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Divisions over China's disputed island claims spilled over to a meeting of US and Asian defense ministers

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WORLD BRIEFS

N KOREA blocks two South Korean officials from entering a jointly run factory park in the North over what it describes as a conflict between the countries' management committees overseeing the complex.

N KOREA says the United States needs to end its "nuclear blackmail" and respond to Pyongyang's recent diplomatic overture to formally end the decades-old Korean conflict. Fighting ended in 1953 without a peace treaty, leaving North and South Korea still technically still at war.

PHILIPPINES Suspected Abu Syyaf gunmen are demanding more than USD60 million for two Canadians and a Norwegian they are holding in the jungles of the southern Philippines in the largest ransom the Muslim militants have sought for their hostages in years. *More on p13*

INDONESIA Thousands of tourists are stranded on two Indonesian islands after ash from the Mount Rinjani volcano forced the closure of two airports and blanketed villages and farmlands. Mount Rinjani on Lombok Island blasted ash and debris 3,500 meters into the air. *More on p12*

INDONESIA A strong earthquake struck off eastern Indonesia, causing people to flee their homes in panic, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage, and authorities said there was no threat of a tsunami.

CAMBODIA Police have arrested three men suspected of beating up two opposition lawmakers during an assault outside of the National Assembly last week.

INDIAN authorities detain key separatist leaders and hundreds of their supporters to prevent them from holding a protest rally during a visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Kashmir this weekend.

More on backpage

CHINA-TAIWAN

Historic Xi-Ma meeting sparks protests in Taipei

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Macau Foundation's third-quarter grants equivalent to half a year in 2014

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REPORT

'One in three cigarettes illegal' findings questioned by experts

A report published last month, which found that one in three cigarettes in Macau SAR are illegal, has continued to come under scrutiny after experts and regional organizations questioned its credibility.

The report, entitled "Asia-16: Illicit Tobacco Indicator 2014", was jointly commissioned by the International Tax and Investment Center (ITIC) and Oxford Economics (OE), and found that around 34.5 percent of all cigarettes consumed within Macau were illegal.

Last month, the Times reported on a press conference held by OE in Macau, outlining the main findings of the report. Since then, we have been alerted to recent critiques of versions of the reports from 2012 and 2013, including one which was published by Professor Hana Ross on May 20, 2015 titled "A Critique of the ITIC/OE Asia-14 Illicit Tobacco Indicator 2013".

According to Ross, who is the Principal Research Officer of Economics of Cape Town's University Tobacco Control Project, the 2012 and 2013 reports both fail to provide scientifically sound and unbiased information to policy-makers.

She contends, "The figures and statistics [that they report] are the product of either incorrect or unverified/unverifiable estimation methods applied to often questionable data from multiple sources that do not blend." She added that "the results are not comparable across countries and are inconsistent with results of other studies."

In her critique, Ross explains that the problems associated with the "Asia-16" report fall into four general categories: scientific method and data-gathering issues; a lack of detail allowing others to replicate the survey; the selective presentation of results; and what Ross terms "plain mistakes and errors."

The main argument for tackling the illegal trafficking of cigarettes, according to the "Asia-16" report, is to prevent national governments from losing out on missed tax revenues. Some however, believe that the results may have been influenced by the interests of large tobacco organizations.

Oxford Economics was forthcoming at the time of the press conference in revealing that supporting data had

been provided by both Nielsen and the tobacco firm, Philip Morris International (PM). Indeed, the disclaimer at the beginning of the report reads that OE and ITIC "prepared the Report in accordance with specific terms of reference between Philip Morris International Management" and that "financial support was provided by PM."

In the 2013 edition, the disclaimer read, "should any party choose to rely on the report, they do so at their own risk. ITIC and OE will not accept any responsibility or liability for the report." Ross highlighted this in her criticism and reiterated that she "would caution any stakeholders against relying on this report when assessing the trade in illicit cigarettes in their

The results are inconsistent with results of other studies.

HANA ROSS

country or in the region." This may be considered one of the reasons why this part of the disclaimer was not included into the 2014 edition, "Asia-16".

An additional critique, also authored by Ross, was published last month. It is a review of another report from ITIC, entitled "ASEAN Excise Tax Reform: A Resource Manual". The October critique was commissioned by The Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA), which according to their own descriptions, "supports ASEAN member states in developing and implementing effective, evidence-based tobacco control policies in line with the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control."

Skeptics point out that the ITIC report "focuses only on tobacco taxation" whilst failing to mention the overall implications of tobacco products for public health or the overall economy. "Governments should be wary of the recommendations in this manual," wrote Ross.

A media and communications representative from SEATCA told the Times: "We have not

seen the Asia-16 report [2014 edition], however we have seen earlier editions and have commissioned a critique of Asia-14."

When asked about the role of tobacco firm financing, the representative answered: "If Asia-16 is anything like those [previous] reports, we would not be surprised if it was funded by tobacco money."

The report was based on a survey of 1000 packs allegedly discarded in Macau. Survey organizers collected the discarded packages and determined the origins of the cigarettes. According to Adrian Cooper, CEO of Oxford Economics, this is the most accurate method of ascertaining the proportion of illicit cigarettes in a given area as "people are not always forthcoming or honest" when they are asked about the origins of their cigarettes.

The main conclusions from the survey were that countries which impose higher taxes on cigarette sales and which are located within close proximity to cheaper locations "tend to see a higher rate of illicit consumption." The results of the study pertaining to Macau look at data exclusively from 2014, and so did not reflect the recent regulations introduced in 2015, including a new tax hike and a reduced personal duty-free allowance.

The Times requested that a representative from Oxford Economics comment on the matter, but did not receive an answer by press time. **Staff reporter**

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Financial system 'exceptionally secretive': 11th worst globally



Pedestrians walk in front of the Bank of China building, left, and the Casino Grand Lisboa in Macau

MACAU has been ranked 11th for financial secrecy in an index published by the international NGO group, Tax Justice Network (TJN). According to the index, the operations of the territory's financial system are "exceptionally secretive," with the MSAR marked as secretive in 70 percent of the 15 indicators measured.

The index, entitled "2015 Financial Secrecy Index" is biennial and compiles data from 15 related indicators to estimate financial secrecy. Macau was ranked highly in indicators of secrecy which included corporate transparency regulation and transparency of beneficial ownership.

TJN noted that transparency

in the SAR was a factor in the assessment, adding that, among other problem areas, an absence of requirements for obtaining company ownership and a lack of publicly disclosed accounts affected the ranking.

In addition, the index notes that the region does not avoid promoting tax evasion via a tax credit system, nor does it require residents to pay agents to inform the domestic tax authorities about payments to non-residents.

The index is the biggest survey of global financial secrecy to date. It assessed the jurisdictions of 92 countries for indicators such as corporate, tax and financial regulations, of which Macau ranks 11th most secretive.

Leading this year's tax index of the most financially secretive jurisdictions is once again Switzerland. Hong Kong was ranked closely behind in second place. In total, the report estimates that between USD21 trillion and USD32 trillion of private financial wealth is located, untaxed or undertaxed in secretive jurisdictions around the world.

Foundation's third-quarter grants equivalent to half a year in 2014

Aries Un

DURING the third quarter, the Macau Foundation has distributed almost half of the total amount it allocated last year in subvention to local organizations. The Women's General Association of Macau and the Catholic Foundation for Higher Education were the top two recipients.

