

LIGHT RAIL: CITIZENS FAVOR FIRST SEAC PAI VAN ROUTE PROPOSAL

According to the blueprint, the line will run through the Lotus checkpoint, then along the west entrance of the Islands District Health Services, reaching the final station in SPV

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INFORMATION MANAGEMENT KEY TO DIVERSIFICATION

Digital information management could help diversify the local economy, said Xue Huacheng, a professor at MUST

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CRIME: SHARP RISE IN GAMING RELATED OFFENSES IN FIRST HALF

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WORLD BRIEFS



USA The National Zoo in Washington says its adult female panda has had twins. The first cub was born Saturday at 5:35 p.m. and the zoo said on Twitter that a second was born at 10:07 p.m. The zoo has said both cubs appear healthy. If the cubs survive, they would be the 17-year-old panda's third and fourth surviving offspring. Mei Xiang's first cub, Tai Shan, was born in 2005 and returned to China in 2010. Her second cub, Bao Bao, turned 2-years-old yesterday and still lives at the zoo.

NEPAL has opened Mount Everest to climbers for the first time since an earthquake-triggered avalanche in April killed 19 mountaineers and ended the popular spring climbing season. Japanese climber Nobukazu Kuriki will be the first to attempt to scale the world's highest peak since the quake. Nepal's tourism minister, Kripasur Sherpa, gave Kuriki his climbing permit at a ceremony in Kathmandu yesterday.

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Ho Iat Seng on idle plots motion: I follow the rules

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Information management key to diversification of local economy, says professor

Catarina Pinto

DIGITAL information management could help diversify the local economy, said Xue Huacheng, a professor at the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST), at Friday's 21st Cross-Strait Conference on Information Management Development and Strategy.

Speaking on the sidelines of the conference – hosted by MUST and attended by experts from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan – Professor Huacheng urged the government to implement policies to advance information management in key industries.

He stated that digital information is not limited by the constraints of time or space, and hinted that information management could be particularly useful for Macau, given the territory's limited resources.

"I believe that the development of the information management industry is the only way to economic diversification. Macau is very small and



Professor Xue Huacheng

has limited human resources," he said, stressing that the city's key industries could benefit from the development of IT infrastructure.

"Industries like tourism, food and beverage, and education could develop so much faster [with] information technology."

The role of Macau's government in developing the information technology industry is equally important, he pointed out.

Professor Huacheng, who is also the dean of MUST's Fa-

culty of Management and Administration, said that policies should be implemented in order to ensure the MSAR's sustainable development.

"In order to build a good information infrastructure in Macau, we need both governmental and non-governmental cooperation. In order to encourage the development of advanced applications, science and technology parks could be established," he said.

MUST president Liu Liang reiterated that information technology is the key to overcoming the city's limitations.

"The development of information technology is likely to help Macau overcome the limitations caused by the lack of land and labor resources, and explore a path of diversified economic development based on advanced applications and modern information technology," he said in his speech at the conference's opening ceremony.

National Taiwan University professor Chang-Sung Yu, who also attended the conference, told The Times that information technology has inspired many young graduates to develop start-up companies while still attending university.

"We have a new generation of students in Taiwan and many run their own businesses. While they're in school, they don't have to quit like Bill Gates or many others. By using information technology, they can attend university while still building their businesses."

Development of information management industry is the only way to economic diversification

PROF. XUE HUACHENG
MUST

LIGHT RAIL

Citizens favor first Seac Pai Van route proposal

PUBLIC opinions gathered by the Transportation Infrastructure Office (GIT) last January indicate that the authorities' first scheme for the future Light Railway Transit (LRT) route in Seac Pai Van is the most popular among locals, according to a GIT statement released yesterday.

As per the suggested blueprint, the transit initially operates through the Lotus checkpoint, then along the west en-

trance of the Islands District Health Services Complex before reaching the final station in the Estrada De Seac Pai Van.

The majority of the 3,248 views collected through the 45-day public consultation favor the scheme for its straightforwardness and minimal environmental impact on the neighborhood, as compared to the other two suggestions, where stops are set squarely at the second public hospi-

tal's main entrance and within another public housing complex.

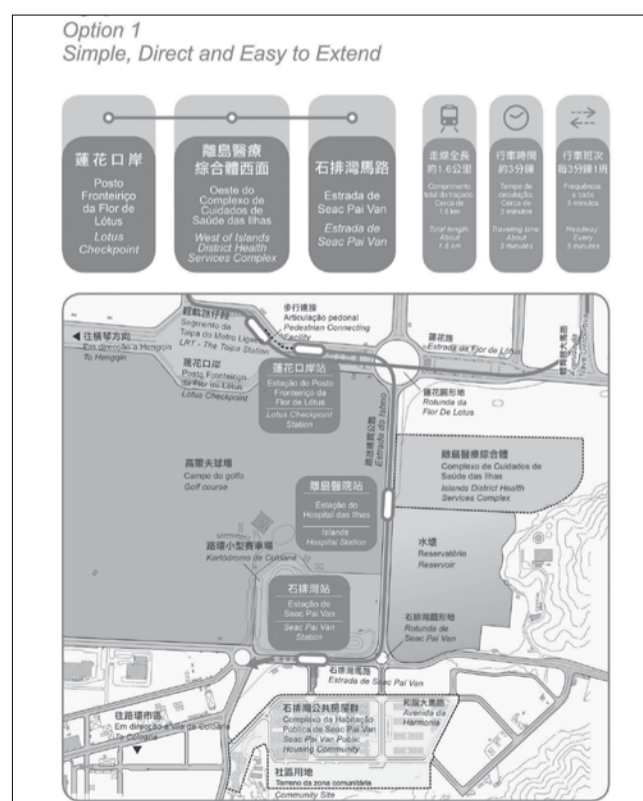
However, the consultation's other major topic – whether the public transport network should extend into Coloane – did not receive many comments.

After the authorities' consolidation, up to 2,938 written opinions received during the public consultation raised 16 other course suggestions, which involve routes connec-

ting the prospective theme park in Cotai with the Macau East Asian Games Dome, and others connecting the University of Macau's campus with the Hengqin port.

The officials claimed in the statement that the suggested alternatives posed "technical challenges" with regard to Macau's infrastructure, and were most likely unfeasible due to "complicated environmental and planning constraints" and "less efficiency in operation."

The government will launch a study into the first scheme in the next phase. The results of the public consultation are available for viewing at the office. **Staff reporter**



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Catarina Pinto

PUBLIC HEARING ON IDLE PLOTS

Ho Iat Seng, president of Macau's Legislative Assembly (AL), has stated that he simply followed the AL's Rules of Procedure when rejecting a motion by pro-democracy lawmakers Ng Kuok Cheong and Au Kam San, which was aimed at launching a public hearing regarding 16 idle plots of land that the government has declared it will not recover.

President Ho met reporters on Friday to share his insights on the AL's performance throughout the second legislative session, which ended on August 15.

Asked whether links between some lawmakers and the plots of land in question had impacted his decision to reject the motion, Mr Ho stressed once more that Ng Kuok Cheong and Au Kam San's request failed to meet public hearing requirements under Macau's Basic Law.

"Rules on public hearings have [recently] been amended, and article number 71 of Macau's Basic Law now applies to the AL's Rules of Procedure. Therefore, [this article] sets out the mechanisms. When I, the AL president, found that not all procedures under the AL's Rules of Procedure were



met, I could only reject [their request]," he concluded.

Lawmakers Au Kam San and Ng Kuok Cheong submitted a motion requesting the launch of a public hearing, which would have called on government officials to explain why 16 idle plots of land had been excluded from the administration's recovery list.

Ho Iat Seng denied the

lawmakers' motion, arguing that their request did not comply with the Basic Law. He added that he believes the AL has no grounds on which to hold the proposed public hearing.

On Friday, the AL's president recalled that the lawmakers had filed an appeal with the Standing Committee on Rules and Mandates. They will also be able to appeal to the plenary and take

their motion to a vote.

"We are not against anyone or [against debating] any subject. We are simply following the AL's Rules of Procedure. The AL president is not entitled to prevent any matters from being discussed. But there are principles that need to be observed," he added.

President Ho acknowledged that Macau's government failed to provide the AL with comprehensive information on the idle plots of land: "Information was not provided in great detail. I do hope the government can provide further clarification on the matter (...) and explain what still needs to be solved. Without information, we can't follow up on the case," he warned.

He reiterated that the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, has pledged to provide the AL with further information on land deals at the beginning of the coming legislative session, starting October 16.

The government has been working on recovering unused land. It recently announced that at least a third of 48 idle plots, which were not properly utilized by leaseholders, could not be recovered.

The Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) has launched a probe into the deals for the 16 land plots.

Ho Iat Seng on Friday presented a report on the AL's second legislative session activities, recalling that a total of 14 bills have been passed by lawmakers. Six bills tabled by lawmaker Coutinho were vetoed.

Ho said that a total of seven bills are still under assessment by respective AL Standing Com-

HO STRESSES
'LOYALTY' TO PRC

THE LEGISLATIVE Assembly President Ho Iat Seng has said that he could not comment on lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho's intention to run for the Portuguese Parliament, dubbing it "a diplomatic matter." He recalled, however, that lawmakers serving in the AL swear an oath of loyalty to the People's Republic of China.

"He's the one running [for Portuguese Parliament], I cannot comment further. There's no regulation in Macau [preventing him from running]. He's the one who needs to evaluate [his candidacy]," he said. Lawmaker Coutinho recently revealed that he would consider running for Parliament in the country's general elections.

