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Macau's Judiciary Police has recorded 214 phone fraud cases in this year's first quarter

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It's the biggest case of its kind ever prosecuted. One that showed yet another way in which the financial world is vulnerable to cybercrime

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WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA A coal mining accident in southern China has left 10 dead and five injured, local authorities said yesterday. The Pu'an county government in Guizhou province said on its website that 56 of those in the mine had safely reached the surface and rescue work was continuing. It wasn't clear whether any miners remained unaccounted for.

PAKISTAN's military says its security forces have arrested a "foreign-sponsored" group of militants who wanted to disrupt this week's Independence Day celebrations by carrying out a suicide attack in the southern city of Karachi.

PAKISTAN A top government official in eastern Pakistan says he has fired a provincial intelligence chief and three senior police officers for failing to act against a gang that blackmailed the families of children it sexually abused.

AFGHANISTAN Authorities recover the corpses of four men kidnapped in eastern Afghanistan last week, while at least eight others are newly abducted.

AP PHOTO



JAPAN A U.S. Army helicopter crashed while landing on a Navy ship during training yesterday off Japan's southern island of Okinawa, injuring seven people and damaging the aircraft, officials said. The H-60 helicopter made a hard landing on the USNS Red Cloud cargo vessel around 30 kilometers east of Okinawa, U.S. Forces Japan said in a statement, adding that the cause was under

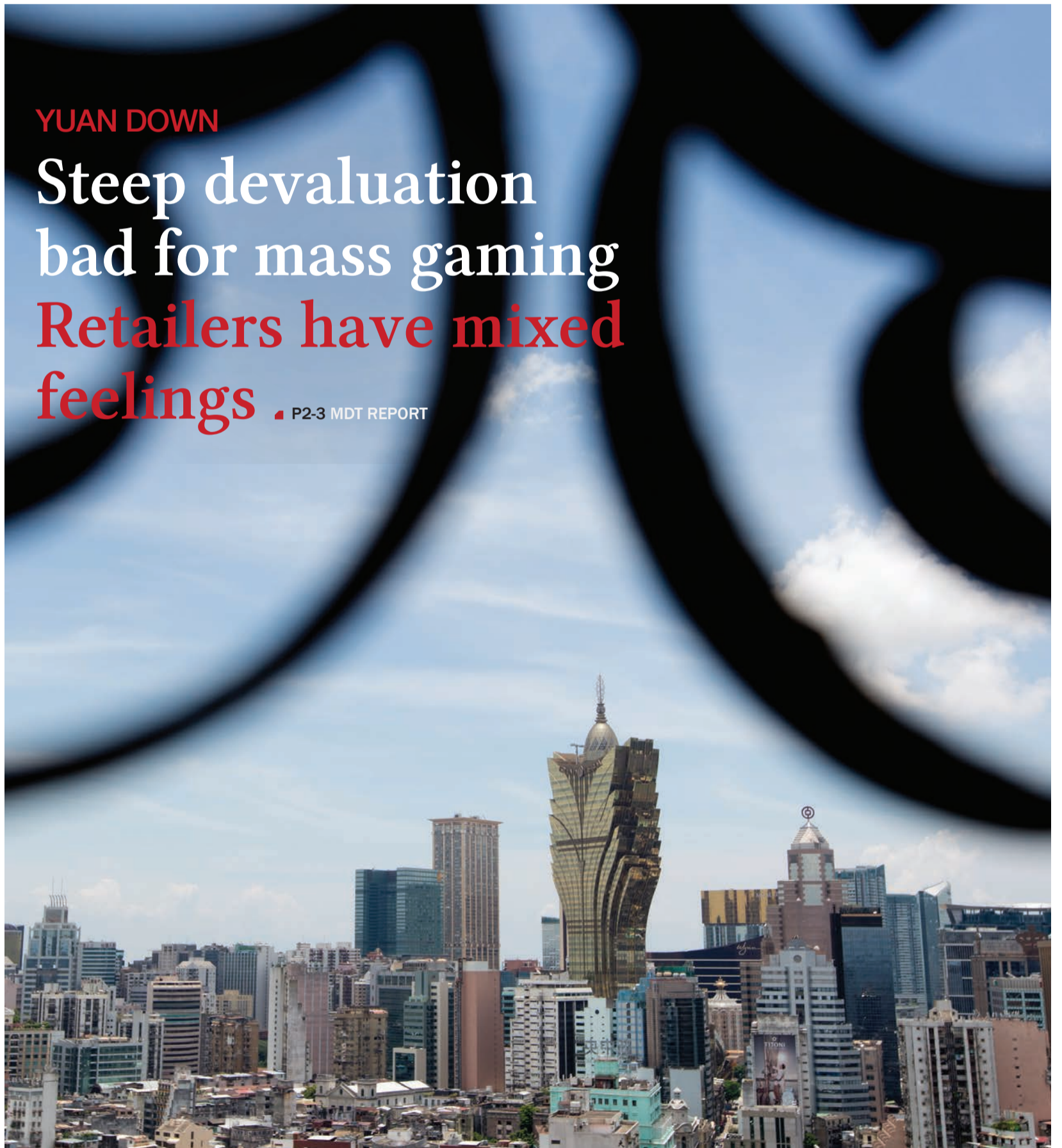
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YUAN DOWN

Steep devaluation bad for mass gaming
Retailers have mixed feelings . P2-3 MDT REPORT



MDT REPORT

Yuan devaluation could negatively impact mass gaming market

Catarina Pinto

MACAU'S mass gaming market could be negatively impacted by China's devaluation of the yuan, according to Union Gaming Research analyst Grant Govertsen.

"Based on the current two-percent decline in value of the renminbi, we would expect the mass market story to be negatively impacted by up to two percent over the coming weeks or months," he told the Times.

China's Central Bank allowed the yuan to drop further against the US dollar yesterday. One day after it had decided to devalue its currency by 1.9 percent, China's Central Bank allowed another drop, this time by 1.6 percent.

The depreciation of the yuan against the US dollar sparked fears of a negative impact on retailers, for instance, in Hong Kong, since the Hong Kong dollar is pegged to the greenback.

Mr Govertsen believes that the implications of this move on Macau's gaming market won't be too serious.

Nevertheless, he stated that, "If we were to think about how this could influence the behavior of Chinese customers to Macau, our view is that it would be the mass market customer who would feel the greatest impact."

The gaming analyst recalled that unlike VIP customers, who have almost unlimited resources, mass market gamblers have a finite amount of money that they would bring to Macau.

"So if your budget is RMB2,000 and one week ago you exchange that for Hong Kong dollars... and then you would come back this week and those same RMB2,000 get you two percent fewer Hong Kong dollars. As a result, your bank roll is a little bit smaller," he added.

Although the yuan's current devaluation is said not to play a big role on Macau's mass gaming industry, risks of an impact on gaming revenue might

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We would expect the mass market story to be negatively impacted by up to two percent over the coming weeks or months

GRANT GOVERTSEN
UNION GAMING RESEARCH

arise if the currency falls further.

"Should the central government decide to let the renminbi devalue even further, then there'd be even greater risk of mass

market revenues declining even more. I think that's what we are seeing today [yesterday] with the stock prices down for the most part around six percent for the big [gaming] operators," Mr Govertsen said.

The gaming analyst acknowledged that the future of Macau is much more mass-market-focused, which makes the industry want to avoid "any pain being brought to the mass market customer." But again, Mr Govertsen pointed out that "Macau has been caught in the cross fire."

"Things like this are entirely out of the gaming operators' and local government's control," he stressed.

Local economist and president of the Institute for European Studies of Macau, José Luís Sales Marques, believes that Macau's gaming sector will not be greatly impacted by the yuan's devaluation for the interim.

"Even with a three- or four-percent devaluation... the ef-

fect, by itself, wouldn't be too grim. But, of course, if this adjustment continues, then it's a different story," he told the Times.

Mr Sales Marques stressed that, so far, it doesn't appear that such a devaluation will have a great impact on Macau's mass market specifically. But he acknowledged that there's a potential psychological effect that could come into play. "We'll be looking into what kind of influence people think this will have in the Chinese economy; what the expectations toward Chinese businesses' and economic development are," he recalled. "It's difficult to foresee what's going to happen," he added.

"I think we need to be on the alert but there's no need to draw hasty conclusions. But, of course, this is no incentive for Macau's tourism and gaming development," he acknowledged.

Furthermore, Mr Sales Marques does not believe that mainland Chinese tourists will think twice before traveling or buying goods here.

Bloomberg reported that Chinese policy makers added to the pain for international companies when they decided to devalue the yuan by the biggest amount in two decades, causing a slump in shares of European luxury companies.

Louis Vuitton sales in China, Macau and Hong Kong fell about 10 percent in the second quarter, according to Paris-based LVMH.

The devaluation of the yuan means that Chinese travelers' purchasing power outside China will be hurt, says Alessandro Migliorini, an analyst at Mirabaud Securities LLP. "What really counts is what lies beneath the decision to devalue the yuan," he said. "The most significant worry is the big picture: that China's economy is weakening."

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MDT REPORT

Mixed feelings among local retailers over weakened renminbi

LOCAL small and medium-sized retailers have generally shrugged off the news of China's decision to devalue its currency, announced by the Central government on Tuesday, while jewelers and watch-sellers expressed concerns over the weakened Chinese yuan, the Times learned. At least three pharmacies located nearby the Border Gate, of which the clientele are comprised largely of main-

land buyers, downplayed Beijing's currency devaluation policy. Their owners don't believe it will lower the mainlanders' purchasing power. "No, at least it's still higher than Hong Kong dollars and Macau patacas," said Andy Lam, owner of Farmácia Espirito in reference to the current set of exchange rates. "The currency's advantage over the other two is still there." Helen Chan, who is the ow-

ner of another drugstore located opposite Lam's, was upbeat about the outlook of local retailers, saying that business would soon pick up despite the city recording a five-percent drop in total sales in the first quarter. She staunchly dismissed the possible impacts that have been suggested in the wake of this fresh policy. "No worries at all. They have a need for these shops, the mainland's reputation for pharmacies is very low," she said. Echoing the pair's remarks was Tim Wong, who worked for the largest chain pharmacy in the territory. The salesman believed that the fall in the Chinese currency rate was "temporary and would rise again before long." Against the background of

disappointing revenue in the gaming sector, Shirley Chan, who is employed by a large fashion retailing company that operates 12 retailers in the downtown precinct, told the Times that her company saw a 10-percent increase in sales in the first half of the year compared to the equivalent period of last year. "Our customers showed no reaction [to the currency devaluation] in their buying [habits]," said the shop supervisor, adding that she had only recently learnt about the news. "I guess it's because we sell mass market brands." A watch franchise located along San Malo told the Times that some mainland customers were reluctant to purchase her products due to the unfavorable rate of Hong

Kong dollars. "It isn't worth buying things here in Macau," she said anonymously, quoting her customer yesterday morning. Mr. Kuan, who is in charge of a jewelry shop across the avenue, said that his firm "went with the flow" as "there was not much to do about policy changes." He indicated that the store had endured lukewarm sales yesterday. Mr. Yip, who manages Good-year Perfume Centre's local branch, recognized a shift in the firm's market. "Most of the consumers overlook the difference of exchange rates, but what matters is the goods they buy," he said, observing that most of his consumers have moved away from high-end products to less pricey ones. **Staff reporter**

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Hundreds swindled out of joint MOP8.53 million in phone scams

MACAU'S Judiciary Police (PJ) has recorded 214 phone fraud cases in this year's first quarter. In 30 percent of the cases, victims were swindled out of their money, the total of which is said to have reached around MOP8.53 million.

