned that religions in China must be independent from foreign influence as Beijing asks domestic religious groups to adapt to Chinese society and pledge loyalty to the state. China is ruled by the atheist Communist Party and Beijing tries to control a variety of religions and their spread. Xi made the remarks yesterday at a high-profile meeting seeking to unite non-Communist Party groups and individuals. His words have been widely reported in state media. Beijing believes that foreign, hostile forces can use religions to infiltrate Chinese society and eventually subvert the party rule. However, Beijing never clarifies what constitute the foreign forces.



Beijing's impact looms large as US debates its own trade deals

Jim Kuhnenn, Washington

IF the U.S. doesn't write the rules of international trade, President Barack Obama warns, China will. In fact, China is already helping write those rules, and in some ways has jumped ahead of the game.

There's intense competition between the U.S. and China for economic influence in the world. As Obama seeks to persuade lawmakers to back his trade agenda, he has cast that competition as an economic threat.

"They'll write those rules in a way that gives Chinese workers and Chinese businesses the upper hand, and locks American-made goods out," the president said in Oregon this month.

As a result, China's impact, both current and potential, is partly shaping the U.S. debate over whether Congress should grant Obama greater trade-negotiation authority. Under such authority, lawmakers could still set parameters for trade deals, but once an agreement was negotiated they could only approve or reject it.

Obama is seeking the "fast-track" authority to complete a Trans-Pacific trade deal with 11 other countries along the Pacific rim, many of whom are also negotiating separate trade pacts with China.

Some U.S. concerns:

CHINA'S AMPLE REACH

The U.S. is the largest economy seeking to conclude the Trans-Pacific trade deal. China is the largest economy negotiating the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, 16 countries that include the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as well as Australia, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand.

There is significant overlap. Countries involved in both negotiations include Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

China, under President Xi Jinping, is also starting an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and has enlisted 57 countries to sign up. Such a venture is designed to broaden China's practice of using its state-owned companies and its workers on foreign capital projects.

The U.S. and Japan, leading shareholders of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, have expressed concern over the new bank's governance standards and the types of projects it might finance. "They may be very good for the leaders of some countries and contractors but may not be good for the actual people who live there," Obama said last month.

Still, Britain, France and Germany have broken with Washington and are seeking membership.

As a result, the Trans-Pacific trade deal Obama seeks would do less to thwart China than to help the U.S. "rebalance" toward Asia and gain a foothold in a major world market.

"The U.S. has to be in the game itself," Evan A. Feigenbaum, a former deputy assistant secretary of state for South Asia, said at a recent conference on U.S.-China economic relations. "In the full sweep and scope of Asia institutions, agreements, functional areas, clearly the United States, if it's going to adapt and compete, has to compete with something."

PLAYING WITH CURRENCY

U.S. administrations have long complained that China subsidizes its exports by keeping its currency values artificially low. And while China is not a participant in the Trans-Pacific agreement, critics and even some supporters of the deal believe it should include measures that would crack down on nations that manipulate currency.

"Past administrations have had a number of tools at their disposal, but they've sat in a

drawer gathering dust," Sen. Chuck Schumer, the New York Democrat who succeeded in placing currency valuation restrictions in related trade legislation, said last week.

But administration officials say any provision that would punish countries deemed to be purposefully undervaluing their currency to gain a trade advantage would prompt retaliation and lead to a trade war. The administration on Tuesday said that if the currency manipulation restrictions are placed directly in the "fast track" legislation, Obama will veto it.

"There was a time when China was pretty egregious about this," Obama said during a trade pitch at Nike headquarters in Oregon last month. "And we pushed back hard, and China moved. ... That's not an argument against this trade agreement."

Still, Jared Bernstein, who served as an economist for Vice President Joe Biden, believes the trade agreement should contain currency enforcement provisions.

He said in an email: "One reason for our persistent trade deficits is that some of our trading partners have managed their currency to subsidize their exports to us and tax ours to them." AP

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

HAND your passport to police or it will be canceled, read the notice to all 4.4 million residents of far-northwestern China's Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture.

The demand would now seem outrageous to most Chinese, who more than a decade since passport restrictions were eased have become increasingly accustomed to traveling abroad for tourism, study or work.

Yet the story is vastly different for groups targeted by the ruling Communist Party, which has long denied passports to dissidents who might embarrass the party overseas. Now that most Chinese can easily obtain passports, eroding barriers to travel have thrown into relief a new pattern showing that entire ethnic groups deemed potentially risky to the leadership — such as Muslim Uighurs and Buddhist Tibetans — are largely being barred.

By denying them opportunities for jobs, education and overseas connections, the withholding of passports has become one of the party's most potent weapons against dissent, both real and imagined.

The notice in Ili, part of the vast Xinjiang region bordering Central Asia, set a May 15 deadline for residents to hand in passports "for safekeeping." It gave no reason for the demand.

The order raised eyebrows because Xinjiang is home to China's minority Uighurs, Turkic Muslims who are culturally and linguistically distinct from the country's Han majority. Uighurs have come under increasing scrutiny because radicals have waged a low-level campaign of violence against Chinese rule. This has resulted in heightened unofficial barriers on travel even within China, such as difficulty booking air tickets or hotel rooms.

China is eager to avoid the appearance of discrimination against ethnic minorities, including Uighurs and Tibetans, and an officer at police headquarters in the prefectural seat of Yining said the order applied to all ethnic groups. The officer, who like most Chinese bureaucrats declined to be identified by name, said passport holders would be required to reapply and submit documents stating their reason for traveling and ensuring their good reputations if they wished to get them back.

It's not clear how many Ili residents were complying with the order and only two out of a dozen company workers reached by phone in the prefecture said they had even heard of it.

Uighurs and Tibetans, who together number about 16 million inside China, have increasingly complained about difficulties obtaining passports, including the need for government approvals that members of the majority Han group aren't subject to.



Tibetan lamas climb a barrier to get a better view near the Bird's Nest Stadium in Beijing

Authorities denying passports to restrict critics, minorities

Permission is often limited to those participating in government-backed exchanges, or in the case of Uighurs, Muslims performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. The government-backed Chinese Muslim Association said about 14,500 Chinese Muslims went on the haj last year, but didn't say how many were Uighurs.

While the government says only that the restrictions are to maintain social order, minority activists and critics of the one-party communist system believe politics are the real reason.

"The government fears that Uighurs will return with a better understanding of their conditions and greater determination to throw off Chinese rule," said Germany-based Uighur activist Dilshat Rexit. "Limits on passports reveal the government lack of confidence in facing threats to its rule in Xinjiang."