The former association, headed by Tina Ho Teng Iat - the Legislative Assembly president Ho Iat Seng's sister - received around MOP129 million in total to be used for the refurbishment of its headquarters, annual events, festive gifts and for the construction of a new school campus in Hac Sa Wan. According to the notice published in the Official Gazette, the new campus alone received a MOP116 million support.

Another grant recipient, the Catholic Foundation for Higher Education, received a total of MOP101 million. A portion of the grant is to be devoted to the second-phase construction of its Ilha Verde campus, which is scheduled to



The foundation's head, Wu Zhiqiang

become operational next year.

The subsidy-granting body pledged earlier that no cuts would be made to its funding to education and vulnerable communities. The third quarter's total grant of MOP536,726,753.67 was almost the sum total of the MOP565,217,147 in the last

two quarters of 2014.

The president of the foundation's administrative committee, Wu Zhiqiang, previously called on some of the beneficiaries to reduce spending on food-related expenses, such as catering and banquets. According to him, education accounts for around 70 percent of the grant distribution.

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Non-resident construction wages soar 8.5pct

The average daily wage of non-resident construction workers increased by 8.5 percent to MOP661 in the last quarter due to a surge in demand, according to data from the government. In particular there has been an increase in demand for labourers engaging in interior finishing works of large-scale entertainment facilities, currently in progress in Cotai. Meanwhile, the average daily wage of local construction workers went up by 3.7 percent to MOP980, compared with the previous quarter.

Mobile phone usage continues upward trend



The number of mobile telephone subscribers increased by 7.6 percent to 1,816,020 at the end of September. According to the data issued by DSEC, the number of Internet services subscribers totaled 325,920, up by 10.2 percent year-on-year. The cumulative duration of usage in the first three quarters (786 million hours) rose by 11.9 percent year-on-year. The number of fixed-line telephone subscribers decreased by 4.1 percent year-on-year to 148,307 in 2015.



The memorial service for Lai Man Wa was held at Kiang Wu Hospital Funeral Home



Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, led representatives of police forces to pay their last respects to the Customs Service chief

Top officials express sorrow over Lai Man Wa's death

THE Chief Executive, Chui Sai On, issued a letter of condolence yesterday to express his deepest sorrow regarding the death of the director general of the Macau Customs Service, Lai Man Wa.

In the letter, Chui said that Lai had been an outstanding member of the government and a good colleague and friend to him. He expressed his condolences as both a representative of the govern-

ment as well as in a personal capacity.

He said that Lai was widely known for her kindness, sincerity, self-discipline and support for local young talent. He further urged everyone to remember the late official for her love of the country and of Macau.

Lai Man Wa had held the post of deputy director of the Customs Service since the role's establishment, and in

2014 she was promoted to director of the service. The Chief Executive said that she had made significant contributions in the process of advancing the work of the Customs Service.

Lai's death has triggered some controversy relating to the apparent suspicious circumstances of the case with the circulation of several rumours. Individuals alleged on social media that the

official had not committed suicide but had been killed - possibly as a result of links to the gaming industry or because of internal disputes at the agency.

In a press conference on Tuesday afternoon, the Secretary for Security dismissed the speculations and asserted that no information had been withheld from the public. Lai Man Wa's funeral will be held today.

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CRIME

Man arrested for using fake UnionPay card



Aries Un

A Hong Kong man was caught intentionally using a counterfeit UnionPay card that he obtained on the street to make a purchase in Macau, according to the Judiciary Police.

The kitchen aid, aged 25, was arrested by the police early on Tuesday morning after he attempted to buy five mobile phones, worth

HKD50,000, with the card in a store in NAPE.

The store's staff called the police after questioning the authenticity of the card based on its rough surface, while continuing the transaction on the POS machine despite it being disconnected from the power.

The suspect admitted to purposefully coming to the region in order to commit the crime, with an aim to dodge

Hong Kong security authorities despite realizing that it was a forged card through an authentication website.

In a separate case, a mainland Chinese man remains at large after allegedly withholding the salaries of two illegal workmen who also hailed from the mainland, while the police authorities' inquiry continues.

One of the victims had allegedly known the suspect since last year and met him again in early July. He started working for a construction site in Cotai with his assistance between July 26 to September 23. However, despite having received MOP28,000 for the first two months, the 44-year-old failed to obtain the outstanding MOP17,000.

Another 53-year-old victim, hired by an unknown individual to work at the same worksite, was yet to receive MOP40,000 for his four-month remuneration as the suspect vanished with his salary.

Galaxy takes largest gaming market share

THE Casino operator, Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd, took the largest market share of Macau's Gross Gaming Revenue (GGR) in October, according to broadcaster TDM. The group attained a 24.7 percent market share in October ahead of its closest rivals Sands Ltd (23.1 percent) and SJM Holdings Ltd (20.6 percent).

Galaxy Entertainment Group moved up 350 basis points compared with September, while Sands China was up by 180 basis points. Meanwhile, SJM Holdings was down by 110 basis points compared with the previous month.

October was the 17th consecutive month of GGR contraction, but it remained the best monthly result for the industry since May. Compared with Macau's GGR for October 2014, last month was down by 28.4 percent year-on-year to MOP 20.06 billion, according to data from the government.

According to analysts from Japanese brokerage firm, Nomura, SJM Holdings is likely to continue to lose market share until the opening of the Lisboa Palace in late 2017. The analysts accredit this to the recent openings or planned



openings of SJM's rivals.

"SJM continues to lose market shares, in our view, as new openings take market share from weaker casino properties like Casino Lisboa and SJM satellite casinos," said analysts.

On Tuesday, SJM said that its gaming revenue accounted for 21.3 percent of Macau's market share for the third quarter of 2015, down from 22.5 percent compared with the same quarter of the previous year.

As for other operators in Macau, Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd holds 13.5 percent of market share, down 100 basis points month-on-month, while Wynn Macau Ltd recorded a month-on-month rise of 90 basis points (9.3 percent share), and MGM China Holdings Ltd was down 250 basis points (8.7 percent share).

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Coloane pier

50 berthing points for tourist yachts to open before year-end

Renato Marques

THE Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) has presented to the press new facilities for yachts traveling between Zhongshan and Macau. The facilities have been made ready for the implementation of the so-called "individual visit scheme."

In a tour organized by the DSAMA and held last Friday, the marine authority guided journalists through the new facilities and explained the procedures to be enforced when the berth becomes operational, which is expected to happen before the end of this year.

As explained by the Shipping and Seafarers Department

We are just waiting for the conclusion of the works on the Zhongshan pier.

JESSE LEI
MARINE AND WATER BUREAU

head, Jesse Lei, "On the Macau side, everything is about ready. We are just waiting for the conclusion of the works on the Zhongshan pier, the facilities of which had to be upgraded

from commercial port to a tourism berth."

On the Macau side, the new berth setup in Coloane, just across from the University of Macau's new campus, is ready and has the capacity for fifty yachts between 12 and 40 meters long.

At arrival on the new berth, there will be a transportation ferry with a capacity for 12 persons. This will transfer passengers from their yacht to dry land, where they will complete the customs formalities as per normal. These formalities will be conducted at the Coloane Customs Point in order to facilitate and provide assistance to the boat owner or person responsible, who are obliged to

declare all goods and products carried on board.

The transfer operator, which will make 15 to 20 workers available to support this operation

in this first phase, will be available 24 hours a day to perform these transportation tasks at any time needed. These workers have already received training to perform all the required operations and duties.