AL president issues warning over associations' spending

AS Macau entered an adjustment phase with regard to the decline of gaming revenue over the past 14 months, AL president Ho Iat Seng stated that there is a limit to the number of areas where the government can make cuts.

He suggested that associations such as the Macao Foundation should consider channeling more funds into social responsibility projects to help those in need.

"The Macao Foundation [receives large funding grants]. So it may need to work with institutions on social responsibility (...) Furthermore, not all meetings [organized by government entities] need to be held in hotels, when meetings could be hosted at public facilities."

Mr Ho said that caution in public spending

should not only apply to economic downturns, but that governments should strive to always exercise prudence in public spending.

He recalled, however, that there are areas that the authorities should not cut. These include education and services provided to handicapped citizens, as well as other social policies.

The government is currently working on a new draft of the Budget Framework Law, which will reinforce the AL's power to oversee the administration's work. On Friday, Mr Ho announced that under the revised legislation, they will request the government to present the previous year's budget execution reports by May instead of October.

This will enable the AL to supervise Macau's budget more carefully.

mittees, including controversial pieces of legislation regulating animal protection, the smoking ban, and medical malpractice.

The average AL plenary attendance rate stood at 95.5 percent, while the attendance rate of Standing Committee meetings was set at 86.3 percent. Lawmaker Victor Kwan, a member of two committees, attended only one meeting of each committee in a total of 26 meetings – the lowest attendance rate among lawmakers this legislative session.

The number of spoken and written enquiries increased over the previous legislative session, with a total of 127 spoken enquiries delivered and 687 written enquiries submitted.

Mainland, Macau ink pact to fight money laundering

The central bank said it has signed a pact with the financial regulators of Macau on anti-money laundering cooperation.

A memorandum of understanding to "prevent money laundering and terrorist financing activities" was signed with the Monetary Authority (AMCM), according to a statement on the website of the People's Bank of China (PBOC). Both sides will strengthen information sharing, personnel exchanges and training, as well as cooperation on

inspections, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported late on Friday.

No specific measures were outlined in the statement. The PBOC said the agreement is of "great significance" as it will promote Beijing-Macau cooperation and improve the implementation of suggestions by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global anti-money laundering body.

According to yesterday's Sunday Morning Post, "the lack of detail and the fact that there was no parallel

announcement by the Macau Monetary Authority or the city's anti-money laundering unit has prompted concern over what the deal could mean for the autonomy of China's only other Special Administrative Region."

Sources quoted by the paper fear similar moves might be considered for Hong Kong. One finance industry insider told the Sunday Morning Post: "Although we don't have all the details, taken in the context of what has gone on over the past year or so, the pro-

blem here seems not to be about taking away power from Macau bodies but rather giving the Chinese authorities unhindered access to information."

A lawyer in Macau also raised concerns over the legitimacy of the handing over "sensitive personal information" by the Monetary Authority to the Chinese central bank. "For starters, the AMCM is the entity that gathers information from the banks and other financial operators and regulates the sector; it's not in its attributes the

handing over of personal, banking accounts, information," Sérgio de Almeida Correia told the Times yesterday.

"It's important to know more details about the MoU. For instance, if it applies to residents and/or non-residents." In Mr Correia's opinion AMCM cannot hand over residents' personal data to an alien entity without the "authorization of the MSAR government, namely the Office for Personal Data Protection, and even the Legislative Assembly."

The lawyer also found "strange" the fact that the pact was unilaterally disclosed by the PBOC and "not simultaneously by the two parties, as is usual in these cases."

"On the other hand, one should ask the Monetary Authority if they are signing pacts of this nature with other jurisdictions' counterparts, like, for example, the Federal Reserve in the U.S. giving [information about] the American gaming operations here," Sérgio Correia said. **PC**

CRIME

HK college student caught smuggling drugs



The suspect was arrested yesterday at the Macau Ferry Terminal

A Hong Kong university student was arrested by the Judiciary Police (PJ) yesterday afternoon at the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal, following his attempt to smuggle cocaine from the Philippines through the territory into the neighboring special administrative region.

According to the PJ authorities, who received an early

tip-off from an anonymous source, the 20-year-old suspect took a flight to Manila last Friday through Macau and arrived in the city with 1kg of cocaine, at a market value of HKD 3 million, stashed inside his sneakers. He was finally intercepted at the pier by the investigators, who had tailed him since his arrival at the airport at 3:30 pm.

Their initial investigation suggested that it was the second time that the student had committed the crime. The suspect had been approached by a drug ring through his friend, and was offered HKD 10,000 as remuneration for each gig.

The PJ is currently investigating whether Hong Kong was the smuggler's final destination. **Staff reporter**

Two commit arson at Fai Chi Kei McDonald's

POLICE authorities initiated an investigation after the manager of the McDonald's in Fai Chi Kei reported an incident of arson on the fast food chain's premises yesterday morning.

The fire, which was discovered and extinguished by the staff at around 6:00 am in the playground zone on the first floor of the restaurant, caused no casualties, but damaged the steps of a ladder. A few burnt pieces of advertising paper were found on nearby trays.

Examination of the closed-circuit camera feed revealed that two men had approached the area with napkins and set the facility ablaze before fleeing the scene. Their motives are unknown and the police are investigating the incident.



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THE city has witnessed a significant rise in gaming-related crime over the past quarter, acknowledged the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak. While announcing the police's latest crime statistics last Friday, Wong said that this year's gaming-related criminal cases had surged to 679 cases, up 34.5 percent from the previous year.

Amongst these, the Secretary warned that criminal cases involving unlawful detention and loan sharking have increased between March and June. During the first half of this year, a total of 170 unlawful detention cases were recorded, reflecting a 112.5 percent increase year-on-year. The surge in illegal detentions also drove violent crimes up by 3 percent to 410, while

CRIME STATS

Sharp rise in gaming-related offenses in first half



Secretary Wong (center) highlights cases of unlawful detention and loan sharking

FEWER ILLEGAL MIGRANTS THAN LAST YEAR

THE FIRST six months saw a year-on-year plunge in illegal entry and over-staying of visas, reducing the crimes to 16,720 cases. However, cases of decoying, assisting, accommodating and employing illegal immigrants rose by 8.9 percent to 257 cases.

usury cases increased by 39.1 percent to 153.

Despite the growth, Wong believes that "so far there hasn't been enough evidence to show the adjustment in the gaming industry has [negatively affected] Macau's public security." He explained the police's proactive enforcement actions have led to more crackdowns on those crimes, and that victims and

suspects were mostly not local residents.

"73 and 54 percent of [the respective] types of criminal cases were opened as the police proactively launched enforcement actions; most of those cases occurred inside casinos, which means these crimes haven't affected the public security outside casinos," he stated, adding that the police have received no triad-related

alerts brought about by the industry downturn.

Wong also noted a decline in other violent cases that directly or severely affected social public security. There were no serious violent crimes of murder, kidnapping or triad-related crimes; the recorded number of crime groups remained at 6, with all being busted; and 12 out of the 13 arson cases – although almost double the number of cases the previous year – were revealed to be unrelated to triads or casino interests.

Nevertheless, the Secretary stressed that security authorities will "stay on high alert and closely monitor the situations so as to prevent incidents from occurring." He pledged to "continue watching closely the possible impact of the gaming industry adjustment on public security, and deploy effective crackdown operations targeting the dynamics and trends in criminal activities."

The first half of this year also witnessed a slight decrease in

the number of overall crime cases, down by 0.9 percent year-on-year to 7,025.

"Crimes jeopardizing the territory", which include offenses against the authorities and obstruction of justice, rose 37.5 percent to 583 cases. Of these, instances of disobedience and false declaration saw a respective increase of 44.6 percent and 33.7 percent.

Moreover, the authorities prosecuted a total of 3,037 cases of taxi irregularities during the first six months of this year, whereas the number recorded in the same period a year earlier was merely 539.

On the other hand, the police recorded significant declines in the incidences of drug-selling and drug abuse, with the former down by 33.9 percent whilst the latter was halved. Additionally, cases of identity theft and subsequent usage dropped by 39.3 percent, whereas counterfeit currency cases fell by 55.4 percent. **BY**

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NEW ACADEMIC SEMESTER

IPM vows to strengthen Sino-Luso language and trade programs

Brook Yang

THE Macao Polytechnic Institute (IPM) has welcomed some 800 freshmen for its summer semester, a sizeable cohort that surprised recruiters amid declining numbers of local high school graduates.

The school's president Lei Heong Iok told the media after last week's New Year commencement that "this year's enrollment situation is ideal, as the number of local students applying to the IPM – which was expected to decline – increased instead." An overwhelming 2,000-odd qualified applicants from the mainland competed for 120 admission placements, whilst over 60 international students joined the institution through exchange programs from abroad.

The new semester also marks the arrival of a batch of some 20 students of the IPM's inaugural degree program in Sino-Luso Economy and Trade, where they will study both Portuguese language and tra-



Dr Lei Heong Iok

de courses.

Professor Lei revealed that Portuguese language studies are a top choice for applicants. New programs will be rolled out in order to strengthen the Institute's research and coursework strengths, including bachelor's degree courses in Chinese language and culture for Portuguese speakers.

"We are preparing a tailor-made program for them; this will be another key course aimed at facilitating exchanges between China and Lusophone countries. The IPM is almost ready and will soon submit a proposal to the government for consideration," he told the Times.

Lei revealed that the institution has no plans to expand the enrollment of regular students next year, but will gradually increase its intake of exchange students, especially

those from Portuguese-speaking countries.