A joint investigation launched by Macau and Taiwan's police authorities led to the arrest of two Taiwan residents in connection to phone fraud charges.

The nature of phone scams varies, but the PJ said there are five highly common types of phone fraud reaching Macau. One of the most famous phone scams features a scammer who pretends to be a family member of acquaintance of the victim. Other scams include convincing the victim that he/she has won a prize.

Last May, police authorities also warned residents of a new telephone scam, in which victims receive calls from conmen pretending to repre-



sent someone in a position of authority from mainland China and asking for their bank account details.

Similar phone scams have been reported in Hong Kong. South China Morning Post reported that phone scams involving scammers posing

as mainland law enforcement officials increased 11-fold in the first five months of this year.

Nineteen people were swindled out of a total of HKD13 million between January and May in the neighboring SAR. **MDT/Lusa**

Alexis Tam keen on solving Macanese doctor exam

THE Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, has acknowledged his surprise in learning that a Macanese doctor, who had completed her degree at the University of Coimbra's Faculty of Medicine, failed to pass an exam that would allow her to work for Macau's public hospital, Radio Macau reported.

Portuguese newspaper Hoje Macau broke the news on Tuesday that a Macanese physician, who completed her General Internal Medicine residency with a 19.6 average (on a 0 to 20 scale) in Portugal, was eager to return to her hometown of Macau and further her career here, but did not pass an exam conducted by Health Bureau (SSM) professionals.

The doctor seemed to have encountered hurdles right from the beginning, when she sent a speculative job application to the SSM director in July last year. The SSM's Human Resources office first responded by saying that there were no vacancies matching her profile, and adding that they did not need specialized health professionals.

She insisted and was later

allowed to sit a conversion exam, so that her academic qualifications would be recognized in Macau.

The doctor claims that there were no Portuguese-speaking physicians or health professionals at her exam. Furthermore, she argued that there were also problems with translation. She eventually failed to pass the exam, and is now taking the case to court.

"I only heard of the case through the newspaper. I was surprised. The doctor is Macanese, a local, and finished her residency with a 19.6 average. I was surprised because we do need doctors. She's from Macau and knows Macau well," Alexis Tam stated, as quoted by Radio Macau.

The Secretary pledged to gather further information on the case. He concluded by saying that, "Upon reading the feature story, I called the Health Bureau's head, Lei Chin Ion, for more information because I was surprised. We need to give [more] opportunities to locals (...) The lady has appealed [the decision]. I think we can still solve the case." **CP**

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MACAU has developed its first genome database, which will be used to identify the underlying risks of genetic diseases in the local population, an innovative move that researchers believe would be informative and beneficial to the rest of the world.

The medical breakthrough in the region, led by scholars at the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) and from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, was believed to serve as a beneficial reference to healthcare authorities in formulating policies to prolong locals' lifespans.

With the help of the data collated and stored in the system, authorities would be able to pinpoint the particular varieties of diseases to which people of this region are genetically prone, thereby devising corresponding approaches in order to reduce the occurrence of those illnesses among them.

"This is something not done in other regions across the globe. It's conducive to developing medical planning, hospitals and specialist physicians [training] in the future," said Dr Manson Fok, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences at MUST, after a media conference at which the results of a year

Breakthrough genome database launched for public healthcare policies



This is conducive to developing medical planning, hospitals and specialist physician [training] in the future

DR MANSON FOK
MUST

of hard work were formally presented.

Dr Gregory Cheng, hematology and oncology consultant at the university's hospital, reassured the public that the data

compiled would not necessarily translate into a message suggesting that locals were doomed to specific sicknesses.

"If you have a high genetic

risk, for example, it does not mean you're guaranteed to get the disease, so don't scare yourself to death," he explained in English.

The medical expert stressed that the objective of this analysis, which is currently in its preliminary stage and involves over 1,000 samples extracted from local Chinese youth, was to "offset the inherent shortcomings [associated] with acquired or environmental factors."

Drawing on similar research assignments such as the International Hapmap Project and the Thousand Genome Project targeting European, American and mainland Chinese populations, the test will continue in other phases with the aim of gleaning more data from a dataset comprising various ages, genders and ethnicities, moving towards a more

comprehensive and representative database.

The experts estimated that it would take at least two years to reach their expected volume of at least 20,000 samples in the following stage. This would still occur in conjunction with the university in the neighboring special administrative region.

The initial findings of the research concluded that Chinese locals are more likely to develop lung, breast, ovarian and prostate cancers with lower risks of Alzheimer's and other neurological diseases, out of a total of 16 illnesses tested in comparison to people from northern China, Europe and America.

According to the figures also provided by the scholars, the observed incidence rate in 2012 described a similar trend of diseases among locals. **Staff reporter**

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Q&A AT THE AL

Chui 'cautiously optimistic' on gaming, tourism

Brook Yang

THE Chief Executive (CE) Chui Sai On attended a Q&A session at the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday answering a total of 32 lawmakers' inquiries covering concerns over industrial development, regional cooperation, urban renewal and planning, housing and social welfare, medical and judicial systems reform, as well as waste disposal.

In light of the city's "new economic normal" where gaming revenue has continued to decline for 13 straight months, several lawmakers questioned whether the government's administration capacity, fiscal management and austerity plan, as well as its strategies for tourism economy and population capacity, would be adequate to cope with the dynamics and aggravating challenges.

In response, Chui said that the



administration "remains cautiously optimistic" for the gaming industry, as Macau still "stands high and competitive amongst world's gaming economies" whilst maturing with diversified entertainment and services. He recognized "the numbers have gone back to a stable level after a decade going upward," and that "the public fi-

nance surplus recorded in the first half of this year is basically up to the goal, with MOP 25.2 billion."

He further assured lawmakers that the government's investment plan with the fiscal reserve would be "not only capital-guaranteed and profitable but also safe." Although no specific projects have been chosen, he revealed the initial amount to be invested in Guangdong is estimated between 10 billion and 20 billion yuan.

Meanwhile, Chui stressed, "the government still needs to observe the revenue fulfillment for the second half of the year, but that will not impede its push for economic diversification, regional cooperation and non-gaming elements." He added that key supports would include supporting the local MICE industry to bid for hosting international conferences.

The Chief Executive further indicated "the revenue gap between gaming and non-gaming sectors

have narrowed as being reflected in the statistics." Noting that non-gaming gross revenues had reached over MOP190 billion last year while gaming revenue stood at MOP350 billion, he stressed the government would continue bridging the gap.

Meanwhile, the authorities are expected to complete a preliminary draft interim review on gaming concessions at the end of next month, and will consult the public's opinion when it is ready at year-end.

Chui explained, "the review looks into eight aspects including the gaming industry's impacts on local economy, SMEs' business environment, society and livelihood, incorporation of non-gaming elements, concessionaires and operators' performance of contract, business situation, law compliance and social responsibility fulfillment."

As for lawmakers' inquiries about the city's strategies to boost its tourism economy, Chui revealed the government is now studying how to match Macau to its goals and platform roles, and within this year will announce and roll out tasks of the newly established committee for accelerating the territory's steps towards becoming a world tourism and leisure center.

Regarding Macau's reception capacity, Chui acknowledged "the city tends to be crowded during holidays, but the overall tourist arrivals of 31 million in a year didn't come easily." He added the MSAR will fully discuss with Beijing to "make sure visitor arrivals won't exceed the city's upper limit of capacity." Moreover, he said the government has drafted a report that suggests how Macau could play to its strength in the country's "Road and Belt" initiatives, which will be released for the lawmakers' reference next month.

CE pledges action on urban renewal within the year

AS several lawmakers slammed the government's postponement of much-needed restructuring and renewal in the old districts, the Chief Executive yesterday pledged that the Urban Renewal Committee would be set up within the year and start formulating related laws and regulations six months later.

Moreover, Chui Sai On also revealed the government would launch strategic research on urban development this year and conclude it at year-end. He said by then the drafting of the city's overall planning could begin, which would need three to five years.

Impatient to improve the living quality and business environment in the old neighborhoods, lawmakers urged the CE to give a timetable and introduce plans since the government had decided to reinvent the wheel after years of research.

In response, Chui said, "the preparation for the Urban Renewal Committee's set up is in the final stage, and after that, new regulations need to be

formulated. Only after these two tasks are completed could we decide the renewal model."

He explained that the previous "old neighborhood restructuring" plan was replaced with the "urban renewal" concept because "it couldn't meet the residents' demands and unveiled many unsolved issues in practice."

"The tasks, such as deciding operational model, land resource allocation, execution objects, work content and dedicated laws, all need to be carried out at full speed urgently," he added.

At the Q&A session held at the Legislative Assembly, some lawmakers also urged for employment and retirement security, as well as more support to grassroots public workers. Regarding building a non-mandatory Central Provident Fund scheme for workers, Chui said the draft bill would be submitted to the AL by the end of this year. Moreover, he added that the government is set to fulfill its funding plan of injecting MOP37 billion into the Social Security Fund next year. **BY**

Elderly petitioners scuffle with police

ABOUT a hundred parents from the Family Reunion Association rallied at the entrance of the Legislative Assembly building yesterday to petition the Chief Executive to allow their adult children residing in the mainland to move to the MSAR.

The group of petitioners demanded to enter the AL building to listen in on the CE's Q&A session with lawmakers and to deliver the petition letter to him. Being barred by the police for "not registering the rally in advance", and with no government representatives coming out to communicate with them, the group of middle aged and elderly protestors attempted to storm the

entrance.

Jostling then occurred between several of them and the police, during which, three petitioners reported feeling unwell and were sent to the hospital, while one woman was arrested for "having allegedly committed the crime of aggravated disobedience."

The Public Security Police stated it would transfer the arrested woman to the Public Prosecutions Office today. The arrest also provoked ten to twenty association members to rally outside the police station demanding the release of the detainee, with some of them even kneeling down in front of the police at one point. **BY**



Protestors outside the AL building

Public consultation on Estoril revamp extended

The public consultation period on Hotel Estoril's renovations will be extended until September 20, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, told Radio Macau yesterday. While it was initially planned to end on August 20, the public consultation period has been extended for an additional month, as not many people have participated in the two recent public briefing sessions. The Secretary recalled that a total of 19 briefing sessions have been held to ascertain the opinions of associations and experts on the topic of these renovations. However, the general public were not as willing to comment on the subject, he said. The abandoned Hotel Estoril will be transformed into a youth recreation and art center.