The daily berthing fee is yet to be fully determined, but will be based on a formula in which the boat's dimensions are the decisive factor when calculating the amount to be paid by the travelers. The price table will be set by the operator after gaining the approval of the Marine and Water Bureau.

The DSAMA officials also mentioned that this new 50 berth facility spots is the first phase of a larger project, as it can be expanded up to a limit of 150 berthing locations, according to the quantity of demand.

In order to travel to Macau under this system, travelers must apply from their original location. The application is hassle-free and can be completed online and applicants can expect a response within 24 hours.

As a complement to its services, the operator will also provide a "shuttle bus" between the pier and several locations within the territory.

The DSAMA is currently collecting data from several entities and departments in order to create an "Individual Tourism in Yachts User Manual" to be provided to travelers. The manual will be ready before the new berth begins its operations.



Tour cruiser

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Takata fined USD70 million over exploding air bags



Japanese air bag maker Takata Corp. CEO Shigehisa Takada speaks at a press conference in Tokyo

Tom Krisher, Auto Writer, Detroit

U.S. auto safety regulators fined Japan's Takata Corp. USD70 million yesterday for concealing evidence for years that its air bags are prone to explode with grisly consequences — a defect linked to eight deaths and more than 100 injuries worldwide.

Under an agreement with the government, Takata will phase out manufacture of air bag inflators that use ammonium nitrate, the propellant blamed for the explosions. It also agreed to a schedule over the next two years for replacing many of the devices already in use.

And unless it can prove they are safe, Takata may have to recall all its inflators, even those not yet implicated in the mess.

The company admitted that it knew for years that the inflators were defective but that it fended off recalls by failing to tell the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"Delay, misdirection and refusal to acknowledge the truth allowed a serious problem to become a massive crisis," Transportation Secretary

Anthony Foxx said.

In a statement, Takata CEO Shigehisa Takada said the company regrets the circumstances that led to the NHTSA agreement and will work to develop a new generation of inflators. He said the settlement will "enable us to focus on rebuilding the trust of automakers, regulators and the driving public."

Under the five-year pact, NHTSA can increase the penalty to a record \$200 million if the company fails to abide by the terms.

The biggest fine ever handed out by NHTSA is the \$105 million levied against Fiat Chrysler earlier this year for failing to report safety problems and follow through on 23 recalls.

Takata's inflators can rupture and hurl shrapnel at drivers and passengers in a crash. So far, about 23.4 million driver-side and passenger-side inflators have been recalled on 19.2 million U.S. vehicles sold by 12 automakers.

Honda, Takata's biggest customer, essentially fired the supplier yesterday. All of the air bag-related deaths reported so far have been in Honda vehicles. **AP**

Japan Post companies net USD12b in biggest IPO, shares soar

Elaine Kurtenbach
Business Writer, Tokyo

SHARES of Japan Post surged nearly 26 percent in their trading debut yesterday after the company and its banking and insurance units raised a combined 1.44 trillion yen (USD11.9 billion) in the world's biggest initial public offering this year.

The long awaited sale of shares in the state-owned company was the biggest since Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holdings raised \$25 billion in its IPO in September 2014.

The Japan Post sale is meant to tease out some of the more than \$14 trillion that Japanese have squirreled away in savings accounts. Some IPO funds will help pay for rebuilding from the 2011 tsunami disaster.

The government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has sought to push share prices higher as part of its economic policies meant to revive Japan's sluggish growth. The massive IPO helped push the benchmark Nikkei 225 index to its highest level in over two months by midday, though it later gave up some of those gains, rising 1.3 percent to 18,926.91.

Japan Post Bank shares surged 15.2 percent and Japan Post Insurance shares rocketed 55.9 percent.

"Through privatization, we can play a role in revitalizing the Japanese economy," Japan Post president Taizo Nishimuro told reporters after ringing a



A man mails a letter into a mailbox in front of a post office in Tokyo

bell at the Tokyo Stock Exchange to start trading.

The IPO comes more than a decade after Japan began privatizing its postal system and the postal banks that are the backbone of the country's massive household savings pool.

Japanese have strong trust in their more than 140-year-old postal system, which has 24,000 outlets across the country. Shares in all three companies were in high demand and sold at the top end of the indicative price range.

The government sold the national telephone company, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp., or NTT, in 1986, for \$13.6 billion. The \$18.4 billion IPO of NTT Mobile Communications Network in 1998 was the country's largest IPO ever.

Japan Post remains profitable, but only thanks to fees paid by its banking and insurance units for operating inside post offices. All three businesses

face a shrinking market as Japan's population ages and declines.

Only 11 percent of the government's equity in the three companies was sold. Of the shares on sale, 80 percent was reserved for domestic investors and 20 percent for foreign buyers.

The government plans to sell more shares in additional steps, but is expected to keep majority ownership of Japan Post.

Regulators are hoping that the partial sale of the two big postal financial institutions will goad rival private banks and insurers toward greater consolidation, innovation and efficiency.

While operating as state-owned entities, the Japan Post banks and insurers faced limits on the types of business they could operate. But those restrictions, such as a prohibition against Japan Post Bank offering mortgages, will be lifted as the two institutions are privatized. **AP**

corporate bits

EXO PLANET #2 - THE EXO'LUXION DEBUT AT THE VENETIAN MACAO



Korean boy band Exo will perform a range of songs from all their major albums when they bring Exo Planet #2 - The EXO'luxion - in Macao to The Venetian's Cotai Arena on Saturday, Nov. 21. Tickets go on sale tomorrow.

Exo made their debut with "Mama" in 2012 and released their first studio album "XOXO" the following year.

Their second studio album "Exodus" followed in 2015, breaking records when it sold over a million copies. The band has gained a huge following in Korea, China and worldwide. Fans in the region will get to see their pop idols live when the tour, which started earlier this year with five concerts in Seoul, arrives at the Cotai Arena.

NEW IPAD PRO NOW AVAILABLE TO PRE-ORDER

In anticipation of Apple's impending iPad Pro release this November, Goldgenie, the London based Gold-plating specialists, have launched pre-order sales of their customized versions of the new devices.

The collection comprises 24k Gold, Rose Gold and Platinum finishes for this larger iPad. Goldgenie's in-house team of

graphic designers can design a laser engraving.

The new addition to the iPad is Apple's most powerful tablet release yet. With 12.9 inches of high definition Retina display, this iPad has a long lasting battery life and packs nearly double the CPU performance of the iPad Air 2 for applications including 4k video, photo and music editing.



UNIVERSITY OF MACAU STUDENTS VISIT CTM



Around 10 University Macau (UM) students yesterday paid a visit to CTM where they took a tour of CTM's IT Data Centre, the largest amongst the local telecom industry. Led by Toby Ng, CTM's Senior Manager of IT Infrastructure, they learnt about the capacity and efficiency of the data storage system, as well as adoption of

various green protection features in the data center. Moreover, Mr Ng, who graduated from UMAC, also shared his career insights and experiences. After the tour, a briefing session was arranged, where Vivian Chan, CTM's General HR Manager introduced the company's corporate structure and business scale.

TAIWAN

Island defined by conflicted identity, diplomatic isolation

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

IT has no membership in the United Nations. In the Olympics, it competes as “Chinese Taipei.” Most nations don’t recognize it as a country.

The economically dynamic, self-governing island of Taiwan has struggled with diplomatic isolation and a conflicted identity that makes it not quite a sovereign nation — although many Taiwanese insist it is.

It has de facto independence from mainland China, but has never formalized that, so it technically still vies with the mainland to be the “real China.”