"Portugal, Brazil and the African countries, as well as the United States, have all requested to send more students to study here. But due to limited dormitory spaces, we are currently unable to receive more exchange students," he said. "If we can start using the dormitory building in the University of Macau's previous Taipa campus next year, I believe there will be a big improvement; we hope to increase the number of students from Lusophone countries from some 40 to 100."

The IPM was allocated a total of five buildings at the Taipa campus, which are expected to be converted into an educational base for cultural and creative industries in the next academic year. In addition, the president said the Institute will also relocate its Portuguese language center to the Taipa campus, as well as strengthening its gaming-related courses and training sessions.

"We've already run out of space on our current campus [in NAPE] and we've been renting several premises outside to run the classes. With new buildings on the Taipa campus, we will designate the space to suit the IPM's long-term development," he said.

As for the tertiary institution's eventual upgrade to university status, Lei said "It's only a matter of changing the name, which now no longer seems important."

"What's important is whether this institution has the academic strength of a university, gains recognition from the outside world, and maintains its reputation as an educational institution. Having passed the review of the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, I think we are no longer concerned with this matter," he added.

UM WELCOMES NEARLY 2,000 NEW STUDENTS

Rector Wei stresses the importance of living a moral life



Rector Wei Zhao

THE University of Macau (UM) last week held its annual convocation for the 2015/2016 academic year for nearly 2,000 new undergraduates and postgraduates at the UM Sports Complex. Rector Wei Zhao expressed his expectations for the students, stressing "the importance of honesty and living a moral life," according to an official press release.

Rector Zhao said at the convocation that going to college is one of the most exciting things in one's life and he was "excited that UM will become a new home for the students."

Prof. Wei noted "that a university is a place to acquire new knowledge and develop new skills, but more importantly, it is also a place to enrich one's moral life. He also encouraged the students to have a heart of love, be honest and to observe the Three Principles (Love China, Love Macau, and Love the University of Macau)."

Jones Chong, a distinguished alumnus of UM, was invited to the convocation to share his experiences as a former student, the note read. Chong said that "had it not been for the four years at UM, which allowed him to follow his interests and passions, he probably would not have started a business in the first place, and the thriving music scene in Macau probably would not have been possible either."

Portugal, Brazil and the African countries, as well as the United States, have all requested to send more students here

DR LEI HEONG IOK
IPM PRESIDENT

HEALTHCARE, SOCIAL SERVICES AND TRAVEL SAFETY

Top elderly concerns

Brook Yang

THE Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) last Friday concluded its final public briefing session for the consultation on establishing a Support System for the Aged in the second quarter of next year. Having drafted and presented the framework of the system and received the community's feedback, the bureau's president Mr. Iong Kong Io noted that issues of medical and social services, as well as travel safety, have topped the list of public concerns regard-

ing the construction of a comprehensive system.

On the last public session held at the Kiang Wu Hospital, participants highlighted several existing issues troubling elderly residents, including the insufficient medical care and services in elderly care facilities, inadequate guidance for domestic caregivers, a lack of attention to elderly people living alone, and barriers preventing retired workers from accessing their right to social participation.

Lawmaker Chan Iek Lap from the medical sector

– amongst other participants – noted that nursing staff at elderly care homes often lack full medical knowledge, resulting in repeated or unnecessary hospital trips for the aged residents. He thus urged the government to better regulate the homes in order to improve the overall quality of service.

Other participants suggested that the authorities should not place the pressure of looking after the elderly solely on medical institutions and care homes, but should promote a caring society and



offer specialized training courses for families and domestic helpers to learn how to care for elderly family members.

Iong responded that the authorities are paying great attention to these areas and that the research group would carefully analyze the opinions and suggestions. He pledged to constantly optimize futu-

re action plans to address Macau's rapidly aging society, adding that specific work and policies would be implemented shortly after the system has been officially set up.

He stressed that "ten years [is] not a short period, but the government will set the plans in motion as soon as possible." He added that a supervisory

system would be established for a comprehensive annual review of the policy implementation, which will include conclusions, assessments and specific plans for future services.

"The action plan of elderly services jointly proposed by 13 departments basically attends to senior citizens' demands in different aspects, which cover healthcare, social security, protection of rights, social participation, and living environment. Most elderly citizens that participated in the briefing sessions expressed approval of the framework," he told the media, adding that residents can still submit opinions during the consultation period, which ends on September 15.

corporate bits

SANDS LAUNCHES EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY 'CRAZY RATE' ROOM OFFERS



To celebrate the eighth anniversary of Sands Resorts Cotai Strip Macao and The Venetian Macao, guests can participate in the first-ever flash sale with rates starting at MOP88 on a limited number of guestrooms. The offer represents savings of up to 90 percent on rooms at six Sands Resorts hotels during the "Crazy Rate" promotion. The deal will only be available via the official website while details of the offers will be released through the hotel's official website and social media channels.

From today until Wednesday, guests will be able to book rooms for stays between Aug. 28, 2015 and Feb. 7, 2016 at discounted rates at The Venetian Macao; Four Seasons Hotel Macao; Conrad Macao, Cotai Central; Sheraton Macao Hotel, Cotai Central; Holiday Inn Macao, Cotai Central; and Sands Macao as part of the "Crazy Rate" promotion. Details of each offer will be made available via the official websites of Sands Resorts Macao, The Venetian Macao and Sands Cotai Central from 9 a.m. today; bookings can be made until 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday. A low rate for one of the above hotels will be announced on all Sands Resorts Macao official websites and social media platforms each day during the promotion.

MIGRANT LABOR

Domestic helpers appeal for agency regulation

Foreign domestic helpers rallied yesterday during a press conference to urge for strengthened regulation of local employment agencies. The maids slammed some of the intermediaries for financially exploiting them upon their arrival in the territory.

Ayu Sri Wahyuni and Erik, from the Peduli Buruh Migrant Indonesian Concern Group, disclosed that most their fellows were subjected to unreasonable confiscation of their identification documents and ATM cards by their agents. Besides, the pair also condemned the overcharging of agency fees that could reach as high as MOP25,000, to be taken from their meager salaries every month.

Jasmine Santos, another Filipino maid from



From left to right, Jasmine Santos, Erik, Ayu Sri Wahyuni

the Progressive Labour Union, also expressed her dissatisfaction that other domestic helpers from her country experienced similar ordeals where half their wages for the first three months were taken by agents, who withheld either their blue cards or passports.

"So it means if your salary is MOP4,000, you

will give MOP2,000 for the three months; this is ludicrous," said Santos. "They'll take a lot of money, you won't be hired for a very long time. From the very beginning, the agency abused us already to work and [took] the money, and our strength."

Describing the upcoming anti-maid rally to be held this coming Sun-

day as "saddening," the trio reckoned that conflicts between employers and domestic helpers usually stemmed from miscommunication, which required understanding from each other.

"Not every worker here abused kids," said Sri Wahyuni who has been serving her current employer for 11 years. "If both sides argue all the time and do not even communicate, that's the problem that takes time to be addressed."

The groups also called on local employers to take reference from the practice in Hong Kong to make clear the employee's expected duties and rules in their contracts to safeguard both parties' interests.

In response to allegations that some migrant maids deliberately made errors in order to be laid off for other better-paying jobs, the domestic helpers said that most of them were devoted to their assigned jobs and always expected a positive rapport with their employers. **Staff reporter**

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Sinking currencies point to jitters about emerging economies

Paul Wiseman and
Joshua Goodman, Washington

THE damage spans the globe.

Thailand's baht. Kazakhstan's tenge. South Africa's rand. Peru's nuevo sol.

In emerging markets worldwide, currencies are plunging over fears that developing economies are on the verge of a crippling fall. Success stories until recently, emerging economies are seen as casualties now — of slower growth in China, plunging prices for commodities like oil and iron ore, the prospect of higher U.S. interest rates and homegrown threats.

The damage has spilled across oceans, with the turmoil jolting investors in New York, Tokyo and Europe. Investors there worry that China and other major emerging economies will reduce their imports. They also fear a trade-disrupting currency war as some countries desperately lower their currencies' value to gain a competitive edge. A lower-priced currency makes a country's goods cheaper for foreigners.

The Dow Jones industrials plunged 530 points, more than 3 percent, Friday on top of a 358-point drop Thursday. Tokyo's Nikkei index shed 3 percent Friday.

For all the markets' jitters, many economists say they remain confident that the U.S. economy is resilient enough to withstand a slowdown in the developing world. And Europe's economy appears to be emerging from its long slump.

Even so, the trouble in emerging markets is a surprising and unsettling reversal.



Turkish Liras, Euros and U.S. Dollars are stacked at a currency exchange office in Istanbul, Turkey

"It's remarkable just how things turned around so quickly," says Neil Shearing, an economist at Capital Economics and a former British Treasury official.

Consider Peru. Three years ago, its capital, Lima, was chosen to host an International Monetary Fund's meeting of global finance officials in what was seen as a celebration of Latin America's arrival in the economic big leagues.

But with the event six weeks away, Latin America's outlook has descended from boom to gloom. Peru's economy has steadily slowed, and its currency, the nuevo sol, has plunged 2.5 percent against the U.S. dollar in the past month.

And Peru boasts one of the region's healthiest economies.

Brazil's economy is expected to shrink this year and next. Its currency, the real, is down 7 percent the past month and more than 30 percent the past two years. The Mexican peso closed Friday at a record low against the dollar.

It's hardly just Latin America. Kazakhstan's currency plummeted this week after the government decided to let it trade freely. The South African rand fell this week to a 14-year-low against the U.S. dollar. Turkey's lira hit a record low against the dollar this week.