For Tibetans, already severe restrictions were tightened further in 2012 when hundreds of Buddhist pilgrims were detained and interrogated after attending a religious event in India presided over by the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled religious leader who is reviled in Beijing, say overseas activists.

As with the Uighurs, China is deeply concerned about the growth of separatist sentiment among Tibetans, as well as their connections to the Tibetan diaspora and the sympathy and support they receive from overseas boosters.

Tibetan writer and rights activist Woenser Tsering says she's

consistently been refused a passport since first applying in 1997. During her most recent attempt in 2012, a police officer told her she'd been placed on a list of people banned from leaving the country by the Ministry of State Security, she said.

"Not having a passport has an enormous impact on my life," she said. The inability to travel

■ **Entire ethnic groups deemed potentially risky to the leadership such as Muslim Uighurs and Buddhist Tibetans are largely being barred**

has made her unable to take up offered writing positions in the U.S. and Germany. "I had no choice but to give them up, all because of not having a passport."

Individual travel overseas for ordinary Chinese was first permitted in the late 1990s, and took a massive leap in 2004, when most European countries were designated as approved destinations and requirements for passports, such as an endorsement

letter from an employer, were simplified.

Cheng Fan, a veteran of the 1989 student-led pro-democracy movement, has never been able to obtain a passport. Like many present or former government critics, his applications are answered with a one-page document from police stating that a "relevant Cabinet agency" has ruled that if allowed to travel abroad, he would "pose a threat to national security or cause serious harm to national interests."

"It's extremely frustrating, especially when you have a family and want to show them new things," said Cheng. "It's denying my rights as a citizen."

With a record 107 million Chinese going abroad last year, the inability to travel internationally stigmatizes and deprives.

It's not known exactly how many Chinese citizens are denied passports, had them seized or were simply turned away at the airport when attempting to board international flights. The Public Security Ministry's Entry and Exit Supervision Bureau did not respond to questions from The Associated Press and the Foreign Ministry and Tibetan officials said they had no information on the issue.

Concerns over Uighurs have been heightened by the growth of global jihadi groups, said Dru Gladney, an expert at Pomona College. Yet, travel restrictions will likely only add to the "pressure cooker" of ethnic discontent in Xinjiang, he said.

"I think it's a self-defeating stra-

tegy. China is a global country, engaged in the world and trying to become a global player, yet it still has these very medieval rules," Gladney said.

While passport denials can theoretically be appealed, it's unclear whether any have ever been successful, although some have managed to receive passports when reapplying later for reasons that remain a mystery.

Human rights lawyer Teng Biao had his passport confiscated at the airport in 2008 when he was trying to go to an overseas conference. Four years later, he reapplied, saying his passport had been lost. A new one was promptly issued.

"They said nothing when giving me the new one," said Teng, now a visiting fellow at Harvard Law School.

Others denied the right to travel range from imprisoned Uighur scholar Ilham Tohti to artist Ai Weiwei, whose passport has been confiscated since a 2011 detention even though his works are shown around the world.

A growing number of Chinese overseas are putting off returning home for fear of not being allowed out of the country again, said Columbia University China expert Andrew Nathan. Often the criteria for being denied is murky, he said.

"Police being police, and wanting to do their jobs and avoid mistakes, they would use their judgment and deny passports or exit permits for whatever reason made sense to them," Nathan said. **AP**

NORTH KOREA

UN chief says Pyongyang cancels invitation to visit

Hyung-jin Kim, Seoul

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said yesterday that North Korea has canceled an invitation for him to visit a factory park in the country that is the last major cooperation project between the rival Koreas.

Ban had previously said that he wanted to go today to the Kaesong industrial park just north of the heavily fortified Korean border to help improve ties between North and South Korea, which jointly run the complex but have seen their always-tense ties worsen in recent weeks.

Ban, a former South Korean foreign minister, would have been the first U.N. chief to visit the factory park, which opened in 2004 and is a rare legitimate source of foreign currency for the impoverished North, and the first U.N. head to visit North Korea since Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1993.

North Korea gave no reason when it told the U.N. of its decision to cancel his trip, Ban told a forum in Seoul yesterday. Analysts had said Ban's trip wouldn't likely bring any major breakthrough in ties between the Koreas, and some have calculated that North Korea made a last-minute decision to cancel because it was unlikely to get much out of such a visit.

"This decision by Pyongyang is deeply regrettable," Ban said, adding that he will spare no effort to encourage North Korea to work with the international community for peace and



U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

stability on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.

Relations between the Koreas are strained over North Korean missile and other weapon tests that South Korea views as provocations. There are also worries after South Korea's spy agency said last week that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had his defense chief executed by anti-aircraft gunfire in late April.

Lim Byeong Cheol, a spokesman for Seoul's Unification Ministry, expressed regret over

the North's decision, saying the country must accept offers for dialogue and cooperation by the U.N. and other members of the international community instead of isolating itself.

North Korea has sometimes invited high-profile figures such as former U.S. President Jimmy Carter under the expectation that those people would listen to its concerns and then mediate in various standoffs with the outside world, including allegations of human rights abuses and its pursuit of nuclear armed missi-

les that could hit the U.S. mainland. But North Korea appears to have determined that Ban would only back the views of Seoul and Washington during his trip, said Lim Eul Chul, a North Korea expert at South Korea's Kyungnam University.

North Korea likely didn't want to see Ban "delivering a peace message ... and asking them to come back to six-nation nuclear talks without any preconditions and to talk to South Korea to improve ties," Lim said. "I think North Korea has concluded Ban's visit won't be helpful for them."

The Kaesong park opened during a period of warming ties between the Koreas and has been considered a test case for unification, pairing cheap local labor with South Korean know-how and technology.

It has survived periods of animosity, including North Korea's artillery bombardment of a South Korean island in 2010, while other cross-border projects, such as tours to a scenic North Korean mountain, remain deadlocked.

However, the park's operations were halted for five months in 2013 after North Korea withdrew its 53,000 workers amid tension over a torrent of threats by the North to launch nuclear attacks on Seoul and Washington. **AP**

US: N KOREA 'MANY YEARS' FROM DEVELOPING SUBMARINE MISSILE

A TOP U.S. military officer says North Korea is "many years" away from being able to launch ballistic missiles from a submarine. But vice chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. James Winnefeld, said Tuesday such missiles could eventually present a "hard-to-detect" danger to Japan and South Korea and U.S. forces stationed there. North Korean state media reported leader Kim Jong Un observing the

test of such a missile this month. Photos showed a projectile rising from the sea's surface and Kim smiling from a distance at what looked like a floating submarine. Winnefeld said the North Koreans "have not gotten as far as their clever video editors and spinmeisters would have us believe." But he said the potential future threat reinforced the need for regional missile defense.