Taiwan retains its official name “Republic of China,” along with a constitution that defines its territory as encompassing all of mainland China. But as far as Communist China is concerned, Taiwan is part of its territory, and it insists that the two sides eventually reunite.

Among Taiwan’s 23.5 million people, sentiment for unification with China is declining. Surveys show significant ma-



Opposition protesters shout slogans with placards opposing the planned meeting of Taiwan’s President Ma Ying-jeou with his China counterpart Xi Jinping in Taipei

majorities favor simply maintaining the status quo of de facto independence.

Those contradictions underpin the island’s politics, rising again to the fore with the announcement of talks between the Chinese and Taiwanese

presidents this weekend in Singapore — the first since the two sides split in 1949 after China’s civil war.

Taiwan’s complicated identity comes from a tumultuous recent history and, of course, politics.

A former Japanese colony, Taiwan — historically called Formosa, a name given by Portuguese sailors — was handed to the Republic of China under the terms of Japan’s World War II surrender in 1945. But when Mao Zedong’s Commu-

nists won China’s civil war in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek’s defeated Nationalists moved their government wholesale to the island.

Decades of political repression followed as the island grew increasingly diplomatically isolated, finally losing its U.N. Security Council seat to the ascendant People’s Republic of China in 1971. The U.S. then severed ties in 1979, but by the late 1980s the pro-independence democratic opposition began making electoral gains against the Nationalist hardliners who clung to the unification goal.

That culminated in the first direct presidential election in 1996, accompanied by Chinese attempts to intimidate voters with missile firings that were ultimately counterproductive. The pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party took the presidency in 2000 for eight years before a Nationalist resurgence put Ma Ying-jeou in power.

The past decade has seen China moderate its words and actions toward Taiwan in hopes of boosting the unification camp, including enforcing an unofficial diplomatic truce so as not to strip Taiwan of its 22 remaining diplomatic allies. That arrangement could go by the boards should Beijing conclude that tougher measures are needed, leaving Taiwan more of an international orphan state than ever. **AP**

Beijing approves budget for 2022 Winter Olympics rail link

CHINA has approved the budget for a 58.41 billion yuan (USD9.22 billion) high-speed rail project connecting Beijing to the outdoor venues for the 2022 Winter Olympics, a crucial piece of infrastructure for staging the games.

State media reports said construction on the 174 kilometer line to Zhangjiakou in neighboring Hebei province will last 4 1/2 years.

The cost of the rail line had not been included in the games’ approximately \$3 billion budget because Chinese authorities said it would be built anyway as part of a national high-speed network.

Beijing’s lack of high mountains nearby required the locating of the outdoor events in Yanqing and Zhangjiakou, 60 and 140 kilometers outside the city. Indoor events will use venues in Beijing’s city center,



most of them left over from the 2008 Summer Olympics.

Beijing is the only city to have won bids for both the Summer and Winter Olympics, basing its appeal on that experience, financial strength and the possibility of expanding interest in winter sports among the 300 million Chinese living in the country’s north.

While Beijing has retained its Olympic operational knowledge and many of its experienced organizers, the IOC sent its own experts to Beijing

this week to walk staff through aspects of its “Olympic Agenda 2020” program for staging the games.

Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi led a seminar Tuesday and yesterday for about 350 staff members.

IOC President Thomas Bach addressed the group by video link, saying: “This meeting is the first step on our seven-year journey together to deliver brilliant Olympic Winter Games in 2022 for Beijing, for China, and for the world.” **AP**

Hong Kong shares rise as PBOC says 2nd stock link coming

Kelvin Chan, Business Writer, Hong Kong

HONG Kong led gains in Asian stock markets yesterday after an official said China will set up a second stock trading link with the city this year.

Hong Kong’s Hang Seng jumped 3.1 percent to 23,272.66 while the Shanghai Composite Index in mainland China added 2.6 percent to 3,402.30.

People’s Bank of China Governor Zhou Xiaochuan, writing in an article posted on the central bank’s website, said that a stock trading link between Hong Kong and mainland China’s second smaller exchange in Shenzhen will be launched this year. The link has been widely anticipated by investors following last year’s opening of Shanghai-Hong Kong Stock Connect. That link gives outsiders wider access to the mainland’s main market through Hong Kong brokers while also allowing wealthy Chinese investors to invest in a market outside the mainland for the first time.

China shares gained after a survey found that the country’s service industries strengthened last month. The Caixin/Markit purchasing managers index for October rose to



A worker is silhouetted as he cleans a window at a shopping mall in Beijing

52 from a 14-month low of 50.5 in September, based on a 100-point scale on which numbers below 50 indicate contraction. China’s service industries such as retailing and tourism have helped offset weakness in manufacturing amid a slowdown in the world’s No. 2 economy.

The China services index “shows that previous stimulus policies have begun to take effect, while the economic structure steadily improved,” said He Fan, chief economist at Caixin Insight Group. “The economy has started to show signs of stabilizing, reducing the need for a further stimulus.” **AP**

Christopher Bodeen and
Ralph Jennings, Beijing

TAIWAN

Taipei, Beijing presidents to meet for first time since '49

THE presidents of China and Taiwan will meet this weekend for the first time since civil war divided their lands 66 years ago, their governments said yesterday, a highly symbolic move that reflects quickly improving relations between the formerly bitter Cold War foes.

The meeting Saturday in Singapore between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Taiwanese counterpart, Ma Ying-jeou, could be China's last chance to press its case for closer economic and political ties before Taiwan elections in January that may put the brakes on Ma's pro-China initiatives.

Ma's ruling Nationalists have been lagging in polls for the presidential and legislative elections. Saturday's meeting could boost their credentials for driving progress in relations with China, but also carries the risk of appearing too close to Beijing, further damaging their chances with voters wary of the mainland's government.

Presidents of the two sides have not met since Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists lost the Chinese civil war to Mao Zedong's Communists and the Nationalists rebased in Taiwan, 160 kilometers from the mainland, in 1949. The two sides have been separately ruled since then, with Taiwan evolving into a freewheeling democracy. Communist Party-ruled China insists that the two sides eventually reunite, by force if necessary.

Confirmation of the meeting from Chinese Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office came hours after the Taiwanese side announced the meeting earlier yesterday.

Xi and Ma would be meeting in their capacity as "leaders of the two sides" of the Taiwan Strait, office director Zhang Zhijun was quoted as saying in a news release posted on the office's website. They would address each other by the title of "Mr." and attend a banquet after their meeting, the office said.

"This is a pragmatic arrangement under the situation of the irresolution of cross-strait political differences on the basis of the one-China principle," Zhang said.

The arrangements avoid the phrases "countries" and "president," in line with Beijing's insistence that Taiwan is not a sovereign nation, but part of China as a single country. However, they give the two leaders equal status, a concession that could blunt criticism from Taiwan's pro-independence opposition, which accuses the Nationalists of pandering to China's ruling Communists.

The two sides never talked formally until Ma, president since 2008, set aside old hostilities to allow lower-level official meetings. China and Taiwan have

AP PHOTO



Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou, left, and China's President Xi Jinping

signed 23 deals covering mainly trade, transit and investment, binding Taiwan closer to its top trading partner and the world's second-largest economy.

Taiwanese presidential spokesman Charles Chen said in a statement yesterday that the two would exchange ideas about relations, but would not sign any deals.