Hung Tran, an executive managing director at the Institute of International Finance, expects developing countries to post 3.8 percent economic growth this year, down from

4.3 percent in 2014. The institute is on the verge of cutting that forecast further.

Analysts point to a primary culprit:

"It's all coming from China," says Masamichi Adachi, an economist with JP Morgan Chase in Tokyo. "Brazil, South Africa, many countries are commodity exporters, and the final destination is all going to China."

The Chinese economy is slowing more sharply than most people had expected from the double-digit growth rates of the mid-2000s. The world's second-biggest economy is expected to grow 7 percent this year, which would be its slowest pace since 1990.

That means China would need fewer raw materials — Chilean

copper, Nigerian oil, Brazilian iron ore. That helps explain why China's pullback has loosed carnage in global commodity prices: The Standard & Poor's GSCI commodity index, which tracks 24 commodities prices, is down nearly 20 percent this year.

Emerging markets were already feeling the squeeze last week, when China devalued its currency, the yuan. That step ignited a semi-panic.

"The devaluation is a red flag about China's current economic situation," says Kurt Braybrook, who runs a Shanghai company that does quality control work. A falling yuan raises the risk that other countries will devalue their currencies to catch up. **AP**

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FIGHTER jets flew low over Beijing yesterday as thousands of soldiers from China, Russia and other countries rehearsed for a military parade next month commemorating the end of World War II.

The Sept. 3 parade will showcase the People's Liberation Army's rapidly growing capabilities at a time when Beijing is asserting territorial claims in the South China Sea and East China Sea.

The city center was closed to the public, but photos on social media showed Chinese missile carriers rolling through Tiananmen Square and troops carrying the flags of Cuba, Fiji, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Pakistan. Military helicopters flew over forming the figure "70."

More than 10,000 Chinese military personnel with more than 500 vehicles and some 200 aircraft took part in the rehearsal, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

The Chinese military plans to show seven types of long-, intermediate- and short-range missiles at the parade, Xinhua said. It cited a military official as saying 84 percent of armaments to be displayed have not been shown in public previously.

Beijing rehearses for massive military parade



Chinese female troops practice marching near a billboard showing Chinese President Xi Jinping, on the outskirts of Beijing

Belarus, Kazakhstan and Mexico also plan to participate, according to state media.

China says the parade is about marking the 70th anniversary of Japan's World War II surrender and demonstrating its commitment to peace. But it comes as other governments are expressing unease at Beijing's confrontational stance toward territorial disputes. That has

made taking part in the event politically charged.

Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia, Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj of Mongolia, Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt and Milos Zeman of the Czech Republic have accepted invitations to attend, along with unidentified leaders from Central Asia, according to state media.

South Korean President Park

Geun-hye has said she will attend a ceremony marking the anniversary of victory over Japan in World War II, but aides say she has yet to decide whether to attend the military parade.

The 75-member Mexican military delegation will include officers and cadets from the country's military, naval and air force colleges, according to Xinhua.

"With this event, we want to help Mexico become a player with global responsibility," the commander of the delegation, Jose Carlos Luna Loaeza, was quoted as saying.

Beijing also is actively courting support for its rivalry with Japan, which many Chinese say has never showed adequate contrition for its World War II invasion of China.

On Saturday, propaganda officials took foreign reporters to a military base outside Beijing where hundreds of troops in dress uniforms and battle attire

marched along a tarmac strip. China insists the parade is about marking the anniversary, remembering the sacrifices of past generations and demonstrating its commitment to future peace.

"This is not about extending hatred, but about reflecting on history and facing the future," the head trainer of the parade's infantry component, Col. Liu Shijun, told reporters.

Despite that, the parade is widely seen as a high-profile display of the People's Liberation Army's fast-growing capabilities, and comes as China is growing more assertive.

Those moves have prompted its concerned neighbors to boost their own capabilities, and the U.S. military to renew its commitments to regional allies.

China's last such military parade was in 2009 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic. **AP**

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Police hunt man accused of killing 9

Police in eastern China have launched a manhunt for a man accused of fatally stabbing his estranged wife and eight other people. The official Xinhua News Agency said the attacks occurred Saturday in Longshan County in Hunan province, southwest of Shanghai. It said four other people also were injured. A news website in Hunan, rednet.cn, said yesterday some 400 police officers were mobilized to find the suspect, identified as Wang Wensheng.

Landslide in Yunnan kills 3

A Chinese state news agency says rescue workers are searching for eight people missing after a landslide that killed three others in the country's mountainous southwest. The Xinhua News Agency said the disaster at about 7 p.m. on Saturday evening buried a road in Funing County in Yunnan province. Xinhua said some 200 rescue workers using excavators and sniffer dogs were searching for eight people who were unaccounted for.

State firms to take on global cruise giants

China is looking to secure a stake in the country's USD8 billion cruise industry with a joint venture between two state firms. China Communications Construction Co., and CTS (HK) Group Corp., announced Friday that they will work together to offer cruises from the southern resort of Sanya. The joint venture will build its fleet through merger, acquisition and other cooperative agreements. A maiden voyage from Sanya to the Xisha Islands is expected some time this year. The anticipated cruise itineraries will differ from those offered by existing global cruise giants operating in China, with the aim to establish Sanya's Phoenix Island as one of the world's largest cruise ports. The number of people taking cruises in China has grown at an annual rate of 34 percent over the past decade and is expected to hit 4.5 million annually by 2020.



In this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, a chemical plant is on fire following an explosion in Zibo, in east China's Shandong Province

Explosion at Shandong chemical plant kills 1

AN explosion at a chemical plant in eastern China killed one person and injured nine others, a state news agency reported yesterday, less than two weeks after a similar disaster at a chemical warehouse killed 123 people.

The explosion occurred just before 9 p.m. Saturday in Zibo, a city southeast of Beijing in Shandong province, the Xi-

nhua News Agency said. It said firefighters put out the resulting fire just before 2 a.m. yesterday.

One person working at the facility was killed, Xinhua said. It said the cause of the blast was under investigation.

Environmental authorities detected no contamination from the blast, according to Xinhua.

The facility, owned by Shandong Runxing Chemical Technology Co., produced adiponitrile, which can give off toxic fumes when burned, according to Xinhua. Adiponitrile is used in making nylon and other products.

The blast follows the Aug. 12 explosion at a warehouse holding chemicals in Tianjin, a port city east of Beijing.

Yesterday, the Tianjin city government announced on its microblog account that the death toll in that disaster had been raised to 123. It said 50 people were still missing.

The cause of the Tianjin disaster is under investigation. State media say that the warehouse, which stored sodium cyanide and other dangerous chemicals, was too close to homes and that its operators may have obtained falsified safety approvals.

The disaster raised concerns about the effectiveness of China's regulatory bodies and their ability to oversee industries in which they or officials might have an interest. **AP**

Uber's latest investment said to be USD100m

UBER Technologies Inc. isn't just ramping up its business in China - the mobile car-sharing service is starting to draw investment interest there as well.

A unit of China's Citic Group Corp. is planning to invest USD100 million in the San Francisco-based company, a person familiar with the matter said.

Landing an investment from the state-controlled entity may help accelerate Uber's business in China. It's investing more than 7 billion yuan (\$1.1 billion) to expand in the country, with plans to start operating in 50 midsized cities in the next year. Users of the Uber app complete almost 1 million rides daily in China, which is expected to outgrow Uber's U.S. home



market by the end of this year, Chief Executive Officer Travis Kalanick wrote in a letter to investors in June.

Citic-CP Asset Management, a joint venture between Citic Trust and Citic-Prudential Fund

Management, plans to invest about 80 percent of the \$100 million in Uber and about 20 percent in its China unit, said the person, who asked not be identified because the plans are private. Uber has said

that its China unit could at some point be listed on the Chinese stock market, without providing a time frame.

Uber's Beijing-based spokeswoman Huang Xue couldn't immediately comment. A call to Citic-

CP Asset Management outside usual business hours went unanswered.

It wasn't clear how the latest investment would impact Uber's valuation, which was pegged at about \$50 billion in the last financing round.

Didi Kuaidi, Uber's main competitor in China, is backed by Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. and Tencent Holdings Ltd. Didi attracted Beijing Automotive Group Co. as an investor in its latest funding round, people familiar with the matter said.

Beijing Automotive, controlled by the state-owned Assets Supervision & Administration Commission of Beijing, joins sovereign wealth fund China Investment Corp. as investors in Didi, according to the people. **Bloomberg**

Eric Talmadge and Foster Klug,
Pyongyang

KOREAS

Rivals restart talks, pull back from brink – for now

FOR the moment, North and South Korea have pulled back from the brink and yesterday resumed a second round of talks that temporarily pushed aside vows of imminent war on the peninsula.

The first round of marathon talks on Saturday came to nothing, and South Korea's military reported yesterday that it detected unusual troop and submarine movements in North Korea that indicated Pyongyang was strengthening its capability for a possible strike.

Still, even the decision for senior officials from countries that have spent recent days vowing to destroy each other to simply sit down at a table in Panmunjom, the border enclave where the 1953 armistice ending fighting in the Korean War was agreed to, is something of a victory.

The length of the first round of talks – nearly 10 hours – and the lack of immediate progress are not unusual. While the Koreans often have difficulty agreeing to talks, once they do, overlong sessions are often the rule. After decades of animosity and bloodshed, however, finding common ground is much harder.

South Korean presidential spokesman Min Kyung-wook did not disclose details about the first round of talks, which adjourned just before dawn yesterday. The talks began shortly after a deadline set by North Korea for the South to dismantle loudspeakers broadcasting anti-Pyongyang propaganda at their border. North Korea had declared that its front-line troops were in full war readiness and prepared to go to battle if Seoul did not back down.