JAPAN

Aquariums say they'll stop taking 'Cove'-hunt dolphins

Yuri Kageyama, Tokyo

JAPAN'S aquariums promised yesterday to stop acquiring dolphins captured in a bloody hunt that was depicted in the Oscar-winning documentary "The Cove" and has caused global outrage.

The move by the Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums follows a decision last month by the Swiss-based umbrella group World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, or WAZA, to suspend the Japanese organization's membership.

WAZA characterized the Taiji hunt as "cruel," and



In this photo Aug. 15, 2010 file photo, Shiro, a Risso's dolphin, jumps in front of holidaymakers in a small ocean cove in Taiji

decided that none of its members should acquire dolphins in such a way.

In that hunt, dolphins are scared with banging, herded into a cove and

spearred by fishermen for their meat. The best-looking ones are sold to aquariums.

In a letter to WAZA, the Japanese group, which comprises 89 zoos and 63 aquariums, said it would abide by WAZA's decision.

"It is our wish at JAZA to remain as a member of WAZA," chair Kazutoshi Arai said in a letter addressed to WAZA President Lee Ehmke.

The campaign against the Taiji hunt has drawn Hollywood stars as well as the anti-whaling group Sea Shepherd.

The latest move was

welcomed by animal welfare groups.

"This momentous decision marks the beginning of the end for dolphin hunting in Japan," said Sarah Lucas, the CEO of Australia for Dolphins.

Officials in Taiji, a small fishing village in central Japan, and fishermen have defended the hunt as tradition, saying that eating dolphin meat is no different from eating beef or chicken.

Eating dolphins is a delicacy most Japanese never experience. Many Japanese are horrified by the dolphin killing, and have joined the campaign

against the Taiji hunt.

"The Cove," which won an Academy Award in 2009, focuses on veteran dolphin activist Ric O'Barry, who trained dolphins for the 1960s "Flipper" TV series before deciding to devote his life to protecting the mammals and keeping them in nature.

Groups such as Australia for Dolphins argue that dolphin meat does not provide enough monetary incentive to keep the hunts going, but dolphins are sold to aquariums and marine shows for thousands of dollars. **AP**



Acehnese fishermen are silhouetted by the rising sun as they rescue migrants who are stranded on their boat on the sea off East Aceh, Indonesia



An unconscious migrant is carried by a friend upon arrival in Simpang Tiga, Aceh province

Eileen Ng and Fakhurradzie Gade, Putrajaya

ROHINGYA TRAFFICKING

Malaysia, Indonesia to offer temporary shelter to migrants

IN a major diplomatic breakthrough that could ease Southeast Asia's migrant crisis, Indonesia and Malaysia offered yesterday to temporarily take in thousands of people who have been stranded at sea but appealed for international help, saying the crisis is a global, not regional, problem.

The reversal in their positions, after weeks of saying the migrants were not welcome, came as more than 430 weak, hungry people were rescued — not by navies patrolling the waters but by a flotilla of Indonesian fishermen who brought them ashore in the eastern province of Aceh.

One of the fishermen who led the rescue effort said that when he spotted the migrants' green wooden trawler and saw the people on board screaming for help, he began to weep.

"As we came close, I was shocked. I saw them crammed onto the boat. It left me speechless and I broke down in tears as I watched them screaming, waving their hands and clothes," said 40-year-old Razali Puteh. People from the boat began jumping into the water trying to reach him, but the fisherman told them to stay put and then returned with other fishing boats.

"I could not let them die, because they are also human beings. Just like me," Puteh said. "I am grateful to have saved hundreds of lives."

In the past three weeks, more than 3,000 migrants who fled persecution in Myanmar and poverty in Bangladesh have landed in overcrowded boats on the shores of Southeast Asian countries better known for their white-sand beaches. Aid groups estimate that thousands more are stranded at sea following a crackdown on human traffi-

ckers that prompted captains and smugglers to abandon their boats.

The mounting crisis prompted Malaysia to call an emergency meeting with the foreign ministers of Indonesia and Thailand yesterday. Malaysia is the current chair of the 10-nation grouping of Southeast Asian countries known as ASEAN.

"This is not an ASEAN problem," Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman said after the meeting. "This is a problem for the international community. We are talking about a humanitarian crisis."

Part of the crisis stemmed from the stance of ASEAN nations, which until now was to push boats away and not allow migrants to reach their shores, fearing that allowing a few to come in would lead to an unstoppable flow.

Thailand had previously said it cannot afford to take any more migrants since it is already overburdened by tens of thousands of refugees from Myanmar, but agreed at the meeting to provide humanitarian assistance, Anifah said.

Malaysia and Indonesia "agreed to offer temporary shelter provided that the settlement and repatriation process will be done in one year by the international community," according to a joint statement.

Asked about the statement's conditional wording, Anifah said the two countries would not wait for international support but would start giving mi-

grants shelter "immediately."

"It has to be immediate because we can't leave those people out at sea," Anifah said at a news conference in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

The U.N. refugee agency believes there are some 4,000 still at sea, although some activists initially put the number at 6,000.

■ The reversal in positions came as more than 430 weak, hungry people were rescued by a flotilla of Indonesian fishermen

Aid agencies praised yesterday's breakthrough but time is running out for the boats still at sea, said Joe Lowry, a regional spokesman for the International Organization for Migration.

"It's extremely good news coming out of Malaysia," he said. "The problem is that, so far there is no agreement on search and rescue and these boats have got to be found. There's a huge body of water and only a small number of boats, and the more time that goes on ... the more desperate their conditions are going to become."

The migrants brought ashore yesterday in Indonesia were

rescued by more than a dozen fishing boats, said Herman Sulaiman from East Aceh district's Search and Rescue Agency. It was unclear if all the migrants had been on one vessel or had come from several.

An initial batch of 102 people was the first brought to shore in the Aceh village of Simpang Tiga.

"They were suffering from dehydration, they are weak and starving," said Khairul Nove, head of the Langsa Search and Rescue Agency in Aceh province. Among the 102 were 26 women and 31 children, he said.

One of the migrants, Ubaydul Haque, 30, said the ship's engine had failed and the captain fled, and that they were at sea for four months before the Indonesian fishermen found them.