■ The meeting Saturday in Singapore between Xi Jinping and Ma Ying-jeou could be China's last chance to press its case for closer ties

The choice of Singapore as venue is significant. The Southeast Asian city-state with an ethnic Chinese majority population has strong relations with both Taiwan and China and is seen as neutral ground.

Singapore hosted breakthrough talks between unofficial Taiwanese and Chinese negotiators in 1992 that established a formula whereby they acknowledge that there is only one China, of which Taiwan is a part, but differ on the exact interpretation.

Although Beijing insists on the so-called "1992 consensus" as the basis for talks, Taiwan's main opposition Democratic Progressive Party has refused to embrace it, calling it meaningless and unrepresentative of popular sentiment on the island.

In a statement, the DPP criticized Ma for planning the meeting in secret and said it appeared to be directly targeted at influencing the elections.

"This once again shows the Ma government's tendency to do things in a black box, violate democracy and evade oversight, and the public will have difficulty accepting this," the statement read.

Ma is stepping down as president next year after his maximum two terms, and the DPP's candidate Tsai Ing-wen is considered the front-runner to replace him.

Beijing has hoped that economic inducements would lead to greater acceptance among Taiwanese of eventual political reunification. A DPP victory could prompt Beijing to reassess its policies and become more hardline in pressuring Taiwan into a political union.

Ma's government has come under increasing criticism at home for cozying up to China, amid fears Beijing will eventually leverage economic relations to exert more power over the island.

Such sentiments helped the DPP to a landslide victory a year ago in local elections, raising the possibility it might win not only the presidency but also

a majority in legislative elections also being held Jan. 16. The Nationalists replaced their presidential candidate Oct. 17, highlighting their disarray.

Given the chances of a Nationalist defeat, China is likely to proceed cautiously to avoid further alienating Taiwanese voters.

Xi warned Taiwan in 2013 against putting off political differences from generation to generation. China has long advocated a Hong Kong-style one-country, two-system form of joint rule, in which Beijing controls Taiwan but the island of 23 million retains control of its political, legal and economic affairs.

That approach has little currency in Taiwan, where most favor the current state of de facto independence.

The statement from Chen, Ma's spokesman, said the two presidents will meet to "solidify Taiwan-mainland relations and keep the status quo across the Taiwan Strait."

"To hold a meeting across the Taiwan Strait is the consistent goal of leaders on both sides," Chen said. "President Ma recently has repeated many times that 'at the right time and on the right occasion and in the right capacity' he would not rule out a meeting."

Taiwanese officials planned to hold a news conference about the Singapore meeting later yesterday, and Ma planned to hold one today.

In Washington, White House spokesman Josh Earnest

said the U.S. would welcome steps taken on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to try to reduce tensions and improve relations, but added, "we'll have to see what actually comes out of the meeting."

Ma is likely hoping for some reassurance from Xi over the use of force and closer economic ties that could help Nationalist presidential candidate Eric Chu in the polls, said Hong Kong Chinese politics expert Willy Lam. Xi, for his part, also hopes a friendly, non-threatening meeting gives the Nationalists a boost, while showing mainland Chinese that he could be the best bet in decades for achieving unification.

Sean King, senior vice president with the consultancy Park Strategies in New York and a frequent commentator on Asian affairs, doubted the meeting would help Taiwan's ruling party stay in power.

"This meeting will only hurt the Nationalists at home, as it will cause them to even more be seen as Beijing's preferred Taiwan party," King said. "This could be the mainland's last chance to liaise with the Nationalist Party, while it's in power, for years to come."

Pro-independence demonstrators rallied outside the legislature in Taipei to protest the planned meeting. One banner urged Ma, "Don't come back if you go."

"We will resolutely oppose this," Hung Te-jen said. "Ma is sneaking around to sell off Taiwan." AP

MALDIVES

President declares state of emergency

Sinan Hussain, Male

THE president of the Maldives declared a state of emergency yesterday sharply curtailing key rights of citizens for 30 days following an explosion on his speedboat and the discoveries of a homemade bomb near his residence and a weapons cache.

Attorney General Mohamed Anil said President Yameen Abdul Gayoom made the decision to safeguard public safety.

"The military and police found weapons and an explosive from two locations in their operations. Because these would be a threat to the public and the nation, the National Security Council has advised to take immediate steps to protect the people of Maldives," Anil said.

Under the state of emergency, the military and police are able to enter and search homes without warrants and can make arrests virtually at will. Citizens are forbidden to hold protests or labor strikes or to travel between the country's many islands.

The declaration effectively thwarts plans by the main opposition Maldivian Democratic Party to hold a mass rally



Maldives' President Yameen Abdul Gayoom

on Friday demanding the release of its jailed leader, former President Mohamed Nasheed. It is customary for people to travel from outer islands to participate in protests in the capital, Male.

Maldives has been tense since a Sept. 28 blast on the president's speedboat and a subsequent series of arrests of people, including Vice President Ahmed Adeeb, on suspicion of involvement in the explosion.

Gayoom was unhurt by the blast, which the government called an assassination attempt. The U.S. FBI, which investigated the blast, said it found no evidence that it was caused by a bomb.

The military said Monday it found a homemade bomb in a parked vehicle close to the president's official residence. Days earlier, an arms cache was found on an island being developed as a tourist resort.

Maldives, best known for luxury island resorts and beaches, has had a difficult transition to democracy since holding its first multiparty election in 2008, which ended 30 years of autocratic rule by Gayoom's half-brother.

Nasheed, the country's first democratically elected leader, resigned following public protests against his decision to order the arrest of a top judge in 2012.

In 2013, Gayoom defeated Nasheed in a disputed election in which the Supreme Court annulled the results of the first round, which Nasheed was leading, and delayed a revote until Gayoom was able to negotiate a winning coalition with other parties.

Nasheed is now serving a 13-year prison sentence under a terrorism law for his role in arresting the judge. His trial was widely criticized for its apparent lack of due process. **AP**

INDONESIA

Volcanic eruption closes 3 airports

Firdia Lisnawati, Bali

THOUSANDS of tourists are stranded on three Indonesian islands after ash from the Mount Rinjani volcano forced the closure of airports and blanketed villages and farmlands.

Mount Rinjani on Lombok Island blasted ash and debris 3,500 meters into the air yesterday, said Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman.

The eruption shut down flights at the Ngurah Rai international airport in Bali, about 135 kilometers from Lombok, and the Selaparang airport in Mataram, the capital of West Nusa Tenggara province, located on Lombok Island.

Later yesterday, the Blimbingsari airport in Banyuwangi on the eastern end of main Java Island also was closed, the Ministry of Transportation said.

The closure of the airports affected a total of 692 international and domestic flights, which were either canceled or delayed from Tuesday to today, the ministry said.

Airlines were told to avoid routes near the mountain and a decision about reopening the two airports would be made early today, said ministry spokesman Julius Barata.

At Bali's airport, many travelers complained about a lack of informa-



Passengers wait to check the status of their flights at Bali's airport

tion about their delayed flights and some were sleeping on benches inside terminals.

Farms and trees around the 3,726-meter-high volcano were covered in thick gray ash, but nearby towns and villages were not in danger, Nugroho said.

Rinjani is among about 130 active volcanoes in Indonesia. The archipelago is prone to volcanic eruptions and earthquakes because of its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," a series of fault lines stretching from the Western Hemisphere through Japan and Southeast Asia. **AP**

AFGHANISTAN

Woman accused of adultery stoned to death

A 22-year-old Afghan woman was stoned to death by men identified as Taliban insurgents after she was accused of adultery, an Afghan official said yesterday.