An official from Seoul's Defense Ministry said about 70 percent of the North's more than 70 submarines and undersea vehicles had left their bases and were undetectable by the South Korean military as of Saturday.

The official, who didn't want to be named because of office rules, also said the North had doubled the strength of its front-line artillery forces since the start of the talks early Saturday evening. "It seems that the North is pursuing dialogue on one side and preparing for battle on another side," he said.

The standoff is the result of a series of events that started with the explosions of land mines on the southern side of the Demilitarized Zone between the Koreas that Seoul says were planted by North Korea. The explosions maimed two South Korean soldiers on a routine patrol. In response, the South resumed anti-Pyongyang propaganda broadcasts for the first time in

AP PHOTO



South Korean army soldiers walk on Unification Bridge, which leads to the demilitarized zone, near the border village of Panmunjom in Paju

11 years, infuriating the North, which is extremely sensitive to any criticism of its authoritarian system.

There was shock and worry Thursday, when South Korea's military fired dozens of artillery rounds across the border in response to what Seoul said were North Korean artillery strikes meant to back up an earlier threat to attack the loudspeakers. The North denies it was behind the land mines and the shelling, claims that Seoul calls nonsense.

The Defense Ministry official said the South continued the anti-Pyongyang broadcasts even after the start of the talks

It seems that the North is pursuing dialogue on one side and preparing for battle on another side

SOUTH KOREAN DEFENSE
MINISTRY OFFICIAL

on Saturday and also after the start of the second session yesterday. He said Seoul would decide after the talks whether to halt the broadcasts.

While the meeting offered a way for the rivals to avoid an immediate collision, analysts in Seoul wondered whether the countries were standing too far apart to expect a quick agreement.

South Korea probably can't afford to walk away with a weak agreement after it had openly vowed to stem a "vicious cycle" of North Korean provocations amid public anger over the land mines, said Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk University.

It was highly unlikely that the North would accept the South's expected demand for Pyongyang to take responsibility for the land mine explosions and apologize, he added. However, Koh said the meeting might open the door to more talks between the rivals to discuss a variety of issues.

At the meeting, South Korea's presidential national security director, Kim Kwan-jin, and Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo sat down with Hwang Pyong So, the top political officer for the Korean

People's Army, and Kim Yang Gon, a senior North Korean official responsible for South Korean affairs.

Hwang is considered by outside analysts to be North Korea's second most important official after supreme leader Kim Jong Un.

South Korea had been using 11 loudspeaker systems along the border for the broadcasts, which included the latest news around the Korean Peninsula and the world, South Korean popular music and programs praising the South's democracy and economic affluence over the North's oppressive government, said a senior military official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Each loudspeaker system has broadcast for more than 10 hours a day, the official said. If North Korea attacks the loudspeakers, the South is ready to strike back at the North Korean units responsible, he said.

North Korea, which has also restarted its own propaganda broadcasts, is extremely sensitive to any criticism of its government. Analysts in Seoul also believe the North fears that the South's broadcasts could demoralize its front-li-

ne troops and inspire them to defect.

In Pyongyang, North Korean state media reported that more than 1 million young people have volunteered to join or rejoin the military to defend their country should a conflict break out.

Despite such highly charged rhetoric, which is not particularly unusual, activity in the capital remained calm yesterday, with people going about their daily routines. Truckloads of soldiers singing martial songs could occasionally be seen driving around the city, and a single minivan with camouflage netting was parked near the main train station as the talks with the South went on.

Throughout the day, large crowds of people were mobilized to practice mass activities for the Oct. 10 anniversary of the founding of the ruling Workers Party 70 years ago.

As night fell, instead of anxiously awaiting the outcome of the talks, many Pyongyang residents were riveted to TVs in public places to watch the debut of the "Boy General" cartoon show, which has been revamped for the first time in five years at the order of Kim Jong Un. AP

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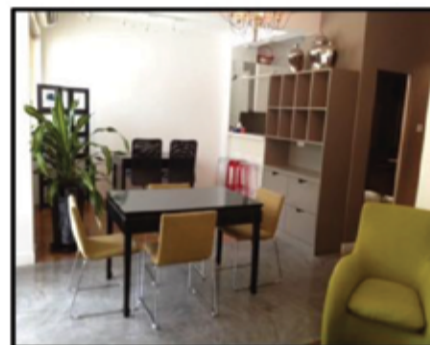
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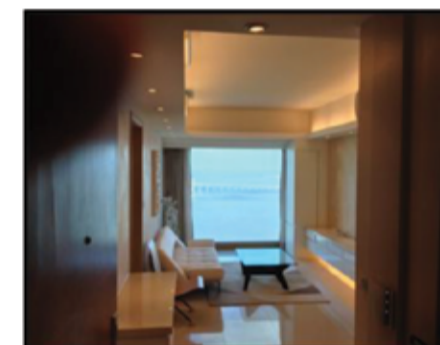


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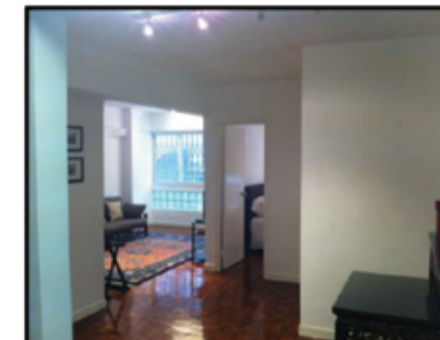


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DESPITE new surveillance video that may offer a possible clue to the bombing in central Bangkok that killed 20 people, Thai police said yesterday that the perpetrators may have already fled the country, and that they will “need some luck” to catch them.

Surveillance video leaked to Thai media shows a man in a blue shirt placing a bag on a riverside walkway, then kicking it into the water last Monday night shortly after the explosion several kilometers away at the downtown Erawan shrine. About 18 hours later, at 1 p.m. Tuesday, an explosion took place at the same spot near a busy pier, causing no casualties.

Col. Winthai Suvarae, a spokesman for Thailand’s ruling junta, also said that closed circuit television showing the main bombing suspect was used to trace the route he took to and from the site of last Monday evening’s rush-hour attack. He said that a police sketch of the suspect had been distributed to border posts.

Police spokesman Prawut Thawornsiri said he believes the perpetrator would have timed an escape carefully and “wouldn’t have much time to stay around.”

“I suspect that he may have left, but we will keep searching,

THAILAND

Police fear Bangkok bombing suspect may have fled



Police investigators work near the statue of Phra Phrom, at the Erawan Shrine

in case we can find others who may be in the country or find clues, evidence and witnesses who may have seen him,” he told Channel 3 TV network.

Police have offered a reward that on Friday was raised to 3 million baht (USD85,000). On a police arrest warrant, the suspect is described as a “foreign man,” although a military spokesman said a connection to international terrorism seemed unlikely.

Thailand’s police chief Somyot Poompanmoung said investigators would need some luck to catch those behind the attack.

“I have to say we need some luck. If the police have good fortune, we might be able to make an arrest, but ... if the perpetrator has good fortune maybe they can get away,” he told reporters yesterday after a ceremonial show of security strength meant in part to reassure the public over safety.

Meanwhile, authorities have

arrested two people for allegedly spreading “false information,” apparently in connection with the shrine bombing.

A student who posted a bomb threat on Facebook was arrested in Ayutthaya on Saturday and was charged with a computer crime that is punishable by up to five years in jail and a fine of 100,000 baht (\$2,800), Winthai said. He did not give details of the second arrest except to say it happened in Bangkok. Ayutthaya is about 80 kilometers north of Bangkok.

Winthai said the two people were arrested for spreading “false information causing confusion in society,” but did not say whether their posts were directly linked to the bombing.

So far the operation to find who carried out the attack appears to have made little headway, with apparently contradictory statements coming from the military-backed government and the police. **AP**

MALAYSIA

Authorities find 24 more bodies of human trafficking victims

MALAYSIAN police said yesterday that they have found 24 more bodies of suspected human trafficking victims in jungles bordering Thailand.

Authorities said in May that they had discovered 139 suspected graves in abandoned jungle camps in the northern Malaysian state of Perlis, a remote area bordering Thailand that trafficking syndicates were using as a transit point.

Most of the victims were believed to be from Myanmar’s persecuted Rohingya minority or impoverished migrants from Bangladesh.

Police said in a brief statement yesterday that 24 bodies were discovered this past week, in addition to 106 bodies found earlier. The bodies have been sent for autopsy, the statement said. No further details were available.

The discoveries in northern Malaysia followed similar revelations earlier in May in Thailand, where police unearthed 36 bodies from shallow gra-



ves in seven abandoned camps on the Thai side of the border.

The discoveries have exposed hidden networks of jungle camps run by human smugglers, who have for years held countless desperate people captive while extorting ransoms from their families. Most of the victims were part of a wave of people who fled their homelands to reach countries like Malaysia, where they hoped to find work or live freely.

Human rights groups and activists say the area

along the Thai-Malaysia border has been used for years to smuggle migrants and refugees, including Rohingya Muslims.

In many cases, they pay human smugglers thousands of dollars for passage, but are instead held for weeks or months while traffickers extort more money from their families. Rights groups say some have been beaten to death, and The Associated Press has documented other cases in which people have been enslaved on fishing boats. **AP**

AFGHANISTAN

Car bombing kills at least 12, including 3 Americans

Rahim Faiez, Kabul

A suicide car bomber attacked a NATO convoy traveling through a crowded neighborhood in Afghanistan’s capital Saturday, killing at least 12 people, including three American civilian contractors for the international military force, authorities said.