MACAU FOUNDATION More funding for the needy, less for the unnecessary

Macau Foundation president Wu Zhiliang stressed yesterday morning that financial support for the region's at-risk communities and for local education initiatives would not be dampened by the lackluster gaming earnings, while the authorities' overall budget remained unaltered. Wu added that the authorities would consider reducing grants allocated to other groups if their applications for funding are devoid of a specific purpose, and this judgement will be based on whether the austerity measures earlier hinted by the government are implemented. Two weeks ago, Wu already said that local groups should seek to minimize their "unnecessary projects," which may include performances and outbound visits. The fiscal reserve at the foundation, sourced from the gross gaming income, has already culminated in a "huge sum" over the years, he said.

Two SARs' mainland entry permits to be made multi-functional

Mainland travel permits for Hong Kong and Macau residents could see further functions added in the future, according to Lao Ngai Leong, local delegate to the National People's Congress. He has revealed the authorities' efforts to make the permit, known as a "home-returning card," available for ticket purchasing and hotel check-in on the mainland. However, no specific timeframe for the new policy has been set to date. Ngai confirmed to media that the new initiative was met with general approval. It was believed that the permit's usage could be extended in order to cover a wide range of livelihood-oriented facilities and services.

SJM'S profit fell by 54.1 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2015, the company said in a filing yesterday to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. The profit for the six months from the start of the year until June 30 amounted to approximately HKD1.79 billion, compared to approximate figure of HKD3.90 billion from the first semester of 2014.

The board approved an interim dividend of HKD0.10 per ordinary share for the reporting period, which is likely to be paid on September 16 to shareholders who are registered as of September 4. At the same time last year, SJM was paying a dividend of HKD0.22 per ordinary share.

In the first six months of this year, the gaming revenue of Macau's oldest operator fell 40.3 percent year-on-year to approximately HKD26.32 billion, compared to approximately HKD44.11 billion, recorded a year earlier. Adjusted earnings before interest, taxation, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) slipped 49.1 percent to approximately HKD2.26 billion.

SJM Holdings said the group

GAMING

SJM's first-half profit falls 54pct



had maintained "a strong financial position" in the first half, with cash, bank balances and

pledged bank deposits totaling nearly HKD22.83 billion as of June 30.

The company also said in its filing that it was making "good progress" on Lisboa Palace, its

new casino resort located in the Cotai district of Macau. In February the firm had described the scheme as a HKD30-billion project.

"Foundation work was essentially completed by the first quarter of 2015, so the construction on the superstructure and basement levels is now well underway," SJM Holdings said.

Ambrose So, chief executive officer of SJM Holdings, said, "While challenging conditions persisted throughout the first half of the year, SJM has focused on enhancing customer service and controlling costs to the [most precise] extent possible. We remain optimistic about the future of the Macau market, and we are proceeding with the construction of the Lisboa Palace integrated resort on Cotai, on which substantial progress has been made and for which we are on target for completion in 2017." **MDT/Lusa**

REPORT

Melco readies for poor Macau outcome

MELCO Crown Entertainment has confirmed that Studio City International Holdings appointed Moelis and legal firm Kirkland & Ellis "because of the possibility that the table allocation for Studio City's gaming area [in Cotai] may be lower than anticipated," The Australian reported yesterday.

Melco Crown chief executive Lawrence Ho warned last week that a low table allocation would have a "drastic impact" on the company's financial modeling for the project, which is due to open on October 27.

Studio City is 60-percent owned by Melco Crown and 40-percent owned by an entity called New Cotai, the latter of which is, in turn, a vehicle 78-percent owned by Silver Point Capital and 22-percent owned by Oaktree Capital Management.

Melco Crown revealed earlier this year that the project would require a minimum of 400 gaming tables. Otherwise, it would risk being technically



Lawrence Ho

in default with its lenders for a sum of USDUS1.4 billion, loaned for the development. ANZ Bank is a member of the banking syndicate that lent money to the project.

Deutsche Bank said last week that it believed Studio City would receive a similar number of new tables, as granted by the Macau government, to rival operator Galaxy En-

ertainment Group, which was allocated 150.

The statement yesterday from Melco Crown was issued in response to a report published in Debtwire, headlined: "Studio City arouses restructuring advisory interest ahead of likely breaches on expected table quota shortfall".

The Debtwire report said that Studio's City's unsecured bonds had

been "holding up above par" in trading, "mostly in anticipation [of the fact] that the banks would waive or amend the covenants as required".

It also speculated that "Melco would double down if needed", indicating that the group backed by Packer and Ho would continue to support the project. The loans and bonds on Studio City were structured non-recourse to Melco. The report also claimed that Melco would probably face little resistance to winning a relaxation of the loan covenants.

The operator could also transfer tables from its other projects in Macau to make up for the shortfall, but "this would be complicated by the fact it only owns 60 per cent of Studio City," Debtwires report states.

In an interview last week with Macau Daily Times, Lawrence Ho noted that he was "hopeful" that the Macau government, when allocating the number of tables for Studio City's complex, would recognize Melco's contribution to Macau's vision of becoming a world-class tourism destination. "We've always supported the government's vision for Macau. We should be rewarded for this," he said. **PC**

AUSTRALIA

SkyCity eyes Adelaide casino expansion to lure more high rollers

SKYCITY Entertainment Group Ltd. needs to complete development of the Adelaide casino site to attract a bigger share of the Asian high-roller market, Chief Executive Officer Nigel Morrison said.

SkyCity increased turnover from international business by 43 percent to NZ\$9.3 billion (USD6 billion) in the year ended June 30, it said yesterday. Spending by high rollers at its flagship New Zealand casino in Auckland rose 39 percent to NZ\$6 billion, while Adelaide, in South Australia, attracted a quarter of that.

"In Adelaide, we don't have a hotel, we've only just got a couple of good restaurants there now," Morrison said in an interview. "We definitely need a hotel and a more integrated facility in Adelaide to make that a more successful international business destination."

SkyCity has a A\$350

million (\$250 million) project on the drawing board to expand its Adelaide site, including VIP gaming rooms, luxury hotel and fine-dining restaurants that well-heeled gamblers demand. It has made those investments at Auckland and its other sites, and increased efforts to compete for the high-roller business which can choose from Macau, Singapore, Sydney and many other cities.

"We have taken on more people in Southeast Asia marketing that business, promoting our properties and bringing those players to Auckland and Darwin and Queenstown," said Morrison. "The pie is getting bigger. There's still good upside in that business."

Full-year net income rose 31 percent to NZ\$128.7 million, SkyCity said today. Operating earnings in Auckland jumped 14 percent, but fell 19 percent in Adelaide. **Bloomberg**



A poster board detailing an insider trading scam involving hacking is displayed at the start of a news conference in Newark, N.J.

Hacking ring accused of making USD100m on stolen news releases

David Porter, Newark, N.J.

IN late October 2013, Panera Bread Co., the national chain of restaurants that specializes in healthy soups and baked goods, prepared a news release to announce it was adjusting its earnings expectations downward for the recently begun fourth quarter. The release undoubtedly was one of many sent by publicly traded companies to business news services for publication. This one was different, though. As an unsuspecting investing public awaited the announcement, federal authorities say a

group comprising computer hackers and stock traders already had seen the release in the computer system of Marketwired, the Toronto business newswire. Using the crucial information in the release, the group allegedly made USD17 million worth of trades and orders betting Panera's stock would lose value once the news went public. They were correct, and for their efforts walked away with nearly \$1 million in profit, according to a criminal indictment unsealed Tuesday against nine people in the U.S. and Ukraine. The international hacking scheme allegedly raked in \$100

million between 2010 and 2015. It is being called the biggest case of its kind ever prosecuted, and one that demonstrated yet another way in which the financial world is vulnerable to cybercrime. The Securities and Exchange Commission also brought civil charges against the nine plus 23 other people and companies in the U.S. and Europe. The case "illustrates the risks posed for our global markets by today's sophisticated hackers," SEC chief Mary Jo White said. "Today's international case is unprecedented in terms of the scope of the hacking at issue,

the number of traders involved, the number of securities unlawfully traded and the amount of profits generated." The nine people indicted include two people described as Ukrainian computer hackers and six stock traders. Prosecutors said the defendants made \$30 million from their part of the scheme. Authorities said that beginning in 2010 and continuing as recently as May, they gained access to more than 150,000 press releases that were about to be issued by Marketwired; PR Newswire in New York; and Business Wire of San Francisco. The press releases contained earnings figures and other corporate information. The defendants then used roughly 800 of those news releases to make trades before the information came out, exploiting a time gap ranging from hours to three days, prosecutors said. Perhaps even more alarming was the assertion by prosecutors that much of the group's ability to illegally tap into the news services' computer systems came via "phishing," a well-known practice in which hackers send an email with a seemingly innocuous link that, if clicked on, can eventually lead to the divulging of the user's login and password information. The case should sound a warning for anyone who uses email in a work setting, Paul Fishman, U.S. attorney for New Jersey, said Tuesday. "Every employee of every company has to be vigilant about the emails they get from people who look like their friends or acquaintances, urging them to click on a link," Fishman said. "They should say to themselves every time that happens, 'That seems like a really bad idea.'" A strong earnings report or other positive news can cause a company's stock to rise, while disappointing news can make it fall. The conspirators typically

used the advance information to buy stock options, which are essentially a bet on the direction a stock will move, authorities said. The hackers were routinely paid a cut of the profits, prosecutors contended. Five defendants were arrested in the U.S. on Tuesday, and warrants were issued for four others in Ukraine. Among those charged were Pavel, Igor and Arkadiy Dubovoy. Authorities said they

■ Hackers broke into the computers of newswire services that put out corporate press releases, trading on the information before it was made public

are related but didn't say how. Arkadiy and Igor were arrested at their homes in Alpharetta, Georgia. Pavel was believed to be in Ukraine. It wasn't immediately known whether the defendants had attorneys. Business Wire said it has hired a cybersecurity firm to test its systems and make sure they are protected. PR Newswire said it is cooperating with the investigation, and added: "We take security very seriously and are dedicated to protecting our information and systems." Marketwire did not immediately respond to a request for comment. **AP**

corporate bits

MID-AUTUMN OFFERS AT CITY OF DREAMS AND ALTIRA MACAU

"Jin Ying" and "R Bar" from City of Dreams, together with "Ying" from Altira Macau, are presenting a series of moon cake gift box and hamper selections. Traditional Chinese or special flavor moon cakes are available in City of Dreams and Altira Macau with special offers, while premium hampers of deluxe Chinese gift selections are also offered. Altira Macau's signature Chinese restaurant "Ying" is also launching a special Mid-Autumn dinner menu of Chinese delicacies while allowing families to enjoy fireworks with views of the Macau Peninsula. In addition, Altira Macau's other signature restaurants "Aurora", "Kira" and "Tenmasa" are also introducing special cuisines during the annual fireworks festival.