The woman, identified only as Rokhshana, was forced to stand in a deep hole in the ground during the Oct. 24 attack in a village in remote Ghor province of western Afghanistan, said Abdul Hai Khateby, spokesman for the governor.

The village, about 45 kilometers north of Ghor's capital Firozkoh, is controlled by Taliban insurgents "who implement their own barbaric laws," Khateby said.

In video posted online purportedly showing the attack, about a half-dozen men stand around the narrow pit, pelting the woman with rocks while a larger group of men sit on the ground nearby and watch. The video could not be independently verified.



While Ghor officials blamed the Taliban, the 14-year insurgent war in Afghanistan is often used as a coverall for a wide range of criminal behavior, including revenge killings, kidnapping for ransom and extortion.

The war has entrenched traditional and religious values in many parts of Afghanistan's vast rural hinterland. Although stoning is illegal under

the Afghan constitution, it's seen as a legitimate punishment under Sharia law.

Incidents of stoning are unusual but not unheard of in Afghanistan, where women are the main victims.

"This is not the first such incident and it won't be the last," said Silai Ghafar, spokeswoman for the Solidarity Party which advocates for women's rights. **AP**

SOUTH CHINA SEA

No joint declaration at ASEAN defense meet amid rising China tensions

Robert Burns and Eileen Ng
Kuala Lumpur

DIVISIONS within Asia over China's claims in the disputed South China Sea spilled over yesterday to a meeting of U.S. and Asian defense ministers, where China insisted the group make no public mention of the strategic waters in a joint declaration intended as a public display of unity.

As a result, a joint statement was canceled, said Malaysian Defense Minister Hishammuddin Hussein, reflecting a split with China and perhaps other Asian nations over citing the South China Sea issue.

"What we sign on the joint declaration is not going to resolve the issue of duplicating claims nor is it going to wish vessels that are in the South China Sea away," Hishammuddin told a news conference while trying to downplay the dispute at the meeting. "To dwell on the joint declaration is not going to solve the real problem. Our concerns are more real ... unintended accidents at the high sea, which can spiral into something worse and that we must avoid."

Hishammuddin said that the Southeast Asian grouping will continue to engage China and the U.S. to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Singapore Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen said that the dispute over the joint declaration



China's Defense Minister Chang Wanquan, right, sits before the start of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus in Kuala Lumpur

was due to "differences in phrasing and interpretation." But he said "all countries agreed on the

What we sign on the joint declaration is not going to resolve the issue of duplicating claims.

HISHAMMUDDIN HUSSEIN
MALAYSIAN DEFENSE MINISTER

freedom of navigation and all countries accepted international laws and norms."

In a statement issued by the host country, Malaysia said the meeting noted the importance of the code of conduct in the South China Sea — a set of rules meant to govern behavior in the disputed waters — "in order to build mutual trust and confidence, and maintain peace, security and stability in the region." China has so far dragged its feet in concluding discussions on the code of conduct.

A senior American official traveling with Defense Secretary Ash Carter said that China, which like the United States is not a member of the 10-nation Asso-

ciation of Southeast Asian Nations but was attending the defense ministers' meeting as an invited partner, was adamant that the meeting's final public statement omit any mention of the South China Sea. The Americans argued that it would be better to make no joint statement at all rather than issue one that omitted mention of the contentious South China Sea issue.

Carter was expected to hold a news conference later yesterday.

He also plans to go aboard the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt today as it transits the South China Sea off the Malaysian coast, a senior U.S. Official said. Carter plans

to bring his Malaysian counterpart with him, said the official, who was not authorized to discuss the plan and so spoke on condition of anonymity.

China's claims in the South China Sea are disputed by several countries in the region, including Malaysia.

It was not clear what Carter or other attendees wanted the meeting's final public statement to say about the South China Sea, which is a highly trafficked waterway with longstanding territorial disputes.

Carter met with his Chinese counterpart, Chang Wanquan on Tuesday evening, and U.S. officials said afterward that Chang repeated the Chinese government's earlier criticism of U.S. naval movements in the South China Sea. They said he called the U.S. actions provocative and illegal, but they also said the exchanges between Carter and Chang were cordial.

The U.S. officials who briefed reporters on the dispute about mentioning the South China Sea in the group's final statement said that it reflected divisions in the region created by China's reclamation of coral reefs and other land formations in the waterway.

The U.S. asserts that China is militarizing these formations, but Chinese President Xi Jinping told President Barack Obama at the White House in September that China has no such intentions. **AP**

PHILIPPINES

Filipino militants demand USD60m ransom for 3 foreigners

Jim Gomez, Manila

SUSPECTED Abu Sayyaf gunmen have demanded more than USD60 million for two Canadians and a Norwegian they are holding in the jungles of the southern Philippines in the largest ransom the Muslim militants have sought for their hostages in years.

Army Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado said yesterday the Philippine government maintains a no-ransom policy, adding there would be no let-up

in efforts by his troops to secure the hostages' freedom in the safest way possible.

In the video circulated online by the U.S.-based SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadi websites, the kidnapers and their captives said for the first time that the Abu Sayyaf was behind the Sept. 21 kidnappings in an upscale marina on the southern resort island of Samal. In the first video of the hostages last month, the kidnapers demanded a stop to military offensives but did not

identify themselves.

In the latest video, the hostages and one of the mostly masked kidnapers said a ransom of 1 billion pesos (\$21 million) must be paid for each of the captives to secure their freedom. The militant said the captives would be killed if the ransom was not paid but did not give any deadline.

One of the hostages, Canadian John Ridsdel, pleaded for Canada's prime minister and people to heed the ransom demand "as soon as possible or our lives are in great

danger."

A militant, who did not wear a mask, pointed a knife at him and the two other captives as each of them spoke. A fourth female captive seized from Samal who has been identified by authorities as a Filipino citizen was not allowed to speak in the video.

The hostages were seen sitting on a clearing with the more than a dozen heavily-armed militants standing behind them. Two black flags were displayed in the background.

Aside from Ridsdel, Phi-



A video shows two Canadians, a Norwegian and a Filipino woman who were abducted last month from a southern Philippines resort

lippine authorities have identified the other hostages as Canadian Robert Hall, Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad and Filipino national Maritess Flor. They were abducted at

gunpoint from a yacht-berthing resort on Samal in Davao del Norte province in the south, scene of a decades-long Muslim rebellion in the largely Roman Catholic nation. **AP**

EGYPTIAN PLANE CRASH

Bodies of 33 victims identified in Russia



A man and his daughter put flowers and a toy at an entrance of Pulkovo airport outside St. Petersburg, Russia

Dmitry Lovetsky, St Petersburg

THE number of plane crash victims identified by grief-stricken Russian families rose to 33 yesterday as rescue teams in

Egypt combed the Sinai desert for more remains and parts of the plane's fuselage.

The Metrojet Airbus A321-200 carrying Russian vacationers from Sharm el-Sheikh in

Egypt back to Russia's second-largest city of St. Petersburg crashed over the Sinai Peninsula early Saturday, killing all 224 people on board.

Only one body has been re-

leased to a Russian family for burial so far. Relatives have identified 33 bodies and the paperwork is close to ready on 22 of those, meaning the families should get the bodies shortly, Igor Albin, deputy governor of St. Petersburg, said in a televised conference call.

Russians were still seen sobbing in grief yesterday at the unruly pile of flowers, photos and stuffed animals at the entrance to St. Petersburg's Pulkovo Airport.