The Taliban quickly denied it was behind in the attack in Kabul’s Marcorayan neighborhood, though the militants increasingly have been targeting Kabul in recent weeks and often don’t claim attacks that maim large numbers of civilians.

The attack struck near the private Shinozada hospital, the sound of the powerful blast roaring throughout the capital. Ambulances and Afghan security forces quickly surrounded the blast site, blocking access off from about 1 kilometer away.

The bombing killed at least 11 Afghan civilians and one foreigner and wounded 66, said Wahidullah Mayar, a Health Ministry spokesman. In a statement, NATO said one of the Americans was killed in the blast, while the two others later died of their wounds. The contractors were not named.


It was not immediately possible to reconcile the differing casualty figures, though conflicting information is common after such attacks.

At least one armored vehicle in the convoy had been destroyed by the blast. It wasn’t clear how many armored cars were in the convoy, though it is at least two, often three because of heightened security concerns in the capital.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. In an email to journalists, Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid denied his group was responsible. **AP**



Afghan security forces and British soldiers inspect the site of a suicide attack in the heart of Kabul



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Dusan Stojanovic, Gvegelija

MACEDONIA

Thousands of migrants head closer to EU from Macedonia

THOUSANDS of tired and beleaguered migrants — mostly Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans fleeing conflict — boarded trains and buses in Macedonia that took them one step closer to the European Union yesterday, a day after they stormed past police trying to block them from entering the country from Greece.

On Saturday, some 2,000 rain-soaked migrants rushed past baton-wielding Macedonian officers, who had been sealing the border for three days. Police fired stun grenades and dozens of people were injured as the migrants leapt over barbed wire or ran across a field not protected by the fence to enter Macedonia.

After the incident, police decided to allow migrants to cross the border freely again from Greece, which is also overwhelmed by the human tide. Police officials said that the blockade was imposed to try and stem the overflow of people that has caused chaotic scenes at a railway station in the Macedonian town of Gvegelija as thousands tried to secure places on overcrowded trains.

Yesterday, the migrants —



Child migrants look from a window onboard a train departing towards Serbia, at the railway station in the southern Macedonian town of Gvegelija

many with small children and babies — orderly boarded trains and buses that took them to the border with Serbia before heading farther north toward EU-member Hungary, which

is building a razor wire fence on its frontier to prevent them from entering. If they manage to enter Hungary, the migrants could travel freely across the borders of most of the 28 EU-

member states.

Thousands of migrants who reached Serbia overnight faced an overcrowded refugee center where they have to apply for asylum — the paper that allows

them three days to reach Hungary.

Emina, a migrant from Syria who boarded an early morning train with her two-month-old baby, blamed Macedonian authorities for “harassing” the migrants, not giving them food or water, as well as holding them back at the border.

“It was very hard in Macedonia,” she said. “I did not sleep or eat for three days. Just as we arrived to the border, they closed it. It was awful.”

Both Greece and Macedonia have seen an unprecedented wave of migrants this year. More than 160,000 have arrived so far in Greece, mostly crossing in inflatable dinghies from the nearby Turkish coast — an influx that has overwhelmed Greek authorities and the country’s small Aegean islands. Some 45,000 crossed through Macedonia over the past two months. **AP**

IRAN

British foreign secretary reopens embassy in Tehran

Ali Akbar Dareini, Tehran

BRITISH Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond reopened the British Embassy in Tehran yesterday, nearly four years after it was closed following an attack by hard-liners.

Hammond arrived in Tehran yesterday to attend the reopening ceremony and to hold talks with Iranian officials. The trip marked the first time a British foreign secretary has visited Tehran since 2003.

Britain has had no diplomatic presence in Tehran since hard-liners protesting the imposition of international sanctions stormed it in November 2011, but the election of President Hassan Rouhani and the recent nuclear deal between Iran and world powers have brought about a significant diplomatic thaw.

The Iranian Embassy in London was simultaneously reopened in London, the semi-official ISNA news agency said.

“Four years on from an attack on the British Embassy, I am today re-opening it,” Hammond said in a prepared statement. “Our relationship has improved since 2011. President Rouhani’s election and last month’s nuclear agreement were important milestones. I believe that we have the potential to go much further.”

Terrorism, regional stability and the spread of the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq are among the challenges Britain and Iran should be prepared to work together on, Hammond said.

Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif welcomed the reopening of the



The British Embassy plaque in Tehran

British Embassy, saying it showed Iran’s regional and global significance.

“The world has realized Iran’s constructive role in the region and the globe,” state TV quoted Zarif as saying yesterday. “Of course, we have differences with some European countries but that can be negotiated through interaction, with open eyes and a realistic approach.”

Hammond and the new British charge d’affaires, Ajay Sharma, were attending the embassy reopening ceremony together with representatives of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Office said.

Hammond was also accompanied by a small British trade delegation to discuss possible future trade opportunities following last month’s nuclear deal, the ministry added.

The British Embassy would initially have a small number of staff with limited consular services, but officials expect to upgrade its leadership to full ambassador status in coming months. **AP**

FRANCE

Gun-wielding train attacker on authorities’ radar in 3 countries

Elaine Ganley and Nadine Achoui-Lesage

A man who boarded a high-speed Amsterdam-to-Paris train with a Kalashnikov rifle before being tackled by passengers was on the radar of authorities in three countries, had ties to radical Islam and may have traveled to Syria, authorities said.

The attacker was identified by a French official close to the investigation as Ayoub El-Khazzani, 26, who was known to authorities in France, Belgium and Spain. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing.

Officials did not disclose a possible motive for the Friday attack, but Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said Spanish authorities had advised French intelligence about the suspect because he belongs



In this image made from a video taken by Anthony Sadler, a gunman lies on floor with arms tied behind his back, after an incident on a high-speed train traveling from Amsterdam to Paris

to the “radical Islamist movement.” Three people were injured but no one died, and authorities credited brave American, French and British passengers with stopping El-Khazzani, who they said was armed with the assault rifle, nine magazines, a pistol and a box cutter.

El-Khazzani was

being questioned Saturday by French counter-terrorism police who confirmed through fingerprints their suspicions that he was the same man who had been brought to their attention in February 2014, according to the French official. French authorities said he had lived in the southern Spanish city of Algeciras, frequenting a mosque which is under surveillance there. He was transferred Saturday morning to anti-terror police headquarters outside Paris and can be held for up to 96 hours.

El-Khazzani had the Kalashnikov strapped across his shoulder when a French citizen trying to use the toilet encountered him and tried to subdue him, Cazeneuve said. Bullets started flying and two American servicemen, with help from a friend and a Briton, tackled and disarmed him. **AP**

what's ON

MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (Except Thursdays)

ADDRESS: Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen

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Planetarium (Dome/Sky Shows): MOP50

Planetarium (3D Dome/3D Sky Shows): MOP65

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MACAU GRAND PRIX MUSEUM & WINE MUSEUM

TIME: 10am-8pm daily (Except Tuesdays)

VENUE: Rua Luis Gonzaga Gomes, 431, basement

(Tourism Activities Centre-CAT)

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8798 4108 / 2833 3000



INSTALLATION 'VALKYRIE OCTOPUS'

BY JOANA VASCONCELOS

TIME: 24 hours

UNTIL: October 31, 2015

VENUE: MGM MACAU, Av. Dr. Sun Yat Sen, NAPE

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8802 8888

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

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

UNTIL: September 30, 2015

VENUE: SIGNUM Living Store,

Rua do Almirante Sérgio, no. 285, R/C, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 8925

'SAUDADE' ART EXHIBITION

TIME: 24 hours

UNTIL: September 30, 2015

VENUE: L2 Showcase / MGM MACAU,

Avenida Dr. Sun Yat Sen, NAPE, Macau

ADMISSION: free

GUIDED TOURS: 12pm-9pm (Mondays to Fridays);

11am to 9:00 pm (Saturdays and Sundays)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8802 8888

Offbeat

ALABAMA: GIANT ALLIGATOR WEIGHING 920 POUNDS GETS PULLED FROM LAKE

Authorities say an alligator pulled from a lake in southeast Alabama weighs an estimated 417 kilograms (920 pounds).

AL.com (bit.ly/1Js66AM) reports that the 4-meter, 15.24-centimeter gator was captured in Lake Eufaula on Aug. 14.

Authorities say the alligator was caught by Scott Evans of Center Point, Alabama, and his friends, Jeff and Justin Gregg. The gator was weighed at Dixon Lumber Co. in Eufaula.

Last year, a 4.57-meter, 23-centimeter gator weighing 458.8 kilograms (1,011.5 pounds) was caught in Meek Creek, a tributary of the Alabama River. About 115 pounds of that gator was a deer in the gator's stomach.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPI) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPI Live
18:50	The Presence of Anita (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sports
22:10	The Presence of Anita
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPI Live

cinema

CINETEATRO

20 Aug - 26 Aug



HITMAN: AGENT 47

ROOM 1

2.15, 4.05, 5.55, 9.30 pm

Director: Aleksander Bach

Starring: Rupert Friend, Hannah Ware, Zachary Quinto

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 96min

ATTACK ON TITAN

ROOM 1

7.45 pm

Director: Shinji Higuchi

Starring: Haruma Miura, Kiko Mizuhara

Language: Japanese (English and Chinese)

Duration: 90min



PIXELS

ROOM 2

(2D) 2.30, 4.30, 9.30 pm

(3D) 7.30 pm

Director: Chris Columbus

Starring: Adam Sandler, Kevin James,

Michelle Monaghan

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 106min

DORAEMON THE MOVIE:

NOBITA AND THE SPACE HEROES

ROOM 3

2.15 pm

Director: Yoshihiro Osugi

Language: Cantonese (Chinese/English)

Duration: 100min

WILD CITY

ROOM 3

4.05, 5.55, 7.45, 9.45 pm

Director: Ringo Lam

Starring: Louis Koo, Shawn Yue, Tong Liya

Language: Cantonese/Mandarin (Chinese/English)

Duration: 105min

MACAU TOWER

20 AUG - 9 SEPT

PIXELS

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Chris Columbus

Starring: Adam Sandler, Kevin James,

Michelle Monaghan

Language: English (Chinese)

this day in history



1993 MICHAEL JACKSON ACCUSED OF CHILD ABUSE

Police in Los Angeles are investigating allegations of child abuse made against singer Michael Jackson.