HOTEL OKURA MACAU MOON CAKE PROMOTION



In celebration of the upcoming Mid-Autumn festival, Hotel Okura Macau has created a selection of elegantly designed moon cakes. The premium moon cake

selections include "nectarous red bean", "sweet lotus egg yolk", and "supreme Chinese ham" flavors. For an order of 50 boxes or above, complimentary delivery service will be offered

within Macau. The moon cakes will be available from September 14th to 27th at the Nagomi Pavilion & 28/F Function Room between 10am and 10pm.

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Ambassador outlines limits to freedom of navigation

Jim Gomez, Manila

CHINA respects freedom of navigation in the disputed South China Sea but will not allow any foreign government to invoke that right so its military ships and planes can intrude in Beijing's territory, the Chinese ambassador said.

Ambassador Zhao Jianhua said late Tuesday that Chinese forces warned a U.S. Navy P-8A not to intrude when the warplane approached a Chinese-occupied area in the South China Sea's disputed Spratly Islands in May. A CNN reporter who was on board the plane, which had taken off from the Philippines, reported the incident then.

"We just gave them warnings, be careful, not to intrude," Zhao told reporters on the sidelines of a diplomatic event in Manila.

Washington, however, does not recognize any territorial claim by any country in the South China Sea, a policy that collides with the position of China, which claims virtually the entire sea.

When asked why China shooed away the U.S. Navy plane when



Protesters shout as they gather at the Chinese consulate in the financial district of Makati city, east of Manila, Philippines, Friday, July 24, to protest China's artificial building of islands in the South China Sea

it has pledged to respect freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, Zhao outlined the limits in China's view.

"Freedom of navigation does not mean to allow other countries to intrude into the airspace or the sea which is sovereign. No country will allow that," Zhao said. "We say freedom of navigation must be observed in accordance with international law. No freedom of navigation for warships and airplanes."

Zhao also repeated an earlier pronouncement by Beijing that China's use of land reclamation to create new islands at a number of disputed Spratly reefs has ended. China, he said, would now start constructing facilities to support freedom of navigation, search and rescue efforts when accidents occur, and scientific research.

"When we say we're going to stop reclamation, we mean it," Zhao said.

He acknowledged that "necessary defense facilities" would also be constructed.

The U.S. and its allies, including the Philippines, have asked China to stop the massive island construction, saying it has increased tensions in an increasingly militarized area and threatened regional stability. They say the Chinese construction work violates a 2002 regional pact signed by Beijing which urges rival claimants not to undertake new construction or take any step that would worsen tensions. AP

Landslide traps 60 people in mining town

A midnight landslide at a mining community in central China buried several dormitories and homes, leaving more than 60 people missing, local authorities said yesterday.

The provincial government of Shaanxi said 15 dormitories belonging to the Wuzhou Mining Co. were buried along with three homes in the mountainous county of Shanyang, and that 14 people had been rescued.

It said authorities have dispatched more than 700 rescuers to the site, where rocks continued to roll down mountain slopes.

Photos posted by the provincial fire department showed firefighters with sniffer dogs searching for possible survivors. They also used heavy machinery to remove debris.

State broadcaster CCTV said the area was struck



by recent heavy rains.

Rescuers were hampered by steep and rough terrain, and were filling in a stream to build a road to allow heavy machinery better access to the site, CCTV said.

Both Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang ordered all-out rescue efforts and a tho-

rough check of potential hazards.

The company mines vanadium, an element used in steel alloys.

Deforestation and soil erosion are major problems in Chinese mountainous areas, where mining, road construction and logging have stripped slopes of vegetation. AP

Britain's Hammond in Beijing for security, climate talks

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

BRITISH Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said yesterday that an international agreement to limit Iran's nuclear program could give impetus to efforts aimed at curbing North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Hammond, who is in Beijing for talks on security cooperation and climate change, made the comments during a speech to students at elite Peking University. He is to meet with Chinese senior foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi today and visit an Airbus assembly plant in Tianjin.

Calling the Iran agreement reached in Vienna a "major success for multilateral diplomacy," Hammond said there "may be lessons to be drawn around the world including on tackling nuclear proliferation" in North Korea.

Referring to London's signing on as a charter member of the Chinese-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank — despite U.S. opposition — Hammond called Britain China's best partner in Europe. He said there was ample room to explore other areas of cooperation, including in African development, counterterrorism and attacking climate change.

Hammond's talks today are expected to touch on a potential accord at Paris climate change talks in November. Top carbon polluter China has been praised by some for setting a target of capping its emissions before 2030.

However, he also referred to areas where the two nations "don't see eye to eye," singling out the issue of human rights where Britain has been among western nations critical of the ruling Communist Party's repressive tendencies.

China for its part has harshly criticized Britain over a 2012 meeting between Prime Minister David Cameron and exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama, as well as Britain's questioning of Chinese policy in Hong Kong, a former British colony.

Hammond also touched on the sensitive issue of China's claim to virtually the entire South China Sea and its island groups.

"We want to see claims dealt with by rules-based, not power-based solutions in Asia as elsewhere, in a way which is consistent with the long-term peace and stability of the region, with freedom of navigation and overflight and in accordance with international law, including the law of the sea," he said. AP

Joe McDonald and Christopher S. Rugaber, Business Writers

CHINA'S currency fell further yesterday following a surprise change in its exchange rate mechanism that rattled global markets and threatens to fan trade tensions with the United States and Europe.

The central bank said the yuan's 1.9 percent devaluation Tuesday against the U.S. dollar, which was its biggest one-day fall in a decade, was due to changes aimed at making the tightly controlled currency more market-oriented. That raised the prospect of still more declines, which would help struggling Chinese exporters at the expense of foreign competitors and might shore up flagging economic growth.

Yesterday, the yuan dropped another 1.6 percent. In theory, it could drop 2 percent every day given it can trade 2 percent around a rate that is set based on the previous day's closing value.

Until now, China has set the yuan's value each day based on a basket of currencies that is believed to be dominated by the U.S. dollar. That meant the yuan rose as the dollar jumped over the past year, hurting its exporters and raising the threat of politically dangerous job losses. Exports in July plummeted by an unexpectedly steep 8.3 percent from a year earlier.

The People's Bank of China promised Tuesday to keep the exchange rate "basically stable," but yesterday's decline prompted suggestions the yuan is likely to fall further.

The yuan is likely to see "continued strong influence" from the central bank, with Tuesday's change "probably marking the start of an engineered depreciation," said Mizuho Bank in a report.

Many economists cautioned against seeing Beijing's move mainly as an effort to benefit its exporters. They note that China's currency, left to market forces alone, would have declined in value in recent months.

The depreciation "will not change the gloomy picture of global demand," said Vincent Chan of Credit Suisse in a report. "The 2 percent devaluation cannot provide any meaningful help, but it caught the market by surprise."

U.S. stocks tumbled Tuesday, with the Dow Jones industrial average closing down 212 points.

China becomes the third major trader to take actions that lower the value of its currency. Initiatives by Japan and the European Union over the past two years depressed the yen and euro by a wider margin than this week's decline in

AP PHOTO



A Chinese woman poses for photos near a sculpture depicting a Chinese yuan note at an art district in Beijing

Yuan falls for 2nd day after surprise devaluation

the yuan.

The yuan, also known as the renminbi, is allowed to fluctuate in a band 2 percent above or below a rate set by the People's Bank of China based on its currency basket.

The bank said that starting Tuesday, the daily target will be based on the yuan's closing the previous day and information from traders about supply and demand for the currency.

The change presented a dilemma for China's trading partners, who have called repeatedly for Beijing to let market forces set its exchange rate but don't want to see the yuan weaken.

It sparked complaints in Washington, where members of Congress have long complained Beijing manipulates its currency to gain a trade advantage.

"For years, China has rigged the rules and played games with its currency," said U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer. "Rather than changing their ways, the Chinese government seems to be doubling down."

The U.S. Treasury Department's response was more measured.

"China has indicated that the changes announced today are

another step in its move to a more market-determined exchange rate," a department statement said.

The International Monetary Fund said the change "appears a welcome step" to give market forces a bigger role.

■ Yesterday, the yuan dropped another 1.6 pct. It could drop 2 pct every day given it can trade 2 pct around a rate set on the previous day's closing

"The exact impact will depend on how the new mechanism is implemented in practice," said an IMF statement. "We believe that China can, and should, aim to achieve an effectively floating exchange rate system within two to

three years."

The IMF said the latest change would have no effect on the decision about whether to add the yuan to the dollar, the euro, the yen and the British pound in the basket of currencies used to set the value of the Fund's in-house currency, called Special Drawing Rights. The IMF staff recommended last week that China wait until at least October 2016 to join. The Fund's board is due to consider that recommendation in October.

China's economic growth has slowed to an annual rate of just 7 percent, which is healthy for most countries but far below the previous decade's double-digit pace.

The Federal Reserve is expected to boost the short-term interest rate it controls later this year. A rate hike would likely raise the value of the dollar, which has already jumped about 14 percent in value in the past 12 months against a basket of foreign currencies.

The rising dollar has hurt U.S. exporters by making their goods costlier abroad, and China's devaluation could further complicate the Fed's decision on when to raise rates. By making Chinese goods

comparatively cheaper in the United States, a weaker yuan would push already-low U.S. inflation even lower.

The Fed wants to be "reasonably confident" that inflation is returning to its 2 percent target before raising rates. Inflation has risen just 1.3 percent in the past 12 months.

Michael Feroli, an economist at JPMorgan Chase, suggested the dollar's rise poses a concern for some Fed officials, known as doves, who have been reluctant to raise rates. Should the U.S. economy stumble in the coming weeks, "dollar strength would only further embolden the doves at the next meeting" in September, Feroli said.

Still, Feroli said, "we think this a minor stumbling block for a September" rate increase.

USB economist Tao Wang said Beijing would likely move cautiously, but investor expectations of further weakening "could quickly become entrenched" and cause the yuan to "depreciate quite quickly and significantly."

She said that would represent a "sea change in China's exchange rate policy" but would help to support flagging economic growth. **AP**

Kim Tong-hyung, Seoul

SOUTH KOREA

Man critical after self-immolation at 'comfort women' rally

AN 80-year-old South Korean man was unconscious and experiencing breathing difficulties after setting himself on fire during a large anti-Japan protest in Seoul, hospital officials said.

The rally, held in front of the Japanese Embassy and attended by hundreds of people, was staged days before the 70th anniversary of the Allied victory in World War II that freed the Korean Peninsula from Japanese colonial rule.

Kim Sun-min, who was among several people who rushed over to help put out the flames, said he didn't notice the man before he set himself ablaze on a flower bed near the rally. Lumps of burnt cotton and a small glass bottle that reeked of gasoline were found at the scene. The rally continued after the man was taken to the hospital.

The man suffered third-degree burns on his face, neck, upper body and arms and was relying on a breathing machine after his lungs deteriorated, according to an official at Seoul's Hallym University Medical Center, who didn't want to be named, citing office rules.