Metrojet officials have insisted the crash was due to an 'external impact'

In the Sinai, Russian and Egyptian rescue workers were still scouring the desert after expanding their search area to 40 square kilometers. The Russian state television channel Rossiya-24 reported the plane's tail was found 5 kilometers away from the rest of the wreckage.

Russian officials say the plane broke up in the air 23 minutes

after takeoff after reaching an altitude of 31,000 feet. But they have refrained from announcing the cause of the crash, citing the ongoing investigation.

Metrojet, the plane's owner, and Russian authorities offered conflicting theories of what happened. Metrojet officials have insisted the crash was due to an "external impact," not a technical malfunction or pilot error. Russian officials have said it's too early to jump to that conclusion.

Two U.S. officials told The Associated Press on Tuesday that U.S. satellite imagery detected heat around the jet just before it went down.

The infrared activity could mean many things, however, including a bomb blast or an engine on the plane exploding due to a malfunction. One of the officials who spoke conditionally of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the information publicly said a missile striking the Metrojet was ruled out, because neither a missile launch nor an engine burn had been detected.

Some aviation experts had earlier suggested a bomb was the most likely cause of Saturday's crash, while some others pointed to a 2001 incident in which the Metrojet plane damaged its tail during a rough landing. **AP**

AD



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Prime Minister Victor Ponta



Romanians protest in Bucharest on Tuesday

Alison Mutler, Bucharest

ROMANIA

Prime minister resigns following nightclub fire protests

ROMANIAN Prime Minister Victor Ponta announced the resignation of his government yesterday following huge protests in the wake of a nightclub fire that killed more than 30 people.

"I'm handing in my mandate, I'm resigning, and implicitly my government too," Ponta said in a statement. He said he would stay on until a new government is in place.

"I am obliged to take note of the legitimate grievances which exist in society," said Ponta. "I hope handing in my and my government's mandate will satisfy the demands of protesters."

President Klaus Iohannis will name a prime minister to form a new government, which needs to be approved by Parliament. If this fails twice, early elections will be called. Romania is sche-

duled to hold parliamentary elections in December 2016.

The mayor of the district in the Romanian capital where the nightclub is located, Cristian Popescu Piedone, also resigned yesterday, saying he is morally guilty for the deadliest fire in Romania's history.

Piedone said: "I assume the moral blame. As for the legal (blame) I will leave it to justice to pronounce." He came under pressure to step down following mass protests through the city Tuesday night, with more than 20,000 demonstrators blaming

widespread corruption for the deadly blaze on Friday night.

Witnesses said the fire broke out during a heavy-metal concert in the basement club when a spark ignited foam decor, sending panicked people stampeding for the single exit. The death toll stands at 32, with some 130 still hospitalized, dozens of them in serious or critical condition.

Deputy leader of the opposition Liberal Party, Catalin Predoiu, hailed the resignations. "This is a victory of the street. It is a lesson for all politicians,"

he said.

Thousands took to the streets the night before in a spontaneous protest calling for the resignation of Ponta, Interior Minister Gabriel Oprea and Piedone.

They shouted "Shame on you!" and "Assassins!" and waved Romanian flags. Anger has been brewing for some time in Romania against the government, which many perceive as being corrupt, and Friday's fire has added to the discontent.

Even before the fire, Ponta had been under pressure from

his opponents to resign, but had refused. He is on trial for corruption charges including tax evasion, money laundering, conflict of interest and making false statements while he was working as a lawyer in 2007 and 2008. At the time, Ponta was a lawmaker. He denies wrongdoing.

Romanians had also called for the resignation of Oprea over the on-duty death of a police motorcyclist, who died after he hit a hole on Oct. 20. He was in a motorcade easing a route in Bucharest for Oprea. **AP**



Responders pick through the wreckage of a cargo plane that crashed in the capital Juba

Jason Patinkin, Juba

A cargo plane that was reportedly overloaded crashed along the banks of the Nile River after taking off from the South Sudan's capital, killing at least 25 people, witnesses and officials said.

An Associated Press re-

porter at the scene of the crash saw the bodies, including those of women children. Parts of the plane were scattered in a bushy area on banks of the Nile with a few homes nearby. Packages of cheap sandals, cigarettes, beer and crackers were strewn amid the wreckage. The white tail section protr-

SOUTH SUDAN

Cargo plane crashes along the Nile

ded from the brush.

Bashir Yashin, who saw the plane come down, said it seemed as though initially the plane might crash into a market area before the pilot apparently diverted it. Another witness, Angelo Kenyi, said a child, who looked no more than a year old, and an elderly woman were pulled from the fuselage.

Apparently all of those killed had been on the plane, local residents said, which crashed into a swampy, muddy farm plot in Juba with no structures. Onlookers quickly gathered near the site, about

1.6 kilometers from Juba's international airport. After the crash, planes were still taking off and landing at the airport.

Presidential spokesman Ateny Wek Ateny said the plane had been bound for the Paloich oil fields in Upper Nile state. Rebels and government forces have been battling for control of Upper Nile state. Juba, the capital, has been peaceful recently.

The Antonov plane crashed shortly after taking off, Ateny said. He gave no more details.

Russian television channel LifeNews quoted an unnamed source at the

Russian aviation agency as saying that the plane appeared to have been overloaded and that it was made in the Soviet Union in 1971. There has been no official reaction from Russian authorities so far.

It is common for the security services to put family members on the cargo planes to Paloich even if they are not on the manifest, according to Kenyi Galla, assistant operations manager for Combined Air Services, a company that operates chartered flights across South Sudan. The doomed flight was not charte-

red by his company, Galla said.

"Normally (this flight) used to carry 12 people, but the problem is they added more people," he said. "This plane is just for cargo, not for passengers. It was just chartered for goods."

Many parts of South Sudan, which became an independent nation in 2011, have been hit by violence since December 2013, with government forces under President Salva Kiir battling rebels led by his former deputy, Riek Machar. Fighting persists despite a peace agreement signed in August. **AP**

what's ON



FRINGE: LABEL NO LABELS – DANCE
 TIME: 5pm-5:30pm & 8pm-8:30pm
 VENUE: Senado Square
 ADMISSION: Free
 LANGUAGE: Cantonese
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

FRINGE: OPEN-AIR CINEMA:
 DOCUMENTARY “PLASTIC SHORES”
 SCREENING AND INTRODUCTION
 TIME: 7:30pm-9pm
 VENUE: Camoes Square, Taipa
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

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

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

Offbeat

BOSTON OFFICIAL SAYS BIEBER
GRAFFITI TWEET WAS SARCASM

AP PHOTO



A Boston City Councilor says he was being sarcastic when he tweeted that he would introduce an emergency ordinance prohibiting Justin Bieber-inspired graffiti.

The pop singer asked artists around the world last week to paint murals inspired by tracks from his upcoming album, which is set to release Friday.

The singer posted a photo last Thursday of a mural on a Boston pizza shop, prompting a joking response from Councilor Matt O'Malley on Monday saying he planned to file legislation to keep such murals off city walls.

But not everyone grasped the intended humor and the tweet garnered a range of responses, including calls for O'Malley to focus on things like crime and poverty.