"We ran out of food, we wanted to enter Malaysia but we were not allowed," he said.

Most of the migrants are believed to be victims of human traffickers, who recruit them in Myanmar's Sittwe province and in Bangladesh with promises of safe passage to Malaysia and jobs once they land there, but aid groups say many are held instead for ransom on boats or in jungle camps in southern Thailand.

Another potential breakthrough yesterday came from Myanmar, which is seen as vital to solving the crisis and has repeatedly cast doubt on whether it will attend a conference to be hosted by Thailand on May 29 that is to include 15 Asian na-

tions affected by the emergency.

Myanmar Deputy Foreign Minister Thant Kyaw indicated yesterday that his country would join the talks.

"We all have to sit down and we all have to consider how to tackle this problem together," he told reporters in Bangkok after meeting his Thai counterpart. "Myanmar is thinking of sending a delegation for the 29th of May meeting."

Thai Deputy Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai interpreted the message positively: "Myanmar has accepted (the invitation), as well as Bangladesh."

Myanmar officials had previously said they would not attend if the word "Rohingya" is mentioned on the invitation or if Myanmar would be blamed as "the source of the problem."

The Rohingya Muslims have faced decades of state-sanctioned discrimination in Myanmar, which is predominantly Buddhist. The U.N. says they are one of the most persecuted groups in the world.

In the past three years, Rohingya were targeted by violent mobs of Buddhist extremists, leaving hundreds dead and sparking an exodus of more than 120,000 people, according to the U.N. refugee agency. Even the name Rohingya is taboo in Myanmar, which calls them "Bengalis" and insists they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, even though they have lived in the country for generations. **AP**

Aron Heller, Jerusalem

ISRAEL

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday called off a proposed plan to segregate Palestinians from Israelis on West Bank buses, overruling his own defense minister following a flurry of criticism in an attempt to avert the first crisis of his new government.

An official in the prime minister's office said Netanyahu called Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon to tell him he found his proposal "unacceptable" and the two then decided to freeze the plan.

Yaalon had launched the three-month pilot program following repeated complaints from Jewish settlers who ride the buses and say the Palestinian workers constitute a security threat and harass female Jewish riders.

Thousands of Palestinians enter Israel for work each day from the West Bank and often return home in buses alongside Jewish settlers. The Pales-

tinian laborers all have security clearance and special permits, but the proposed change would have forced them to return home through the same checkpoint they entered and prevented them from riding West Bank buses alongside Israelis.

Critics derided the plan as racist and said it would harm Israel's image, which has already been un-

This is how apartheid looks

ZEHAVA GALON
LEADER, MERETZ PARTY



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, left, speaks with Israel's Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon

der pressure because of its continued settlement activity in the West Bank. Israel captured the West

Bank from Jordan in the 1967 war and Palestinians want it as part of their future state.

"The separation between Palestinians and Jews on public transportation is an unnecessary

humiliation and a stain on the face of the country and its citizens," opposition leader Isaac Herzog wrote on his Facebook page. "It adds unnecessary oil to the bonfire of hate against Israel in the world."

Zehava Galon, leader of the dovish Meretz party, went further, saying, "This is how apartheid looks."

The proposal even came under fire from backers of the settlements, who said it did not promote their cause and created undue damage to Israel's image.

Netanyahu quickly reversed course amid the criticism, marking an inauspicious start for a government that took office this week and has held exactly one cabinet meeting.

The bus segregation plan, if implemented, would have likely drawn global comparisons to both South African apartheid and the racial segregation on buses that sparked the American civil rights movement. **AP**

ITALY

Moroccan man suspected in Tunisia Bardo museum attack arrested

Nicole Winfield, Rome

ITALIAN police have arrested a Moroccan man on a Tunisian arrest warrant accusing him of helping organize and execute the March 18 attack on Tunisia's Bardo museum that left 22 people dead, authorities said yesterday.

Police said the man had arrived in Italy aboard a migrant boat a month before the attack and was ordered expelled. It's not clear how or if he ever left.

Milan chief anti-terrorism investigator Bruno Megale said only that Abdelmajid Touil was identified in Porto Empedocle, Sicily, on Feb. 17 and was issued an expulsion order.

Abdelmajid was arrested Tuesday evening at the home of his mother in Gaggiano, near Milan, anti-terrorism investigator Bruno Megale told a news conference.

The accusations listed in the Tunisian arrest warrant include premeditated murder, conspiracy to commit attacks against the internal security of the state, belonging to a terrorist group and recruiting and training others to commit terrorist attacks, Megale said.



In this Wednesday, March 18 file photo, a victim is evacuated by rescue workers outside the Bardo museum in Tunis, Tunisia

"He was wanted internationally for co-participation in, planning and executing the March 18 attack on the Bardo museum in Tunis," Megale said.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for attacking the Bardo, Tunisia's leading historical museum, which has a trove of Roman mosaics.

Gunmen opened fire on tourists getting out of buses and then entered the museum, apparently unimpeded, and fired on more tourists inside. Two gunmen were killed in a shootout with police. Four Ita-

lians were among the dead.

A number of people have been arrested in connection with the attack, but the Tunisian Interior Ministry has said the mastermind of the attack is still at large.

Megale said Abdelmajid had been unknown to Italian authorities except for an expulsion order issued by Sicilian authorities in February.

Police were able to identify him in part after his mother reported that her son's passport was missing immediately after the Bardo attack. **AP**

BURUNDI

Parliamentary polls postponed to June amid unrest

Tom Odula and
Gerard Nzohabona, Bujumbura

BURUNDI President Pierre Nkurunziza has postponed parliamentary elections for a week from May 26 until early June, as police yesterday battled hundreds of protesters, wounding at least one person, in continuing unrest over the president's bid for a third term in office.

The parliamentary elections will be held on June 5 in the decree signed on Tuesday, Willy Nyamitwe, the presidential adviser for media, told The Associated Press.

Nkurunziza's decision to delay the elections followed requests from the electoral commission, opposition politicians and the international community, said Nyamitwe.

The postponement comes after a failed coup last week which was triggered by weeks of unrest over Nkurunziza's effort to extend his time in power.

Police were back on the streets yesterday battling protesters, who have continued to demonstrate despite Nkurunziza's order for

an end to the street actions. At least 15 protesters have died since the protests began more than three weeks ago when the ruling party announced Nkurunziza would stand for another term.

Yesterday police shot tear gas canisters and live bullets, some from belted machine guns, mostly in the air, in the unrest hotspot of Musaga, a neighborhood of the capital, Bujumbura. Army personnel remained in the area did not intervene.