Police had initially said the

man appeared to have avoided life-threatening injuries.

His motives weren't immediately clear.

Activists since 1992 have organized weekly protests in front of the Japanese Embassy to demand justice for South Korean women who were forced to work as sex slaves for the Japanese military during the war and the gatherings have been mostly peaceful. The turnout was particularly high yesterday as the countries approached the anniversary.

Many South Koreans harbor deep resentment against Japan over its colonial occupation. Hundreds of thousands of Koreans were forced to fight as front-line soldiers, work in slave-labor conditions or serve as prostitutes in brothels operated by the Japanese military during the war.

Such sentiment has strengthe-



A South Korean man, left, sets himself on fire as a woman tries to extinguish him during an anti-Japan rally demanding full compensation and an apology for wartime sex slaves from the Japanese government in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul

ned in recent years over what South Koreans feel as Tokyo's attempts to downplay its wartime conduct and also its terri-

torial claims over a set of small islets occupied by South Korea.

Protests sometimes turn violent. Scuffles with police are

common and demonstrators have severed their own fingers or hurled excrement at the embassy in the past. AP

INDIA

Gov't seeks USD99m damages from Nestle after banning Maggi noodles

Prabhudatta Mishra

INDIA is seeking 6.4 billion rupees (USD99 million) in punitive damages from the local unit of Nestle SA, saying the maker of Maggi instant noodles engaged in "unfair trade practices."

The Department of Consumer Affairs has filed a class-action suit on behalf of a "large number of consumers" for the sale of "defective goods" and a product without the regulator's approval, the government said in a statement. Nestle India Ltd., in a stock exchange filing earlier yesterday, said it could comment only after receiving a notice.

The lawsuit deals another blow to Switzerland-based Nestle, which is battling an order to recall its popular Maggi noodles from Indian stores after the local food regulator said lead content in the snack exceeded permissible limits. Nestle India on July 29 reported its first quarterly loss in at least 15 years after halting sales of its best-selling product.

Nestle dominates the noodle market in the world's second-most populous country, with a 63 percent share in 2014, six times as much as its nearest rival ITC Ltd., according to Euromonitor data.

Maggi noodles have been sold in India for the past three decades. Scores of Indians, who started off



Maggi noodles were hugely popular across India and the three-decade old brand had an 80 pct share of the country's instant noodle market. Dhiraj Singh / Bloomberg

snacking on it as kids and then in college, now feed it to their own children.

The government, in its statement, said it was seeking the damages on behalf of Maggi consumers because of "gross negligence, apathy and callousness on the part" of the company.

Himanshu Manglik, Nestle India's spokesman, referred to yesterday's exchange filing, saying the company had nothing more to add. Nestle said it hadn't received any official notice about the complaint filed with the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India ordered the recall of Maggi packs from store shelves early June after its tests showed excess lead, findings that Nestle is challenging in the Bombay High Court.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said yesterday its own tests didn't find unsafe levels of lead in Maggi instant noodles made by Nestle and sold in the U.S. Other regulators including from Singapore, Canada and the U.K. have also tested and found India-made Maggi noodles to be safe for consumption. Bloomberg

MALAYSIA

Opposition party sues PM over USD700m in donations

A Malaysian opposition party yesterday filed a civil lawsuit against Prime Minister Najib Razak for alleged election offenses involving USD700 million in his bank accounts.

The anti-graft agency recently announced the money, most of which was received ahead of March 2013 general elections, came from donations and not from state investment fund 1MDB.

The People's Justice Party said the money was 26 times above the amount that Najib's ruling National Front coalition was allowed to spend in the elections. The National Front, which has ruled since independence from Britain in 1957, won the elections but lost the popular vote for the first time to an opposition alliance that includes the People's Justice Party.

The party's vice president Nurul Izzah Anwar said the lawsuit will reveal "all kinds of bribes and corrupt tactics" allegedly used by the National Front to win the elections. With evidence of corrupt transactions, she said the results of the 2013 general elections should be nullified and new polls should be called.

The party also named 1MDB, the Election Commission and Adnan Mansor, the secretary-general of Najib's ruling Malay party, in the lawsuit.

Government officials couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

1MDB, set up in 2009 by Najib who still chairs its advisory board, has debts of 42 billion ringgit (\$10.4 billion) after its energy ventures abroad faltered. Critics have voiced concern about 1MDB's massive debt and lack of transparency.

The 1MDB crisis has partly contributed to the Malaysian currency crashing to 4 ringgit to the dollar yesterday, the lowest since the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis. AP



Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Rodham Clinton

USA

Clinton relents, gives up possession of private email server

Ken Dilanian
Intelligence Writer, Washington

HILLARY Rodham Clinton has relented to months of demands that she relinquish the personal email server she used while secretary of state,

directing the device be given to the Justice Department.

The decision announced Tuesday (early yesterday, Macau time) advances the investigation into the Democratic presidential front-runner's use of a private email account as the nation's top diplomat, and whether

classified information was improperly sent via and stored on the home-brew email server she ran from her house in suburban New York City.

Clinton campaign spokesman Nick Merrill said she has "pledged to cooperate with the government's security inquiry, and if

there are more questions, we will continue to address them."

It's not clear if the device will yield any information — Clinton's attorney said in March that no emails from the main personal address she used while secretary of state still "reside on the server or on back-up systems associated with the server."

Clinton had to this point refused demands from Republican critics to turn over the server to a third party, with attorney David Kendall telling the House committee investigating the deadly 2012 attacks that killed four Americans in Benghazi, Libya, that "there is no basis to support the proposed third-party review of the server."

The email controversy has proved a distraction to Clinton's presidential campaign. Polls show her with a commanding lead over her Democratic presidential rivals. But the issue of her use of a personal email server has given Republicans an opportunity to rekindle questions about whether she is trustworthy and they hope that will weaken her as a potential candidate in the November 2016 election.

Republicans jumped on Tuesday's decision to change course, as well as the additional disclosure that two emails that traversed Clinton's personal system were subsequently given one of the government's highest classification ratings.

"All this means is that Hillary Clinton, in the face of FBI scrutiny, has decided she has run out of options," Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus said in a statement. "She knows she did something wrong and has run out of ways to cover it up."

Federal investigators have begun looking into the security of Clintons' email setup amid con-

cerns from the inspector general for the intelligence community that classified information may have passed through the system.

There is no evidence she used encryption to shield the emails or her personal server from foreign intelligence services or other potentially prying eyes. Kendall has said previously that Clinton is "actively cooperating" with the FBI inquiry.

In March, Clinton said she exchanged about 60,000 emails in her four years in the Obama administration, about half of which were personal and were discarded. She turned over the other half to the State Department last December.

The department is reviewing those emails and has begun the process of releasing them to the public.

"As she has said, it is her hope that State and the other agencies involved in the review process will sort out as quickly as possible which emails are appropriate to release to the public, and that the release will be as timely and transparent as possible," Merrill said Tuesday.

Also Tuesday, Kendall gave to the Justice Department three thumb drives containing copies of work-related emails sent to and from her personal email addresses via her private server.

Kendall gave the thumb drives, containing copies of roughly 30,000 emails, to the FBI after the agency determined he could not remain in possession of the classified information contained in some of the emails, according to a U.S. official briefed on the matter who was not authorized to speak publicly.

The State Department previously had said it was comfortable with Kendall keeping the emails at his Washington law office. **AP**

Chief fires Texas officer who killed unarmed 19-year-old

Emily Schmall, Arlington

A police officer who killed an unarmed college football player during a suspected burglary at a Texas car dealership was fired Tuesday (yesterday in Macau) for making mistakes that the city's police chief said caused a deadly confrontation that put him and other officers in danger.

Arlington officer Brad Miller, 49, could also face criminal charges once police complete their investigation, Police Chief Will Johnson said.

Christian Taylor's death came two days before the anniversary of the death of Michael Brown, an

unarmed, black 18-year-old who was fatally shot by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. Brown's death helped spur protests and a nationwide "Black Lives Matter" movement to demand reforms to how police treat minorities.

Called to the scene of a suspected burglary early Friday morning, Miller pursued 19-year-old Christian Taylor through the broken glass doors of a car dealership showroom without telling his supervising officer, Johnson said.

Instead of setting up a perimeter around the showroom, Miller confronted Taylor and ordered him to get down on

the ground, Johnson said. Taylor did not comply. Instead, he began "actively advancing toward Officer Miller," Johnson said.

Miller's field training officer, who had followed Miller into the showroom, drew his own Taser. The training officer heard a single pop of what he thought was Miller's Taser, but Miller actually had drawn his service weapon and fired it at Taylor, who is believed to have been 2.1 to 3 meters away, Johnson said. After Taylor continued to approach, Miller fired his gun three more times.

"Decisions were made that had catastrophic outcomes," Johnson said.

The Arlington Municipal Patrolman's Association issued a statement Tuesday night decrying Johnson's decision.

An attorney for Miller did not have an immediate comment on Johnson's announcement. Taylor's family did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Taylor, who was black, was a graduate of an Arlington high school and a football player at Angelo State University in West Texas. Miller is white.

At a protest Tuesday night outside the Arlington police headquarters, about 60 demonstrators demanded that Miller be charged with a crime. **AP**



This photo provided by the Arlington Police Department shows police officer Brad Miller

Nicholas Paphitis
and Dalton Bennett, Kos

EUROPEAN MIGRANT CRISIS

Refugees stream into Greek island, meet wretched conditions

DOZENS of people from the Middle East reached the Greek island of Kos from nearby Turkey yesterday, joining thousands already camped in wretched conditions on what is normally a tourist playground known for its sun and beaches.

Overwhelmed and unprepared for the unprecedented influx, authorities on the eastern Aegean Sea island have been heavily criticized for their treatment of the migrants — mostly refugees from Syria.

At least two rubber boats made landfall just before dawn in the Psalidi coastal area, and dozens of men, women and children set off on the four-kilometer trudge to the island capital of Kos.

Their first question was where they had landed — which provoked strong laughter as Kos has an obscene meaning in Arabic.

“I feel good to be here, but I still miss my family” in Syria, said Omar Mohammad, a 25-year-old English literature graduate from Aleppo.

He said the three-hour crossing from Turkey was his third attempt to reach Greece in four days. On two occasions, Turkish officials had prevented him from leaving.

Shortly later, an Italian patrol boat participating in a European border watch mission brought in about 50 people rescued at sea — tying up beside dozens of long inflatable dinghies seized by the coast guard.

Struggling with its worst postwar financial crisis, Greece has been overwhelmed by the wave of refugees and economic migrants, more than 125,000 of whom have reached the eastern



Policemen try to disperse hundreds of migrants by spraying them with fire extinguishers, during a registration procedure which was taking place at the stadium of Kos town

Aegean islands this year — a 750 percent increase over 2014.

The country is Europe's main entry point for people arriving by sea, as the alternative route from north Africa to Italy has become increasingly dangerous due to fighting in Libya. From Greece, the migrants move north through the Balkans, hoping to gain asylum, preferably in Germany, the Netherlands or

Scandinavia.