They have refused to give details but it has emerged that two of Mr Jackson's homes were searched at the weekend following allegations of child abuse.

It is reported that the father of one boy befriended by Mr Jackson has alleged the singer seduced the child and performed sex acts with him.

Detectives are said to have interviewed the boy and other youngsters who visited Mr Jackson's Neverland ranch in Santa Barbara.

They include 12-year old actor Macaulay Culkin, star of the Home Alone films.

The singer who is currently on tour in Thailand is aware of the allegations and issued a statement through his lawyer, Harold Weitzman.

"I am confident the police department will conduct a fair and thorough investigation and that the result will demonstrate that there was no wrong doing on my part," Mr Weitzman read.

The singer's security adviser, Anthony Pellicano, has said the allegation is part of a \$20m extortion plot.

Around 30 such blackmail attempts were made against Mr Jackson each year, Mr Pellicano added.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Michael Jackson vehemently denied the accusations - made by the father of 13-year old Jordie Chandler - and he was never charged.

A civil case was settled out of court in early 1994 when he paid Jordie Chandler a reported USD20m (£14m).

Three years later Jordie Chandler's account of the relationship was detailed in a book by a journalist, Victor M Gutierrez.

The book was said to be based on a diary the boy had kept at the time and included details of alleged sexual encounters between the pair.

In 1996 Jordie Chandler's father, Evan, started a claim for around \$60m (£38.5m) from the singer claiming Michael Jackson had breached an agreement never to discuss the case.

In 1999 a court ruled in Michael Jackson's favour and threw out the lawsuit.

Then in November 2003, he was arrested and charged with child abuse after British journalist Martin Bashir had made a documentary in which Jackson admitted sharing his bed with children.

Dubbed the trial of the century, it lasted four months and ended in June 2005 when Michael Jackson was cleared of all charges.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Don't let subliminal heavy business ruin your experience...

Taurus April 20-May 20 Is it really as bad as all that? Don't let your deep emotions fool you...

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Spending at a slower pace won't delay the inevitable. You need to be more calculating than that...

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Emotional intensity is like your torch, illuminating the way. When the light goes out...

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 The most important things in life are beneath the surface. If you have the surface issued covered...

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You're wandering from store to store in a daze, waiting for an item to speak to you...

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Ignore acquisitive feelings when they rear their ugly heads. They're unattractive any time of year...

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Your love is suddenly as intense today as your fear was just yesterday...

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Focusing on the big, internal picture would just be a waste. That was an excellent way to avoid harsh financial reality...

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Details, details, details. If you're not organized by now, it's almost too late...

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 If you planned ahead this year, then congratulations. Things have suddenly slowed down...

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Don't let the stars in your eyes cloud your ability to read. Buying something is like signing a legal contract...

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

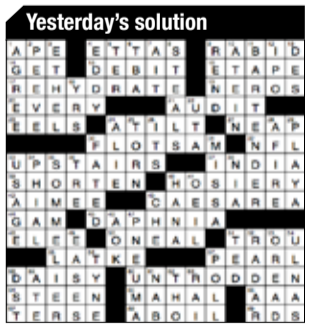
Sudoku puzzles categorized by difficulty: Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each puzzle is a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION. Rows include CHINA (Beijing, Harbin, etc.) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, etc.).

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- ___ accompli; 5- Having wings; 10- Actress Sommer; 14- Humerus neighbor; 15- Make less tense; 16- Boxer Spinks; 17- Horse color; 18- Dull surface; 19- Coup d' ___; 20- Unreachable; 23- Profits; 24- Lend ___ (listen); 25- Bear witness; 28- "Beetle Bailey" dog; 30- Lewd look; 31- Angler; 36- 7th letter of the Greek alphabet; 37- Collided; 39- Ending for legal or Japan; 40- Dryness of the skin; 42- Very funny!; 43- Highland hillside; 44- Beaten egg dish; 46- Cowboy's tool; 49- Mistake; 51- Impromptu; 56- Crowd noise; 57- Skylit lobbies; 58- Gaffer Aoki; 60- Airing; 61- Fowl pole; 62- Immature herring; 63- Aha!; 64- Actress Taylor; 65- Spouse; DOWN: 1- Fine hair; 2- Diamond family name; 3- ___ instant; 4- Scarlet bird; 5- Axilla; 6- Get to know; 7- Choir members; 8- Cheerful; 9- Corp. VIP, briefly; 10- Bess's predecessor; 11- Do not disturb; 12- Australian marsupial; 13- Go into; 21- Ballet step; 22- Despised; 25- "Roots" author Haley; 26- Head of France?; 27- Drop of water expelled by the eye; 28- Dept. of Labor division; 29- Common article; 31- Payment for travel; 32- Doctrine; 33- Kind of ticket; 34- 1975 Wimbledon champ; 35- Cool!; 37- PC storage medium; 38- "Michael Collins" actor; 41- Notice; 42- Bravery; 44- Elaborately adorned; 45- "The Simpsons" bartender; 46- Vive ___; 47- Neural transmitters; 48- Declare; 49- ___ the side of caution; 50- Elevate; 52- Henry VIII's sixth; 53- Oklahoma Indian; 54- Voice of America org.; 55- Preservative; 59- Form of poem, often used to praise something



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PJ (Open line) 993
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Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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Stephen Wade

OLYMPICS

Sailing chief: Rio events could be moved from polluted bay

THE head of sailing's governing body threatened yesterday to move all Olympic sailing events out of polluted Guanabara Bay unless the water is cleaner and floating rubbish is removed for next year's Rio Games.

"If we can't get the water to a level, then we'll move it outside (to the Atlantic Ocean) — for sure," Peter Sowrey told The Associated Press on the final day of an Olympic test event.

Such a move would be an embarrassment to local organizers and the International Olympic Committee. They have said repeatedly the water is safe despite being filled with floating rubbish and untreated sewage that gushes down gullies from hillside favelas.

Sowrey, the chief executive officer of ISAF, said one course for the test event inside the bay was closed after floating rubbish hindered racing for two days. Rubbish flowed into the bay despite little rain in Rio in recent weeks, probably the best weather officials could want.

He also complained he received no data during the week-long Olympic test from the state body that monitors water quality. A check of the website for Inea — the state institute — showed it had reported water quality on the bay only once in the last 10 days.



Athletes from the Nacra 17 Mixed Multihull class return to Flamengo beach after competing in a sailing test event for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games in Guanabara Bay, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

ISAF should demand it be moved because Rio 2016 did not live up to their obligations.

PAUL HENDERSON
FORMER PRESIDENT OF ISAF

"We are not happy as a federation from the reporting on the water," Sowrey said. "We're not getting the reporting we expected to get."

Rio's pollution has been in the spotlight since an independent five-month analysis by the AP published July 30 showed dangerously high levels of viruses from human sewage at all Rio Olympic water venues for sailing, rowing, canoeing, triathlon and distance swimming.

The IOC has declined to en-

dorse testing for viruses, which can cause stomach and respiratory ailments that could knock an athlete out of competition.

Sowrey said the closely watched sailing test event had gone "pretty well" from an operational viewpoint. But he said there was still too much raw sewage being pumped into the bay, and too much floating debris that makes fair racing impossible.

"If we can't get it clean, we've got to do something," he said.

ISAF has three courses in the bay and the three in the open Atlantic. Malcolm Page, a two-time Olympic gold-medal sailor and a spokesman for ISAF, backed up Sowrey.

"Yes, you could sail all the competitions outside," he said.

Moving sailing out of Guanabara would be a blow to ISAF, which hopes to use the backdrop of Sugarloaf Mountain to draw fans to the sport. Television rights holders also love the postcard images, which

look perfect from a distance.

Paul Henderson, the former president of ISAF and a former IOC member, said the event should be moved.

"ISAF should demand it be moved because Rio 2016 did not live up to their obligations," Henderson said in an email to AP.

Sailors at the week-long event wandered around the Marina da Gloria taking photos and videos of raw sewage still pouring into the water just a few steps from where they launch their boats. Raw sewage is also still flowing into Flamengo Beach, which will be used as a sailing viewing area for the Olympics, which open Aug. 5.

"We need much more improvement in cleaning up when it rains," Sowrey said. "And certainly closing down all the sewage outlets."

Sowrey, like the IOC, has declined to endorse viral testing, largely because the World Health Organization has not set a standard for viruses. But he said the high levels concerned him.

"Obviously I don't sleep well," he said. "I worry about it a lot. We're all worried about it."

He said he hoped to return to Rio before the end of the year, and he said it was unclear how soon ISAF would decide if it will move from the bay.

He said he also fears the water issue could distract from next year's Olympic sailing, turning the event into a debate forum on sanitation and pollution.