A protester who identified himself only as Ndayisaba said he was shot in his leg.

"I was in the frontline of the protests and then felt something warm trickling down my leg and I realized I had been shot," he said while being treated in a local clinic.

Protesters say Nkurunziza's bid for a third term in the June 26 presidential election is illegal because the constitution only allows two five-year terms.

Burundi's Constitution states a president can be popularly elected to two five-year terms. Nkurunziza maintains he can run for a third term because parliament elected him for his first one. **AP**

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what's ON



MACAU HANDOVER HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS
DONATED BY LAU SIN PENG
TIME: 10am-7pm
(Closed on Mondays, No admission after 6:30 pm)
UNTIL: December 31, 2015
VENUE: Multi-function Hall,
Handover Gifts Museum of Macao
ADMISSION: MOP5
(Free on Sundays and public holidays)
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

HISTORICAL PAINTINGS OF MACAU IN THE 19TH CENTURY
TIME: 10am-7pm
(Closed on Mondays, No admission after 6:30 pm)
UNTIL: December 31, 2015
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,
Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
ADMISSION: MOP5
(Free on Sundays and public holidays)
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

INSTALLATION 'VALKYRIE OCTOPUS'
BY JOANA VASCONCELOS
TIME: 24 hours
UNTIL: October 31, 2015
VENUE: MGM MACAU, Av. Dr. Sun Yat Sen, NAPE
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8802 8888

FAM: MACAU ANNUAL VISUAL ARTS EXHIBITION 2015— CHINESE PAINTING AND CALLIGRAPHY CATEGORY
TIME: 10am-8pm
UNTIL: August 2, 2015
VENUE: Old Court Building
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699

HUMAN ROOTS
TIME: 11am-7pm (Closed on public holidays)
UNTIL: July 2, 2015
ADMISSION: Free
VENUE: IAOHIN Gallery, Rua da Tercena No.39A
ENQUIRES: (853) 2892 1908

THE PAST — MASTERS OF MACAU:
AN EXHIBITION OF POETRY, CALLIGRAPHY,
PAINTING AND SEAL-CARVING 2015
TIME: 10am-7pm
(Closed on Mondays, no admission after 6:30 pm)
UNTIL: July 19, 2015
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,
Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
ADMISSION: MOP5
(Free on Sundays and public holidays)
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

Offbeat

DISNEY WORLD TELLS RIDERS TO STOP USING SELFIE STICKS



Disney World is looking to crack down on guests who use selfie sticks on rides at the park.

The Orlando Sentinel (<http://bit.ly/1B9pYRZ>) reports a spokesman said this week guests can bring selfie sticks on the rides but must securely store them.

Disney policy forbids visitors from using the sticks, which can be used to extend cameras out up to 0.9 meters. One ride, Thunder Mountain, has had a number of incidents in which the ride had to be stopped because of selfie-stick use.

Last Friday, Disney World workers posted a "No Selfie Sticks" sign at the Magic Kingdom's Thunder Mountain Railroad.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
18:10	Brazil Avenue (Repeated)
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:30	Miscellaneous
22:10	Brazil Avenue
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Champions League Highlights
23:45	Miscellaneous

cinema

CINETEATRO

21 MAY - 27 MAY



TOMORROWLAND

ROOM 1

2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.45 pm

Director: Brad Bird

Starring: George Clooney, John Walker Britt Robertson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 130min



MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

ROOM 2

(3D) 7.15 pm

(2D) 2.30, 4.45, 9.30 pm

Director: George Miller

Starring: Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron, Nicholas Hoult

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 120min

DRAGON BALL Z: RESURRECTION "F"

ROOM 3

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Tadayoshi Yamamuro

Starring: Ji-tae Yu, Yūsuke Iseya, Ye-ryeon Cha

Language: Japanese (Chinese/English)

Duration: 93min

PITCH PERFECT 2

ROOM 3

(23-25 MAY) 7.30 pm

Director: Elizabeth Banks

Starring: Anna Kendrick, Skylar Astin, Rebel Wilson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 141min

MACAU TOWER

21 MAY - 10 JUN

TOMORROWLAND

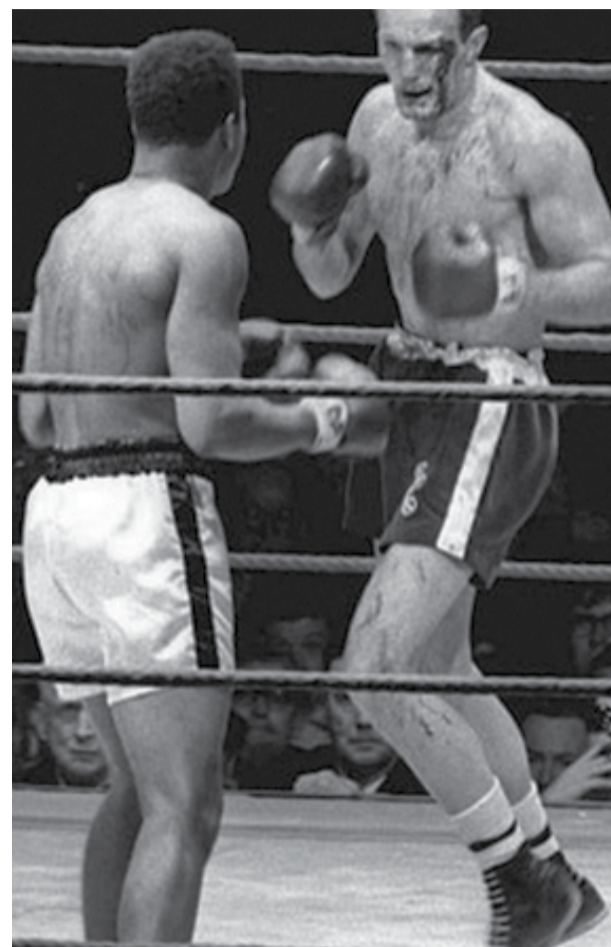
Director: Brad Bird

Starring: George Clooney, John Walker Britt Robertson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 130min

this day in history



1966 COOPER LOSES TO WORLD CHAMP CLAY

American Cassius Clay has beaten Britain's Henry Cooper in the sixth round of a fight in London to retain the world heavyweight championship.

Cooper's hopes of bringing the title back to the UK were dashed one minute and 38 seconds into the sixth round when the referee stopped the fight - a deep gash over his left eye forced him to concede victory to 24-year-old Clay.