“Aleppo is the worst city in the world,” said Dirar, another English graduate who made the crossing with Mohammad's group. “There's no electricity, no water, no Internet. My home was destroyed by a rocket blast,” he said, showing a picture on his mobile phone of himself in the wreckage.

“I was so happy to be alive that

I took a selfie,” he said. “From Greece, I will travel through Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary to Germany.”

But first, those reaching the islands have to be registered by Greek authorities to get necessary travel documents. Huge backlogs caused by the sheer number of arrivals and lack of official preparedness have trapped thousands on Kos, waiting

for the papers that will secure them a berth on an Athens-bound ferry.

For the past two days, Kos authorities have been evicting refugees sleeping rough in parks and streets, locking them in an old football stadium that is the island's main registration center. Many women and young children are among those interned in a sunbaked waste without shade or hygiene facilities.

“The situation here is very bad and police here they beat a boy, they beat a man, they beat children, it's too bad,” Syrian refugee Laith Saleh, who is in the stadium, told The Associated Press by phone yesterday. “We can't go out.”

Doctors Without Borders, the medical charity also known as Medecins sans Frontieres, criticized Greek authorities after police in the stadium used fire extinguishers and batons Tuesday to break up a crowd jostling for papers.

“MSF is very worried about how the situation is evolving in Kos,” MSF director of operations Brice de le Vingne said late Tuesday. “What was previously a situation of state inaction is now one of state abuse, with police using increasing heavy-handed force against these vulnerable people.”

MSF, which is providing medical assistance to refugees, said more than 7,000 people arrived in Kos in July. **AP**

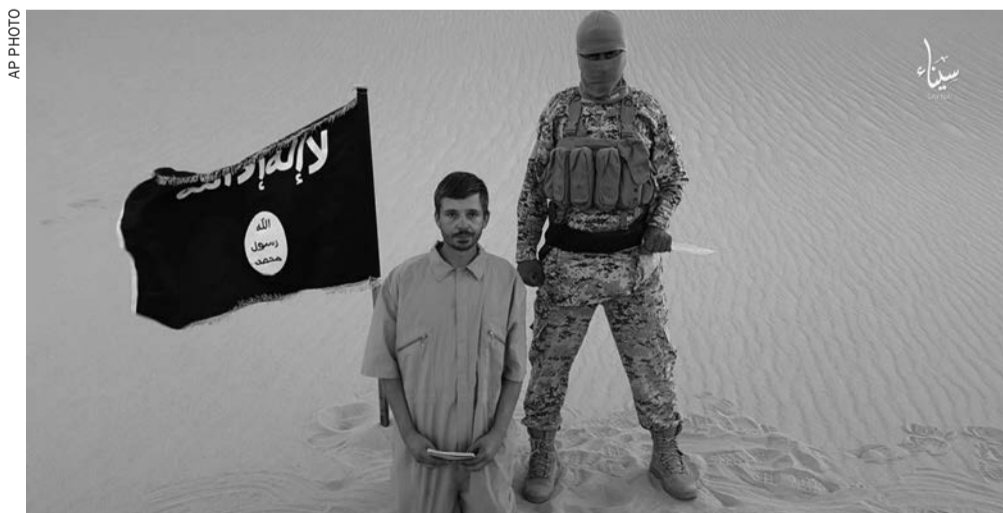
ISLAMIC STATE

Online image purports to show Croat beheaded

Brian Rohan, Cairo

AN online image circulated yesterday purported to show the beheading of a Croatian hostage held by the Islamic State group's Egyptian affiliate, the first such killing of a foreign captive in Egypt since the extremists set up a branch here.

The killing of the 30-year-old oil and gas sector surveyor likely will rattle companies with expatriate workers in Egypt and cast a cloud over President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi's attempts to boost international investment to revive the economy, battered by years of turmoil.



An Islamic State militant stands next to another man who identifies himself as 30-year-old Tomislav Salopek

The still image, shared by Islamic State sympathizers on social media, showed the apparent body of Tomislav Salo-

pek, a married, father of two, wearing a beige jumpsuit looking like the one he had worn in a previous video. A black flag

used by the Islamic State group and a knife were planted in the sand next to him.

The photo carried a

caption in Arabic that said Salopek was killed “for his country's participation in the war against the Islamic State,” and after a deadline had passed for the Egyptian government to meet their demands.

The picture also contained an inset of two Egyptian newspaper reports, with one headline declaring Croatia's support of Egypt in its war against terrorism and extremism and another saying Croatia reiterated its support for the Kurdistan region. Croatian troops also were part of the coalition forces in Iraq and they still serve in the NATO-led force in Afghanistan.

Egyptian Foreign Ministry officials were not immediately available for comment. An official at the Croatian Embassy in Cairo who refused to give his name said the embassy cannot comment on the incident. The Croatian Foreign Ministry declined to immediately comment.

The Associated Press could not independently verify the image. However, it bore markings consistent the filmed hostage demand the group made last week.

Salopek, a surveyor working with France's CGG Ardiseis, was abducted in western Cairo last month. **AP**

AUGUST 14-15TH

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Wednesday, 26/08/2015

Are you a Dancing Dragon or Headless Chicken? Thriving on Change

Speaker: **Robert Kirby**, Founder Kirby Leadership Academy

FMBA Breakfast Meeting

Speech: Dr. Robert Kirby will share with you eight practical strategies from his latest book "Dancing Dragon or Headless Chicken" to assist you not just to survive Change but to Thrive on Change...

Date: Wednesday, 26th Aug. 2015

Time: 9:00-10:30 am (Reception: 8:45am)

Venue: Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16
Promenade Meeting Room (6th floor)

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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

PHOTOGRAPHS OF MACAU OLD SHOPS

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

FASHION POP-UP SHOP

TIME: 10am-8pm (Closed on Mondays, open on public holiday)

UNTIL: August 30, 2015

ADMISSION: Free

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

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 3341

THE CALLING OF SPIRITUALITY - XIAO YAWEN
ARTWORK EXHIBITION

TIME: 10:30am-6:30pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: August 31, 2015

VENUE: 10 Fantasia - A Creative Industries Incubator, 10, Calçada da Igreja de S.Lázaro, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 4582

PATH AND ADVENTURE - WORKS BY MIO PANG
FEI

TIME: 10am-7pm (Closed on Mondays, no admission after 6:30 pm)

UNTIL: November 22, 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

LAU HING KWONG ARTWORK EXHIBITION

TIME: 10:30am-6:30pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: August 16, 2015

ADMISSION: Free

VENUE: 10 Fantasia - A Creative Industries

Incubator, 10, Calçada da Igreja de S.Lázaro, Macau

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 4582

Offbeat

ABDUCTED BABOON RESCUED AND
RETURNED TO ZOO IN MACEDONIA

The playful baboon Luka has been rescued and returned to Macedonia's largest zoo after he was snatched by captors.

Police say the 18-month-old crowd favorite was abducted Monday from Skopje Zoo by captors who cut nets at a zoo enclosure and drove him by taxi to Kavadarci, about 80 kilometers south of the Macedonian capital.

Authorities said Tuesday the ginger-haired animal was found four hours later after witnesses had alerted police. They said two people have been arrested and charged with burglary-related offences. They did not comment on local media reports that said one of the suspects was a 26-year-old woman who had abducted the animal to please her young daughter.

Abandoned by his mother after birth, Luka has become a favorite for children visiting the zoo.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
18:50	The Illusionist (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:40	Miscellaneous
22:10	The Illusionist
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Documentary Serie
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema

CINETEATRO

13 Aug- 19 Aug



FANTASTIC FOUR

ROOM 1

2.15, 5.55, 7.45, 9.45 pm

Director: Josh Trank

Starring: Miles Teller, Kate Mara, Michael B. Jordan

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 100min

DORAEMON THE MOVIE:

NOBITA AND THE SPACE HEROES

ROOM 1

4.05 pm

Director: Yoshihiro Osugi

Language: Cantonese (Chinese/English)

Duration: 100min

ATTACK ON TITAN

ROOM 2

2.15, 4.05, 5.55, 9.45 pm

Director: shinji Higuchi

Starring: Haruma Miura, Kiko Mizuhara

Language: Japanese (English and Chinese)

Duration: 90min

DORAEMON THE MOVIE:

NOBITA AND THE SPACE HEROES

ROOM 2

7.45 pm

Director: Yoshihiro Osugi

Language: Cantonese (Chinese/English)

Duration: 100min

DORAEMON THE MOVIE:

NOBITA AND THE SPACE HEROES

ROOM 3

2.30 pm

Director: Yoshihiro Osugi

Language: Cantonese (Chinese/English)

Duration: 100min

TO THE FORE

ROOM 3

4.30, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Dante Lam

Starring: Eddie Peng, Siwon Choi

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 117min

MACAU TOWER

30 Jul - 19 Aug

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE ROGUE NATION

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Christopher McQuarrie

Starring: Tom Cruise, Jeremy Renner, Simon Pegg,

Rebecca Ferguson

Language: English (Chinese)

this day in history

1985 HEART-LUNG
TRANSPLANT MAKES HISTORY

A three-year-old boy from Dublin has become the world's youngest heart and lung transplant patient. Jamie Gavin had the four-hour operation at Harefield Hospital in Middlesex, west of London.

His condition is described as satisfactory.

The young patient and his parents were flown from Ireland to London on Monday.

He had been waiting for a donor since May, when doctors told his parents he had a congenital heart disease which was progressively weakening his heart and lungs.

Jamie's parents, Tom and Marian Gavin, have spoken of the pressure of their wait.

They said that before the operation Jamie had hardly any energy.

Mrs Gavin said: "He was very tiny for his age, he didn't grow and was very thin."

"He didn't have a future without this operation."

Before Jamie, the youngest heart-lung patient was five-year old Brook Matthews from Australia who also underwent surgery at Harefield.

Jamie's operation was performed by Britain's leading transplant specialist, Egyptian-born Magdi Yacoub.

It was the 20th time Mr Yacoub has carried out this procedure at Harefield - so far 14 of those who have had the operation are still alive.

Mr Yacoub used a new device - a miniature support machine - which allowed the donor's heart and lungs to be brought to Harefield.

Until recently the donor's body had to be transported to Harefield because the organs could be damaged if moved separately.

This meant that some chances for transplants were lost as moving the body was deemed too impractical or was too upsetting for relatives.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Jamie's new heart and lungs came from three-year-old Tina Bran.

She had died after a fall from a third-floor window while visiting a friend's flat with her mother in Southampton.

In 1986 a 30-month-old boy succeeded Jamie Gavin as the youngest heart-lung transplant recipient.

The same year Jamie had recovered sufficiently to take part in a fun run to raise funds for Harefield Hospital.

But in July 1992 he died at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London.

At the time of his death he was believed to be the world's longest-surviving heart and lung transplant recipient.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Your phone keeps ringing — but you can't always answer it. Try to manage your communications with an eye toward what's more important to you. Make one person a priority and keep them available.