"We're worried," he said. "If the whole thing is around the quality of the water, then it's a failure for me." AP

CRICKET

Zealand on top after bowling out SA for 204 in 2nd ODI

DOUg Bracewell took three wickets on his recall to the team to give New Zealand the advantage in the second one-day international after bowling out South Africa for 204 yesterday.

Seamer Bracewell removed Rilee Rossouw, big-hitting David Miller and top-scorer Farhaan Behardien for his ODI career-best 3-31, raising New Zealand's hopes of levelling the three-match series.



Doug Bracewell

Behardien made 70 and shared a half-century partnership of 54 with tailender Vernon Philander (30 not out), the best stand of the innings for South Africa.

Adam Milne took 2-39 to back up Bracewell after South Africa opted to bat first on a slow wicket at Senwes Park.

South Africa was already struggling at 188-7 before it lost its last three batsmen to run outs. Dale Steyn's was the most bi-

zarre of those run outs as he got his bat stuck in the pitch and dropped it as he reached out to make his ground.

Bracewell — recalled after missing the 32-run loss in the first ODI — and Milne adjusted far better than the South African batsmen to the lack of pace in the pitch in Potchefstroom.

Milne removed both openers, Hashim Amla for eight and Morne van Wyk for two, and when

Bracewell had Rossouw out to an easy catch to mid-off, New Zealand had South Africa 68-3 and in big trouble.

Captain AB de Villiers made 31, but his departure left South Africa exposed.

Behardien's 70 off 87 balls with five fours and a six was measured and what South Africa desperately needed, but New Zealand kept the pressure on throughout and the Proteas limped to 204. AP

opinion

Rear Window

Severo Portela



GAMING SHIFT

It is difficult to imagine a day in Macau without gaming. The importance of the casino business is such that nobody has the luxury to live in ignorance, especially, in times of serious adjustment. Daiwa analysts, an accurate bunch both in form and in matter, predict an aggregate 2015 plunge of 34%, and, we eagerly quote, take the V-shaped gaming recovery as “unlikely”. They are being conservative.

Galaxy announced a second-quarter earnings drop of 46% on higher operation costs from its new resorts. Sands China is requesting an extension to complete its Parisian. Macau Studio City cannot do anything but open its doors on the 27th of October and hopes to get 400 additional tables. We could randomly bring other bits of day-to-day casino life, but there's little use.

Instead, we should focus on the on-going mid-term review of Macau's gaming operations to be completed at the end of September. First of all, we have to underline that by presenting himself before the Legislative Assembly to announce a presupposed study on the casino sector, Chui Sai On took into his own hands the development of the industry. Secondly, we do have to pinpoint that the study will be open to the public, since it has “first draft” as a disclaimer. Thirdly, the mid-term review as presented by the CE gives us some tips to envisage the big picture. The review, which some insist will link directly to a renewal of the casino concessions, will focus on eight elements, including the impact of gaming on the Macau economy. Add to that small and medium enterprises, society and the development of gaming and non-gaming activities.

However, going to the end of the communication - not in small print, but with all the political weight of the MSAR Chief Executive - Chui Sai On candidly voiced that the “review will also study if the current contracts with the operators have been fulfilled and if they are assuming their social responsibilities”. This is where the waters part ways.

For those who share the idea above mentioned of a direct link between the mid-term review and the renewal of the gaming concessions and gaming sub-concessions, the said review seems to be secondary to the legal framework. Meaning that no matter what is shown to the public eye, at the end of the day everything related with the renewal depends on the legal groundwork established in the year 2000. They would be wrong.

The new rationale demands a shift from a regulatory focus to economic, social and, in the end, political considerations. That is to say the idea is to produce an overview of gambling in the SAR, now and now and into the immediate future (if 10 years qualifies as the immediate future)."

The new approach to the question goes like this: evaluation, compromise-based, not rule-endowed, solutions. Eventually, post-hoc, we will have to confront any legal questions arising from each of the solutions through the Law.

THE BUZZ EPL: PEDRO MAKES INSTANT IMPACT AS CHELSEA BEATS WEST BROM 3-2

Pedro Rodriguez scored one goal and set up another early in his Chelsea debut in a 3-2 win over West Bromwich Albion yesterday, helping the defending champions to their first Premier League victory of the season.

Chelsea ended an action-packed match at The Hawthorns with 10 men after John Terry's 54th-minute sending-off, with Cesar Azpilicueta's goal three minutes before halftime proving the difference.

After Chelsea goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois saved James Morrison's 14th-minute penalty, Pedro — signed for USD33 million from Barcelona on Thursday — put Chelsea ahead in the 20th and then drove in a cross that Diego Costa turned home in the 30th.

A VISUAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Nevada Museum of Art opens unique Lake Tahoe exhibit in Reno



"Sugar Loaf Peak, El Dorado County, 1865" by Thomas Hill

Scott Sonner, Reno

THE first major historical art survey of Lake Tahoe and the Sierra's infamous Donner Pass takes an ambitious trip through two centuries, highlighting the roles of Native Americans and railroad barons and the tourists and scientists trying to halt the loss of clarity in the azure waters.

"Tahoe: A Visual History" opened over the weekend at the Nevada Museum of Art, featuring more than 400 objects by 175 painters, photographers, architects, basket weavers and sculptors. Arranged chronologically for the most part, it combines culturally and historically significant creations with contemporary works.

"It's a visual encyclopedia of the lake," said William Fox, director of the Reno museum's Center for Art + Environment.

The project's been in the works for five years, said Ann M. Wolfe, the museum's senior curator/deputy director.

"America's most iconic landscapes, places like Yosemite, Niagara Falls, and Yellowstone, have been studied by art historians and scholars extensively, but as far as art history goes, this Tahoe-Donner region has been unrecognized," Wolfe said.

"So much art has been made about this great historical narrative of the Sierra being this boundary to American progress in the 19th century — the trials of the Donner Party followed by

the success of the Transcontinental Railroad as a symbol of progress," she said. "But it's never really been brought together."

For the first time, all 1,394 square meters of the museum's gallery space will be devoted to a single theme.

"To do it justice, it had to be the whole museum," said Amanda Horn, communications director.

Through Jan. 10, the exhibit will showcase the works of Ansel Adams, Albert Bierstadt and Frank Lloyd Wright. But it begins with the largest collection of Washoe Indian baskets ever displayed in one place, many by Louisa Keyser, known as "Datsolalee."

Next, visitors follow maps and journals of western explorers, including John C. Fremont and John Muir. The path tracks the arrival of the Transcontinental Railroad in the 1860s and the ensuing logging and mining boom, the shift from timber to tourism and the rise of the resorts in the early 20th century before environmentalism emerged and scientists began to study Tahoe's ecosystem.

A centerpiece is the 19th century paintings of Bierstadt, Edwin Deakin, Maynard Dixon and Lorenzo Latimer, much of it commissioned by railroad barons. The section also touches on Chinese laborers, many of whom died while laying the rails.

The most treacherous stretch was just north of Tahoe at Donner Pass, which gets its name from a disastrous journey that left settlers

stranded, resulted in dozens of death and prompted some to resort to cannibalism in the winter of 1846-47. It's about 40 miles (64 kilometers) from Reno.

The exhibit references ideas that never materialized at Tahoe, including a resort designed by Wright in 1923. A model of Wright's "Summer Colony" is displayed.

The exhibit closes with works by sculptor Maya Lin, including pins arranged on the wall in an outline of the lake and its tributaries and glass bubbles on the floor. The size of each varies based on precipitation received that year. Each contains clear or cloudy water based on the clarity measured that year.

The region's art has been neglected, Fox said, because Tahoe was developed largely as a "private playground" with estates built on the riches of mining and timber.

"The lake was caught up in this very powerful resource extraction," Fox said. "It was privatized very early on. It never had a chance to become a national park, which normally is what you do with a scenic climax, like the Grand Canyon or Mount Rainier. You memorialize it."

With all the beautiful imagery, Wolfe concedes some might critique the show as being "boosterish."

"But there's also some critical chapters in our history we are addressing," she said, including the "history of Chinese railroad labor that has all but been forgotten." AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	50-70 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	105-135 Bad
Ambient	105-135 Bad

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

PHILIPPINES Typhoon Goni blew out of the northern Philippines yesterday after leaving at least 15 people dead and several others missing, including a dozen miners whose work camps were buried by a huge mudslide in a mountain village, officials said.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES The United Arab Emirates said Sunday that its military freed a British hostage held by al-Qaida in Yemen who had been kidnapped 18 months ago while working as a petroleum engineer in the war-torn country. A statement carried by the UAE's official WAM news agency said Douglas Robert Semple, 64, was freed during a military intelligence operation and taken to the Yemeni port city of Aden before being flown by UAE military aircraft to Abu Dhabi.



UK British police say the death toll from an airshow crash is "highly likely" to increase to 11 people after a fighter jet slammed into a busy main road. The Hawker Hunter single-seater fighter jet, which was participating in the Shoreham Airshow near Brighton in southern England, hit several vehicles on a nearby road as it crashed Saturday afternoon. Witnesses say the jet appeared to have plummeted when it failed to pull out of a loop maneuver. The initial death toll was seven.



ITALY's coast guard says it coordinated the rescue of some 4,400 migrants in a single day, a record-setting number, as smugglers took advantage of ideal sea conditions off Libya to launch a fleet of overcrowded, unseaworthy boats. The coast guard yesterday said 22 rescue operations were carried out a day earlier for motorized rubber dinghies and fishing boats, all crammed with migrants desperate to reach Europe's southern shores.