About 40,000 spectators watched at the Arsenal football ground in Highbury, north London as Cooper, aged 32, fought bravely with his big left hooks to battle against Clay's quick footwork and fast punches.

After the fight Cooper was sent to Guys Hospital where he had 12 stitches for the cut that dashed his hopes of world victory.

His manager Jim Wicks, said Clay had butted Cooper with his head and should be disqualified.

Clay, a committed Muslim, has recently changed his name to Mohammed Ali.

'I am the greatest!'

The 1960 Olympic champion, famed for proclaiming "I am the greatest!", took the heavyweight title from Sonny Liston in 1964.

He was left unmarked by the fight apart from some swelling on the cheekbone under his left eye - the result of one of Cooper's best punches.

After his win, he went to Cooper's dressing room to see him and said: "I hate to spill blood. It's against my religion."

His manager and "spiritual adviser" Herbert Muhammed said Clay should be proud of his performance.

"It was a wonderful punch," he said. "The same one that broke Liston. It's terrible to see a man destroyed like that. I think the referee should have stopped the fight before."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Slow motion footage of the fight later showed Mohammed Ali had won the fight legitimately and not from a clash of heads. The following year, he lost his boxing licence in the US after he refused to be drafted into the army on religious grounds. In 1970 Mohammed Ali won back his right to box at the Supreme Court. But in 1971 he was beaten by Joe Frazier. He took back the title of world champion in 1974 in a famous fight against George Forman in Zaire known as the "rumble in the jungle". He lost it again briefly to Leon Spinks in 1978 and then won it back the same year to become the only boxer to win the title three times.

During the mid-1980s he contracted Parkinson's disease as a result of blows to the brain.

He was voted BBC Sporting Personality of the Century in 1999.

Henry Cooper retired in 1971, became a TV commentator and was knighted in 1999.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You encounter a new idea or person this morning that fills you with hope and excitement. It may relate to love, work, travel or almost anything, but it definitely inspires you to make a change.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You need to police someone who is out of line - though it may take all your energy to keep them from causing any serious problems. Things are still okay, but you can make them better.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You aren't quite sure what to think today, but you are almost certainly in the right place to change your mind - for the better! One difference of opinion can be shifted into a major alliance.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Your brain is more powerful than any other part of your body today, so make the most of it! You can convince people through the power of argument better than you can by appealing to emotions.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You're in a funny place, and need to adapt yourself to new circumstances. It's one of those days when you're pretty sure that you know you're right, but can't quite convince others.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Your experimental ideas are a little weird to outsiders, but you can tell that you're onto something. Tinker with your routines and see what you learn - things can change for the better today!

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Your social wisdom is a potent force today - so make sure that you're paying attention when people are speaking! You can get some amazing insights into what's motivating them.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Conflict is almost certainly on the agenda for today - so try to engage in it on your own terms! You may find that people are more willing to cede you some authority if you set the stakes high enough.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 It's time to share! Ideas and plans need input to come to completion successfully, and you need to make sure that you're talking to the right people today. Things are sure to run more smoothly later.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Look into your finances - a loan, maybe, or a debt problem that has been bugging you for a while. You've got exactly the right kind of karmic energy to turn a bad situation upside-down!

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Your innate genius is visible to all today - you couldn't hide it if you tried! Share your hottest ideas and see who bites. Those are the folks you need to stick with for the near future.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You need to spend time thinking about the future and what you really want - but there's no need to plot it all out to the last detail! Daydreaming may be the most useful thing you can do.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table for China and World cities, including columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Nothing-but-net sound; 6- Courts; 10- Comin' ___ the Rye; 14- Capital of Vietnam; 15- Spot; 16- Hula hoops?; 17- Word of surrender; 18- Slightly; 19- Circle segments; 20- Born; 21- "Bolero" composer; 23- Island greeting; 24- Saw wood; 26- Steak order; 27- Acquiescence; 29- Fundamental; 31- Chunk; 32- Cobb, e.g.; 33- ___ the season...; 36- Frankie Carle's theme song; 40- Asian holiday; 41- Brit's bottle measure; 42- Hamburg's river; 43- Vice follower; 44- Elephant or warthog, e.g.; 46- Coeur d'___, ID; 48- Brainy bunch; 49- United; 50- Japanese-American; 52- Clavell's "___-Pan"; 55- Cornerstone abbr.; 56- Adoring; 57- Indian term of respect; 59- Network of nerves; 60- Savvy about; 61- Chip away at; 62- Nebraska City's county; 63- Classic cars; 64- Antianxiety drug;

DOWN: 1- Keep away from; 2- Decline; 3- Unending; 4- Impresario Hurok; 5- Sacred place; 6- Interlace; 7- Bone; Prefix; 8- Milky gem; 9- Pink Floyd's Barrett; 10- Aztec god of rain; 11- Wading bird; 12- Nouveau ___; 13- Greek peak; 22- ___ nouveau; 23- Bear; 25- Wyo. neighbor; 26- Old despot; 27- No. 2; 28- Turn on an axis; 29- Iraqi port; 30- "Hard ___!" (sailor's yell); 32- Tennis matches are divided into these; 33- Extended discussion; 34- ___ delighted!; 35- Fortuneteller; 37- Actress Graff; 38- Regal address; 39- Promontory; 43- Buyer; 44- Type of shirt; 45- Like some salons; 46- Personal quality of material belonging; 47- Numbers game; 48- Windows predecessor; 49- Houston hockey player; 50- Not one; 51- A fan of; 53- Verdi opera; 54- Mountain goat; 56- Not against; 58- Altar constellation;



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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
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Jerome Pugmire
Sports Writer

NICO Rosberg would love to take the spotlight away from Lewis Hamilton at this weekend's Monaco Grand Prix with a third straight win on his favorite track.

While Hamilton has just announced a new three-year deal with Mercedes yesterday, Rosberg will return to Monaco — where he grew up — full of confidence after his victory at the Spanish Grand Prix.

It was amid the heat and sharp bends of last year's Monaco GP where relations between the teenage friends and go-karting rivals started turning frosty, with Hamilton infuriated by what he perceived as Rosberg's deliberate attempt to thwart him in qualifying.

Unfazed, Rosberg won from pole position to kick-start his own title challenge, and the German driver is aiming to do that again Sunday.

The Monaco qualifying spat set the agenda for a bitter squabble that rumbled on all season — reaching crisis point at the Belgian GP in August — as Rosberg challenged Hamilton for the title until the last race of the season in Abu Dhabi.

Relations have eased somewhat, and Hamilton firmly shook Rosberg's hand after his win in Spain.