Taurus April 20-May 20 This is not a good time for financial decisions — so make sure that you're not on the hook for anything like that today. If you must put money down somewhere, you should probably play it safe.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You've got brainy energy to spare — so make the most of it! You should be able to solve problems or see new ones that no one else has yet identified. Whatever you do, have fun with it!

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 It doesn't take much to get under your skin today — so try to keep to yourself and avoid anyone who might ruffle your feathers. It's a good time to focus inward and try to relax.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Mix and mingle today — you need to show others what you can do, and see what they can do in return. Networking doesn't have to be a chore, and you can make it something really special.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Be careful with choosing your words today — you need to slow down and make sure you don't offend anyone important. That's easier than you think on a day like today, so ease up!

Libra Sep. 23-Oct. 22 You see both sides of every issue, and today that really pays off for you! It's a good time to intervene in long-running battles to see if you can help both sides come to some kind of peaceful settlement.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Work-related problems are amplified today, so see if you can put them back at the top of your priority list. You need to take care, though — speeding through that list can cause even more problems!

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You can't stop talking about the next big thing — even if that means you never get around to dealing with it! That's fine, as today is all about discussion and planning, not taking direct action.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Exercise your intellect today — but also your restraint. If you realize that you need to take action, then the time for thought is over and you have to just do the best you can with what you have.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 A friend or colleague may become something more if you're looking for romance. Even if you aren't, things could get deeper and more interesting between the two of you, thanks to shared passions.

Pisces Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Don't let yourself get nailed down to any specific arrangements today — you need to make sure that you're as free and available as you can be. Things may get weird later on, though.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- No ifs, ...; 5- Bookstore section; 10- Top-notch; 14- Chimney residue; 15- All together; 16- It transforms carbon dioxide into oxygen; 17- "East of Eden" director Kazan; 18- Attack on all sides; 19- Cowardly Lion portrayer; 20- Pertaining to a congress; 23- It's bottled in Cannes; 24- Hi-; 25- Planes, trains, and automobiles, e.g.; 33- Sex researcher Hite; 34- "The Clan of the Cave Bear" author; 35- Rocker Ocasek; 36- Liberal ...; 37- Despised; 39- Room in a casa; 40- And not; 41- Uncouth; 42- Provide food for; 43- Forewritten; 47- ... glance; 48- Hosp. workers; 49- Portly; 56- Believe; 58- ... France; 59- Estimator's phrase; 60- Arch type; 61- Twilled fabric; 62- Lecherous look; 63- Small horse; 64- Reliable; 65- "Betsy's Wedding" star;

DOWN: 1- Wait ...; 2- ... contendere; 3- Slay; 4- Adult male deer; 5- ... corpus; 6- Exhausts; 7- Rock clinging plant; 8- Dedicated to the ... Love; 9- Answered sharply; 10- Finally; 11- Spoken; 12- O.T. book; 13- Always; 21- Actress Russo; 22- Oscar winner Patricia; 25- Pulsate; 26- Back in; 27- ... longa, vita brevis; 28- Like Cheerios; 29- Regret; 30- Hopping mad; 31- Greased; 32- Tenn. neighbor; 33- Capital of Yemen; 37- Student of human affairs; 38- Summer drink; 39- ... Clemente; 41- Nerve network; 42- Mozart's "... fan tutte"; 44- Depression between hills; 45- Tramp; 46- Truly; 49- Hammer part; 50- Robert of "The Sopranos"; 51- Actress Garr; 52- Vincent Lopez's theme song; 53- Baseball's Hershiser; 54- Pre-owned; 55- Marsh bird; 56- Beau Brummell; 57- Swelled head;

Yesterday's solution crossword puzzle grid with filled-in words.

A crossword puzzle grid with some numbers and letters pre-filled.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



FOR SALE and FOR RENT advertisement for JML Property, including contact information and website.

Real estate advertisement for Designer Apartment in Macau, featuring 3 bedrooms and overlooking St Pauls.

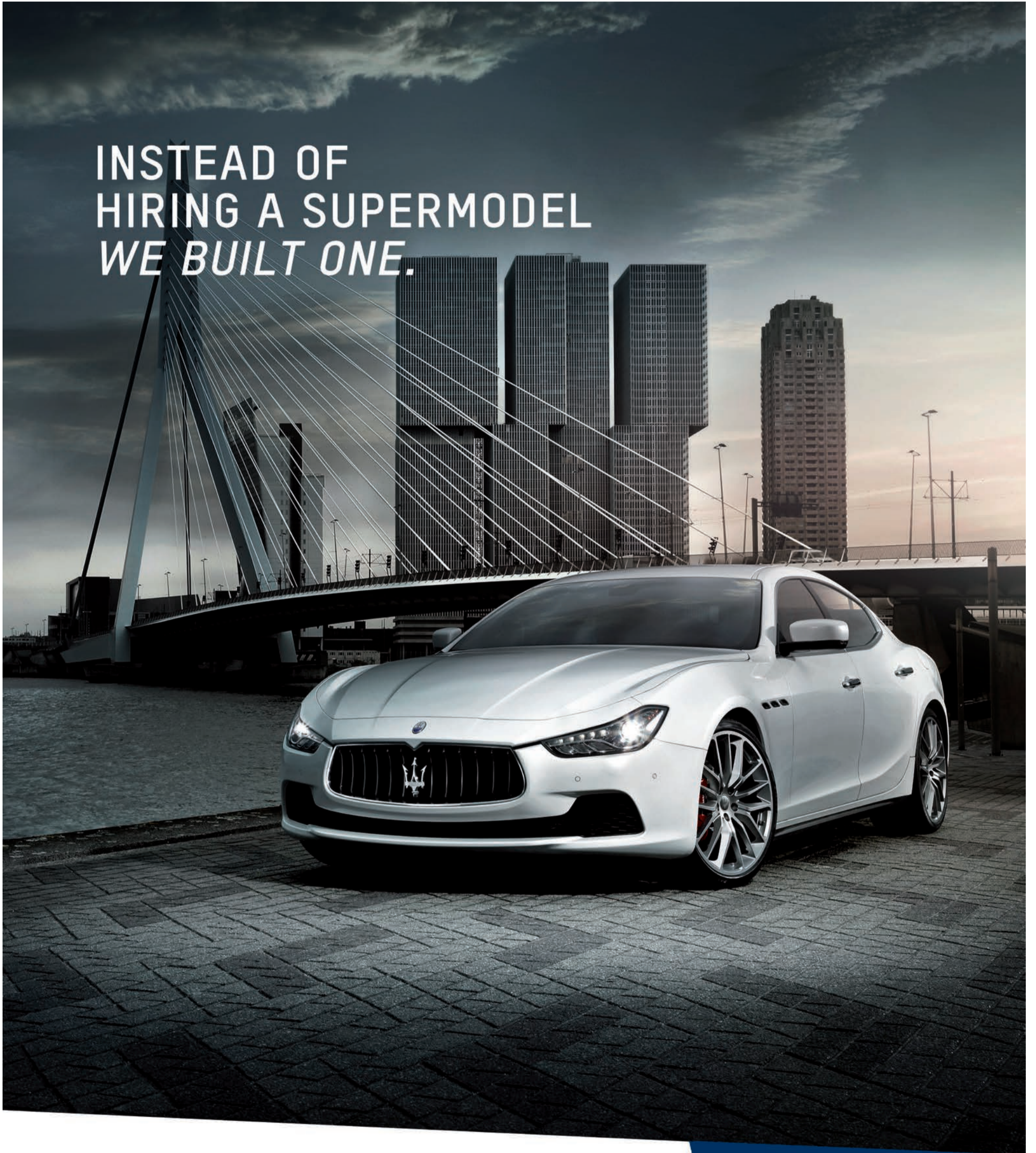
Real estate advertisement for Hellene Gardens in Coloane, featuring a car park and near Lady of Carmel Church.

Real estate advertisement for Old Taipa Village in Taipa, featuring a new development with 1 bedroom.

Real estate advertisement for Jou Fai Kuok in Macau, featuring 2 bedrooms and amazing views.

Advertisement for JML Property, featuring the company logo and name in Chinese and English.

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James Ellingworth, Tbilisi, Georgia

FOOTBALL

Messi stars as Barcelona beats Sevilla 5-4 in Super Cup

LIONEL Messi scored twice and set up the winning goal as Barcelona started the season in dramatic style by beating Sevilla 5-4 after extra time to lift the UEFA Super Cup yesterday (Macau time).

The action-packed, all-Spanish match was won when Pedro, linked by British media with a move to Manchester United, scored from close range after a shot by Messi rebounded in the 115th minute.

In the final seconds of extra time, Sevilla defender Adil Rami had a golden chance to send the match to penalties but missed an open goal from close range.

Earlier, Sevilla had battled back from 4-1 down to 4-4 as Barcelona's fitness was tested in its first competitive match of the season - Europe's curtain-raiser between the winners of the Champions League and the second-tier Europa League.

After a busy pre-season with games in the United States, Italy and Spain, Barcelona's dominance evaporated midway through the second half.

"I thought we were much better, much stronger," Messi said of the first hour of the match. "We had the ball for the first 60 minutes, we had opportunities, we scored. And then we seemed to have relaxed, we let them have the ball, we withdrew a bit.

"It got pretty tough when we looked like we were winning hands down, but fortunately we didn't have to go to penalties."

Calling the match "spectacular" for Barcelona's supporters, coach Luis Enrique suggested his team had taken too many risks while leading.

"We'd practically closed the match, but it's very difficult to secure this," he said. "When you're winning 4-1, the rival has



Barcelona's Lionel Messi shoots a free kick

got nothing to lose. What we do need is to analyze what happened at that point and the risks that they took."

Luis Enrique refused to discuss whether Pedro's winning goal could make it more likely for him to stay with the club.

His Sevilla counterpart Unai Emery said he was "very proud" of his team, which has been rebuilt over the summer after its Europa League win.

"If there's one thing we want to make this team, it's competitive. We want this team to really go for victory whatever the circumstances," he said. "We stood up to the best team in the world."

On a warm summer night, Barcelona was without injured left-back Jordi Alba and star striker Neymar, who is ill with mumps, while various absences for Sevilla meant that midfielder Grzegorz Krychowiak dropped into the center-back role.

European champion Barcelona went behind three minutes into the game when Ever Banega scored from a free-kick from the edge of the penalty area.

Messi curled two direct free-kicks past Sevilla goalkeeper Beto in the seventh and 16th minutes and was a constant threat in attack with throughout the first half, though he made less

of a mark after the break.

Barcelona's third came shortly before halftime when Luis Suarez pounced on the rebound after his shot was parried by Beto and crossed for Rafinha to score.

Suarez grabbed a goal in the 52nd minute following a poor pass by Sevilla defender Benoit Tremoulinas. The French left-back gave the ball away to Sergio Busquets, who played in Suarez to apply a calm finish. However, it was cancelled out almost immediately when the unmarked Jose Antonio Reyes ran in at the far post to steer home a cross by Vitolo.