But another win for Rosberg — who is 20 points behind — would start to turn the pressure back on.

"We saw the advantage swing between them last year and I think we will see more of that in 2015," Mercedes head of motorsport Toto Wolff said. "They are mentally tough, resilient and hate to lose. They push each other all the time."

Rosberg's Spanish GP win from pole position was vital to check Hamilton's momentum,

AP PHOTO



Mercedes driver Nico Rosberg

F1

Rosberg looks to pressure Hamilton at Monaco GP

after the British driver had secured four straight poles and won three races.

Since leaving McLaren to join Mercedes in 2013, Hamilton has competed in 43 races, winning 15 and securing a further 11 podium finishes to replace four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel — the only other driver to beat him this season — as the sport's No. 1 driver.

Hamilton, who is in the final year of his contract, signed a new three-year deal yesterday estimated to be worth 90 million pounds (USD140 million).

His remarkable consistency has seen him reach the podium in 21 of the past 24 races since the beginning of last sea-

son, with 14 wins, five second-place finishes and two third places. With 36 career race wins, and given Mercedes' superior speed, he should overtake Vettel's 40 wins this year.

But given how comfortably Rosberg won in Spain two weeks ago, finishing 18 seconds ahead of Hamilton and 45 clear of Vettel, the German has not given up hope of catching Hamilton.

Monaco's tight, sinewy, serpentine-like street circuit is the most difficult to overtake on in F1 along with Spain's Catalunya track, and whoever takes pole will be hard to stop. In a bid to increase the slim chances of overtaking, tire supplier Pirelli will be bringing a new version of its ultra-fast

supersoft tire.

"To be quick on Sunday, you need a smooth weekend with lots of track time, so the drivers can really attack the limits," Wolff said. "We will need to be at our best."

Form is something Red Bull and McLaren lack.

Red Bull dominated F1 when Vettel won four straight titles from 2010-2013, but has been plagued by performance issues this season amid an increasingly uneasy relationship with engine supplier Renault.

Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo, so impressive when winning three races last season, is already on his fourth and last allocated engine for the season. Teams using more than four engines per driver over a season

■ **Hamilton, who is in the final year of his contract, signed a new three-year deal yesterday**

face grid penalties.

McLaren has made its worst ever start to the season — no points from five races — since rekindling its once-successful partnership with Honda and despite boasting two F1 champions in Jenson Button and Fernando Alonso. **AP**

RUGBY

Burgess, Ashton picked in England's World Cup training squad

SAM Burgess was called into England's training squad for the Rugby World Cup yesterday after barely half a year in the 15-man game following his switch from rugby league.

Winger Chris Ashton was recalled after missing the last two Six Nations, while 20-year-old forward Maro Itoje was one of five uncapped players to make the cut when coach Stuart Lan-

caster announced a 50-man group.

Toulon flanker Steffon Armitage failed to earn a call-up, despite his continued strong form for the reigning three-time European champions, as Lancaster stuck to England's policy of not picking overseas-based players.

The squad will be trimmed to 31 names on Sept. 7.

Burgess began his union career in November after his high-profile departure

from Australian side South Sydney Rabbitohs in the NRL, and has played at center and as a flanker. He has fared better in the back row, although England looks to be selecting Burgess more on reputation and his leadership qualities rather than on form.

England prefers him as a center, and his chances of making the final squad were improved when Manu Tuilagi, who plays in midfield, was told

last week he will not be considered for selection following his conviction for assaulting a taxi driver and two female police officers in a late-night incident in April.

Ashton established a reputation as the best finisher in the English game after an excellent start to his international career in 2010, but doubts over his defensive game led him to being dropped by Lancaster for much of

the last 18 months.

His only international appearances came as a replacement in two tests against New Zealand last June, when England sent a weakened squad.

Itoje, who can play as a lock or a flanker, was captain of the England side that won the under-20 world championship last year, and has forced his way into the starting team at Saracens. Like with Burgess, Itoje's versatili-

ty could prove key to his chances of being included in the final squad.

The other uncapped players are Burgess, flyhalf Henry Slade, center Elliot Daly, and hooker Luke Cowan-Dickie.

Ben Foden, Joe Simpson, Ben Morgan and Tom Croft were not included because of injury but could come into late consideration.

The provisional squad will gather on June 22. England plays warm-up matches against France (home and away), and Ireland at Twickenham before the World Cup on home soil.

England's first pool game is against Fiji on Sept. 18. **AP**

opinion

Views on China

William Pesek, Bloomberg

CHINA NEEDS A GROWN-UP CENTRAL BANK

Zhou Xiaochuan is governor of the People's Bank of China. But among some financial types, he's earning another, less enviable title: the killer of weekends.

On May 10, Zhou announced a surprise interest rate cut, forcing anyone with a stake in the Chinese economy to put a premature end to what had likely otherwise been a day off. Even worse, the move leaked hours earlier on social media, adding to what Deutsche Bank calls an unnecessary "atmosphere of alarm" in the global economy. It was just the latest example of the PBOC's penchant for making surprise moves on Friday, Saturday or Sunday evenings – or, in one instance in 2010, on Christmas Day – with zero warning and little explanation.

All this raises a troubling question: Is China's central bank up for the responsibility of helping steer the world's second biggest economy? The available evidence suggests the answer is no.

There are two main problems with the PBOC's erratic behavior. First, it erodes the effectiveness of Zhou's policies. On May 11, the first trading day after the PBOC said it was trimming its one-year lending rate by 25 basis points to 5.1 percent, financial markets gyrated. After scouring for details from an array of media, traders simply had no idea what Zhou was trying to accomplish. Had the PBOC provided deeper insight into where it wanted to guide borrowing costs, and why, financial markets might have worked in tandem.

"The resulting confusion and asymmetry in information flows are not in PBOC's interest," Angela Beibei Bao, an analyst at New York research firm Rhodium Group, told Bloomberg News.

Second, Beijing's impetuosity impairs any hope it has of playing a leadership role in the global financial system. No serious observer expects the PBOC to mimic the Federal Reserve or European Central Bank. But, as China's clout in the international economy rises, it has a responsibility to adopt a decision-making style that avoids spooking markets.

Take China's push to transform the yuan into one of the world's five main reserve currencies. Zhou has been lobbying the International Monetary Fund to add the yuan to its Special Drawing Rights system along with the dollar, euro, yen and British pound. That goal is sensible given Beijing's status as the biggest holder of currency reserves (USD3.7 trillion). But, given the country's propensity for springing monetary surprises, the IMF is unlikely to grant recognition to China as a "safe haven" from global risks.

It doesn't help that China has also earned a reputation for lacking financial transparency. The International Monetary Fund, Standard & Poor's and McKinsey have gotten accustomed to working around the questionable debt figures regularly issued by the Chinese government. But hardly anyone feels comfortable estimating the size of China's shadow-banking industry and gold reserves. (Beijing treats the latter as a state secret.)

Zhou has been making efforts to reform the Chinese system. In 2013, he began publishing data on the bank's liquidity-management efforts. More recently, the PBOC has issued occasional statements to the public, though they tend to elaborate on the meaning of the bank's mandate – not what efforts Zhou is organizing to meet it.

There are some concrete steps the PBOC could take to further improve its reputation, beginning with the creation of a reliable system for communicating policy changes. Although it's not officially a Group of Seven power, it should begin scheduling regular rate-decision dates – and Zhou should consider making public statements on policy shifts – like the world's other major economies.

It would be better, of course, if the Communist Party gave the PBOC the independence it needs to make difficult policy decisions.

Unfortunately, that's a nonstarter in President Xi Jinping's China. The PBOC's problems with transparency are an unfortunate offshoot of Beijing's broader obsession with secrecy. So for all the talk of China becoming a mature global power, the country seems destined, in the immediate future, to remain a financial black box – one where investors will still be obliged to constantly check their BlackBerrys on the weekends.

THE BUZZ SPAIN'S PRINCESS LEONOR BREAKS TRADITION WITH 1ST COMMUNION

Princess Leonor, heir to the Spanish throne, has celebrated her first communion in a low-key ceremony that broke with tradition.

First communions have long been major social occasions for the Spanish crown. The event has always been held in the royal palace, with nobody else receiving the sacrament at the same event.

Since King Felipe VI came to the throne last year, he has sought to open up the monarchy and bring it closer to Spaniards.

Leonor, aged 9, took communion yesterday at a suburban Madrid church wearing her school uniform and accompanied by two dozen classmates. The king and Queen Letizia were also present, as were former monarchs Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia.

Hollywood sex abuse documentary screens in Cannes



In this file photo, director Amy Berg poses with Evan Henzi from the film, at the world premiere of "An Open Secret" during DOC NYC, in New York

Jill Lawless, Cannes

A dark side of the movie world has played out on-screen at Cannes in "An Open Secret," a documentary about child sexual abuse that calls itself "the movie Hollywood doesn't want you to see."

The film features interviews with former child actors and models who were abused by agents, managers and other industry figures. The filmmakers hope it will encourage more victims to speak out.

"Once kids see that we stick up for the victims, then that's when I think more people will come forward," Evan Henzi, a former child performer who was abused by his manager, said after the screening.

Henzi said his abuse "started when I was 11 and I didn't come forward until I was 18, and it ruined my entire childhood."

The film is directed by acclaimed documentarian Amy Berg, who made miscarriage-of-justice story "West of Memphis" and the Academy Award-nominated "Deliver us from Evil," about child abuse in the Roman Catholic church.

"An Open Secret" treads a careful legal line, naming only abusers who have been convicted of sex offenses.

One of the interviewees is Michael Egan, a former child actor who filed – and then dropped – a lawsuit accusing "X-Men" director Bryan Singer of sexually abusing him. Singer has denied the claims, and the film does not make allegations against him, though he is named as an acquaintance of digital entertainment entrepreneur Marc Collins-Rector, who was convicted of sex charges involving minors.

"An Open Secret" will have a limited release in 20 U.S.

cities starting June 5, and is seeking foreign buyers in Cannes, where it screened outside the festival selection.

It focuses on a handful of victims who were willing to speak on camera, but former Olympic diving champion Greg Louganis, who is in Cannes to support the movie, said this is "the tip of the iceberg in Hollywood."

"This also extends into the sporting world, too," said Louganis, who has spoken about his own experiences as a victim of sexual abuse.

"There is so much money involved that silence can be bought," he said. "This is about intimidation and having power and control." AP

[The abuse] started when I was 11 and I didn't come forward until I was 18, and it ruined my entire childhood

EVAN HENZI

Bin Laden papers include loving notes, terrorist application

U.S. intelligence officials have released more than 100 documents seized in the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound, including a loving letter to his wife and a job application for his terrorist network.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence says the papers were taken in the Navy commando raid that killed bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011.

One of the documents, translated by intelligence officials, begins with questions similar to a conventional job application: "Do you have hobbies? Have you been convicted of a crime?" But it veers into more chilling territory, asking: "What objectives would you like to accomplish on your jihad path?"

It then asks: "Do you wish to execute a suicide operation?"

The document ends with: "Who should we contact in case you become a martyr?" AP



A translated copy of an application to join Osama bin Laden's terrorist network is photographed in Washington

Station	Air quality
Roadside	10-30 Good
High Density Residential Area	30-50 Good
Ambient	25-45 Good

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

INDONESIA A Japanese man who says he was deceived into carrying someone else's bag on a flight into Indonesia was sentenced to life in prison yesterday for smuggling methamphetamine into the country. Masaru Kawada, 73, was arrested in November at Minangkabau Airport in West Sumatra's capital, Padang, after customs officials found 2.35 kg of crystal methamphetamine in his luggage.



AP PHOTO

UK More than 200 British police swooped down on suspected jewel thieves Tuesday, making arrests in the notorious Hatton Garden heist that took place in London over the Easter weekend. Scotland Yard said seven British men, ranging in age from 48 to 76, are being questioned in a London police station after the morning raids. The men were arrested in north London and in Kent, southeast of the city.

IRELAND Prince Charles offered a historic handshake Tuesday to Gerry Adams, longtime leader of the Irish nationalist Sinn Fein party and reputedly an Irish Republican Army commander when the outlawed group killed the prince's great-uncle, Lord Louis Mountbatten, in 1979. The peacemaking gesture marked the first time that Adams, Sinn Fein's leader since 1983, had ever met a member of the British royal family.

UKRAINE is open to considering proposals to place a ballistic missile-defense system on its territory to ward off the risk of attacks from Russia, a senior Ukrainian defense official said yesterday. So far no one has offered.

IRAQ Thousands of displaced people fleeing from Ramadi and the violence in Iraq's western Anbar province poured into Baghdad on Wednesday after the central government waived restrictions and granted them conditional entry, a provincial official said.

USA A longtime confidant of Hillary Rodham Clinton has been subpoenaed to testify before a special House panel investigating the deaths of four Americans at the U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, according to an official familiar with the probe.