Vitolo was again in the thick of the action a quarter of an hour later as he tried to reach a cross from Tremoulinas but was fouled by Jeremy Mathieu, playing at left-back for the injured Alba. The resulting penalty was hit hard and left by Kevin Gameiro.

Sevilla pulled level when debutant Yevhen Konoplyanka slotted in from close range off a low pass from Ciro Immobile in the 81st minute.

Having won the Spanish league and cup titles, along with the Champions League, lifting the Super Cup keeps Barcelona on track to win six trophies in a calendar year, a feat the club last achieved under Pep Guardiola in 2009.

Next up is the Spanish Super Cup against Athletic Bilbao on Friday and Monday, before the Club World Cup in December. **AP**

RUGBY

Struggling Springboks change 9 for last test before Worlds

SOUTH Africa reacted to a first ever defeat to Argentina by making nine changes to its starting 15 yesterday for the return game in Buenos Aires this weekend.

The changes, some caused by injury, see fullback Zane Kirchner, wing Lwazi Mvovo, flyhalf Pat Lambie and forwards Willem Alberts, Marcel van der Merwe, Adriaan Strauss and Trevor Nyakane all make their first starts this year.

Lock Victor Matfield returns to captain the team after Jean de Villiers was ruled out of Saturday's

game with a fractured jaw. The other change is a positional switch, with Jesse Kriel back at outside center after being tried out on the wing.

Hooker Schalk Brits and center Jan Serfontein are in the reserves and get the chance of a first appearance this year.

South Africa lost 37-25 to Argentina in the last round of the Rugby Championship on Saturday, a fourth straight loss for the Springboks, dropping them from No. 2 to No. 5 in the rankings.

This Saturday's test in Buenos Aires is a World

Cup warm-up game and South Africa's last run out before rugby's showpiece starts next month.

Kirchner was called in after regular fullback Willie le Roux was ruled out of the trip with an ankle problem to join a hefty injury list for the Springboks. Regular skipper De Villiers will be out for 4-6 weeks with a fractured jaw sustained in the Argentina loss, putting him in doubt for the World Cup after he had just returned from a long-term knee injury.

Lock Lood de Jager and prop Vincent Koch

also won't travel this weekend, the South African Rugby Union said, while scrumhalf Fourie du Preez is not yet fit for action.

Alberts' return from injury to take up his No. 7 flanker position was a rare positive for coach Heyneke Meyer, who was already under pressure from back-to-back losses to Australia and New Zealand before the surprisingly comprehensive defeat at home by Argentina left his World Cup plans in turmoil.

South Africa, the two-time world champion,

was outmuscled and outplayed by Argentina in Durban, and probably travels to Buenos Aires as the underdog.

"Our physicality was not what it should have been last week and we need to

make a big step up in that department," Meyer said. "We're under no illusions how big the task is going to be over there but it's a challenge we have to embrace and make the best out of." **AP**

LINEUP

SOUTH AFRICA: Zane Kirchner, Lwazi Mvovo, Jesse Kriel, Damian de Allende, Bryan Habana, Pat Lambie, Ruan Pienaar; Schalk Burger, Willem Alberts, Heinrich Brussow, Victor Matfield (captain), Eben Etzebeth, Marcel van der Merwe, Adriaan Strauss, Trevor Nyakane.
RESERVES: Schalk Brits, Tendai Mtawarira, Frans Malherbe, Flip van der Merwe, Pieter-Steph du Toit, Cobus Reinach, Handre Pollard, Jan Serfontein.

opinion

Tech Views

The Editors, Bloomberg

ALL HAIL UBER

Uber is a brand, a verb, a proprietary eponym, a loss-making USD50 billion enterprise and a new way of doing business - one that's upending industries, worrying workers and thrilling consumers around the world.

Uber is one of many new companies eager to act not as suppliers but as platforms - offering smartphone apps that connect drivers with riders, apartments with travelers, handymen with homeowners. Such arrangements are often known as the "sharing economy." They're starting to take off, and they pose something of a challenge to policy makers and regulators.

For the platform owners, the logic is powerful: Use next to no physical capital, employ almost no workers, assume few risks and take your cut of each transaction. For customers, it's just as sweet: Get more of what you want more easily, and pay less for it. For worker-suppliers, it's a mixed bag: Profit from greater demand for what you have to sell and from easier access to buyers - but sometimes for less pay, and without the employee benefits and security that go with traditional jobs.

For officialdom, that's a vexing combination. What's the right response to a company that causes much unease and disrupts entrenched interests, yet also has immense potential benefits for consumers?

In Uber's case, two possibilities suggest themselves.

One appealing option is to have no response at all. Have you tried Uber? It's great. Its innovations - such as surge pricing, which ensures more drivers are available when demand is highest - are exciting. For many drivers, it's a boon. Uber's battles with local governments have become the stuff of legend, but more and more places are welcoming it - some 300 cities so far - and they often find themselves wondering what the fuss was all about.

Another response is to remember that old laws are sometimes ill-suited to new technology. A pending California lawsuit - on behalf of Uber drivers who say the company owes them for expenses and tips - offers a case in point. Uber says its drivers are independent contractors, which means they aren't covered by most labor regulations and aren't owed expense reimbursements, overtime pay and so on. Some drivers (along with the California Labor Commission) assert that they're actually employees, and as such entitled to those benefits and more.

They're probably both wrong. The New-Deal-era classifications that prevail in the U.S. - either contractor or employee - make little sense for Uber and its peers, which let their workers set their own hours and operate with a lot of independence (as contractors would) but also monitor their performance and set their pay rate (as with employees). A California judge considering a similar case said that state law "provides nothing remotely close to a clear answer" to the conundrum and that the jury would be "handed a square peg and asked to choose between two round holes."

Expect such confusion to persist until lawmakers, state and federal, start thinking more creatively. That might mean considering new kinds of classifications - for instance, the "dependent contractor" model used in Canada and elsewhere. It might require rethinking parts of the social safety net that were designed with full-time employment in mind. It will surely mean, in the federalist spirit, that states should experiment with a variety of new arrangements and find what works best for their citizens.

If self-driving cars catch on, labor laws of all kinds may one day be a moot point for Uber. But industry after industry is testing the logic of its approach - hence Uber for tailors, Uber for doctors, Uber for getting wasted. Each will present its own complications. On the whole, though, this phenomenon should be viewed with optimism - and a willingness to question whether the old ways of doing things still make much sense in the age of on-demand cannabis.

THE BUZZ RUSSIAN SOLDIER ACCUSED OF KILLING FAMILY TRIED IN ARMENIA

A Russian soldier suspected of killing an entire family in Armenia has been convicted of desertion as a precursor to his murder trial.

Valery Permyakov, who served with a Russian military base in Gyumri, is suspected of shooting six family members dead and stabbing a 6-month-old baby to death in the Armenian city in January. He was captured quickly after the killings and pleaded guilty

to the charges.

A Russian military court in Gyumri yesterday handed him a 10-year prison sentence on charges of desertion and illegal weapons possession. Armenian investigators are pursuing a separate murder probe. Russia agreed to let Armenia handle the murder investigation after thousands rallied in Gyumri demanding that the soldier face justice in Armenia.



25pct slump in Chinese trade with CPLP countries

COMMERCIAL trade between China and the Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries (CPLP) member states fell 25.62 percent in the first half of this year to close at EUR43.36 billion (USD48.3 billion) according to data from the country's Customs Services quoted on the Forum Macau website.

The details show that in the first six months of this year, China imported goods totaling 25.75 billion euros - down 35.38% - and sold products worth 17.6 billion, down 4.53% in annualized terms.

Brazil remained far and away the largest Portuguese language speaking trade partner of China even with a 19.3% fall in trade through to June.

The 30.85 billion euros in trade was made up of 13.4 billion in Chinese exports, down 7.99% year-on-year whilst Chinese imports from Brazil stood at 17.41 billion, a drop of 26.24%.

Angola did take in an additional 2.77% of imports from China with trade bound for the Southwest African country accounting for 1.92 billion of the 9.39 billion euros total trade exchanged between the two countries and down 45.24% on the first half of 2014.

China's imports from Angola accounted for the remaining 7.46 billion euros with the largely oil based exports down 51.16% in accordance with the slump in international crude prices.

In terms of Portugal, Chi-

na's third most important Portuguese language trading partner, there was a 5.89% slide in trade to close the first half at 1.93 billion euros with Chinese exports slipping 4.14% to 1.27 billion whilst Portuguese exports to China dropped 9.12% year-on-year to amount to 658.6 million.

Taking June as the timeframe, trade between China and the CPLP totalled 8.82 billion euros, up 13.47% year-on-year.

China established the Special Administrative Region of Macau as its platform for boosting trade and cooperation with Portuguese language countries in 2003 and in that year correspondingly established Forum Macau as a means to achieve this goal. MDT/Lusa

Canine actor Uggie, known for role in 'The Artist,' dies

UGGIE, the Jack Russell terrier who became a canine star for his scene-stealing role in the Oscar-winning movie "The Artist," has died.

Uggie was euthanized Friday after a bout with prostate cancer, his owner, Los Angeles animal trainer Omar Von Muller, said yesterday. The dog was 13.

"He was a real friend. He was very special," said Von Muller, who plans to bury the dog in his backyard.

In "The Artist," Uggie played the canine companion to Jean Dujardin's fading silent-film star. The movie won Academy Awards for Best Picture, lead actor and director in 2011.

Uggie shared scenes in the film with his brother Dash and another Jack Russell named Dude. Uggie's other credits included the movies "Water for Elephants" and "Mr. Fix It."

He retired in 2012 in a ceremony at the



AP PHOTO

famous Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, where he became the first dog to leave his paw prints in concrete alongside the prints of human stars.

Uggie was a rescue dog, a cause that his owner championed. AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	10-30 Good
High Density Residential Area	20-40 Good
Ambient	25-45 Good

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

VIETNAM doubles the trading band of its currency to allow it to weaken following an unexpected devaluation of the Chinese yuan.

INDONESIA's president replaces key economic Cabinet ministers with the aim of speeding up infrastructure spending to revive sputtering growth and stabilize the sliding rupiah.

PHILIPPINES Abu Sayyaf extremists behead a kidnapped village leader and threaten to kill two other hostages in the southern Philippines if a ransom is not paid.



AP PHOTO

INDIA Six months after India boasted that its tiger population was growing fast, conservationists yesterday said 41 big cats had already died this year and worried that the country was not doing enough to save them.



AP PHOTO

NEW ZEALAND is considering changing its flag. The public was encouraged to come up with ideas, and submitted more than 10,000 designs. A government-appointed panel has winnowed those down to 40 finalists.

IRAN-SYRIA Heavy rebel shelling and government airstrikes hit around Syria's capital, killing at least 16 people and wounding scores more just hours before the arrival of Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif, activists and state media say.

GREECE Details of Greece's latest bailout package were being pored over across Europe yesterday as Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras insisted the agreement with creditors would put "a definitive end" to the country's economic uncertainty.