O'Malley says he has nothing against Bieber, but that he's not a fan of his work.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
18:00	Trail of Lies (Repeated)
18:50	Montra do Lilau (Repeat)
19:25	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:40	Comedy
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Champions League Highlights
23:45	Television Film

cinema

CINETEATRO

05 Nov - 11 Nov



007 - SPECTRE
 ROOM 1
 2.15, 6.45, 9.30 pm
 Director: Sam Mendes
 Starring: Daniel Craig, Christoph Waltz, Léa Seydoux
 Language: English (Cantonese)
 Duration: 148min

ARE YOU HERE
 ROOM 1
 5.00 pm
 Director: Jill Wong
 Starring: Nina Paw, Helena Law, Susan Shaw
 Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
 Duration: 86min

OUR TIMES
 ROOM 2
 2.15, 4.45, 7.15 pm
 Director: Ding Sheng
 Starring: Andy Lau, Liu Ye, Wu Ruofu, Wang Qianyuan
 Language: Mandarin (English/Cantonese)
 Duration: 134min

ARE YOU HERE
 ROOM 2
 9.45 pm
 Director: Jill Wong
 Starring: Nina Paw, Helena Law, Susan Shaw
 Language: Chinese (Cantonese and English)
 Duration: 86min



SHE REMEMBERS, HE FORGETS
 ROOM 3
 2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm
 Director: Wong Say Ping
 Starring: Miriam Yeung, Jan Lamb
 Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
 Duration: 110min

MACAU TOWER

05 Nov - 25 Nov

007 - SPECTRE
 2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm
 Director: Sam Mendes
 Starring: Daniel Craig, Christoph Waltz, Léa Seydoux
 Language: English (Cantonese)
 Duration: 148min

this day in history

1952 LANDSLIDE VICTORY
FOR EISENHOWER

General Dwight D Eisenhower has swept to victory in the American presidential elections with the largest number of popular votes ever recorded for a presidential candidate.

The new president-elect gained 31,552,768 popular votes and has won, or is leading, in 38 states. This gives him 431 electoral college votes, significantly more than the 266 he needed for a majority.

The results suggest that many of the Southern states, traditionally Democrat, have swung to the Republicans for the first time in 35 years. General Eisenhower's rival, Democrat Adlai E Stevenson, won 25,409,335 votes, securing 10 states and 100 electoral college votes.

The results come after months of one of the hardest-fought campaigns ever. General Eisenhower's popularity among the American people as a military hero, having commanded his country's troops through Europe during World War II, has now been translated into votes.

During the run-up to polling day commentators had predicted a much closer-run battle than it turned out to be.

In a victory speech, delivered in the Ballroom of the Commodore Hotel in New York, the president-elect said to the American people: "I recognize clearly the weight of the responsibilities that you have placed upon me and I assure you that I shall never in my service in Washington give short weight to those responsibilities."

President Truman, who will not officially hand over to General Eisenhower until January next year, sent a telegram congratulating the incoming president on his "overwhelming victory." He has invited General Eisenhower to the White House for talks on the transition process.

Defeated Governor Stevenson also issued a statement: "The people have rendered their verdict, and I gladly accept it. General Eisenhower has been a great leader in war. He has been a vigorous and valiant opponent in the campaign. "These qualities will now be dedicated to leading us all through the next four years."

One of General Eisenhower's biggest challenges as president will be to deal with foreign policy, most notably the civil war in Korea. During the election campaign he promised to visit the war-torn country and now plans to do that within the next ten days.

Dwight D Eisenhower grew up on a farm in Abilene, Kansas with his six brothers. His education was rudimentary. He worked his way up the ranks of the US army during a 40-year military career which culminated in his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nato).

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

General Dwight D Eisenhower was sworn in as the 34th president of the United States of America on 20 January 1953. He immediately set to work on trying to appease the situation in Korea and in July of the same year he instigated the signing of a truce which brought peace along the country's borders. He was also heavily involved in negotiations with Russia regarding the development of nuclear weapons, most notably the hydrogen bomb which both countries were working on. He was elected for a second term as president in November 1956, even though he had suffered a heart attack earlier in the year. He finally left office in 1961. He died after a long illness in March 1969.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Don't do anything drastic just yet. You may be having nightmares of moving home, but things aren't as dire as you imagine. You'll know it if and when the time comes.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You'll get a communication you've been long waiting for. It's a positive response. Opening the champagne is premature, but you can finally breathe a sigh of relief.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Times change, and so do you. You have a new hobby. You're writing your lists and checking them twice. Being tight with money actually suits you. Who knew?

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Trust your emotions, not your head. Someone is trying to convince you to put your money into something that just doesn't feel right. From the special of the day to your life's savings, go with how you feel.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Keep your pride in check. Don't spend just for looks. Keeping up with the Joneses means following them right off of a short pier. Living within your means should be your first choice.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You'll be forced to spend time with people who work your nerves, with no friends in sight. Whether it's a family gathering or a long ride on a Greyhound bus, you'll be wishing you had a private jet and a pilot's license.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Sure, you know how to appreciate the smaller things in life. You just don't want to. If creature comforts are what you crave, then use that feeling to motivate yourself to action.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 If you could get anything you want, what would it be? Prepare yourself, because timing will be just right, and it has nothing to do with how much drive you have. All that matters is desire.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Why fake it? There's no point in questioning your situation. Besides, you already have an inkling of your own culpability, even if it looks like the result of outside forces. Focus on the ways you know you're to blame.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You wish you could be somewhere else. In fact, you'd go so far as to swap lives if you could. Instead of focusing on someone who looks like a likely candidate, focus on ways to improve your own.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Extreme emotions are making you unhealthy. Get a grip. You'll never be able to fix things and move on if you can't even take care of yourself. Start doing something healthy to get fit.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 The universe is forcing you to create something new. In fact, you'll have a whole new life before you know it. Pull whatever strings you have at your disposal, while you still can.

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. It lists weather for various cities in CHINA and the WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Department store department; 5- Fill to surfeit; 9- Roman statesman; 13- Sacramento's ___ Arena; 14- Violinist Zimbalist; 16- ___ about; 17- Snare; 18- Flaming; 19- Me neither; 20- Nicholas II was the last Russian one; 21- Life story; 22- Milk and egg drink; 24- "Roots" author Haley; 26- Eye problem; 27- Summer camp transport; 29- Lively; 33- Storage center; 34- Scrutinize; 35- Letterman rival; 36- Knock vigorously; 37- Parsley piece; 38- Fruit drink; 39- Scandinavian capital; 41- Chinese weight; 42- Coherent light beam; 44- Unmatched; 46- Begat; 47- Microbe; 48- Couturier Cassini; 49- Keep possession of; 52- Cool ___ cucumber; 53- Four Corners state; 57- Vivacity; 58- Metallic mixture; 60- "The Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer; 61- Denier's words; 62- Big dipper; 63- Christmas; 64- Frisbee, e.g.; 65- Boxer Max; 66- Sudden blast of wind;

DOWN: 1- Damon of "Good Will Hunting"; 2- Makes a boo-boo; 3- Final Four org.; 4- Highest singing voice in women; 5- Navy builder; 6- Attach; 7- Threesome; 8- Ballad ending; 9- Curdle; 10- Bartlett's abbr.; 11- Bull; 12- Not a dup.; 15- Assembly; 23- High school class; 25- Used car locale; 26- Gastropod mollusk; 27- Quit; 28- Pomme or manzana; 29- Land measures; 30- Fluff, as bangs; 31- Broke off; 32- Person of action; 33- Fall; 34- Muscle contraction; 37- Chest related; 40- Pertaining to compounds of carbon; 42- Fail to tell the truth; 43- Debating; 45- Circle of flowers; 46- Killer; 48- ___ Mio; 49- Tear; 50- "The Time Machine" people; 51- Makes lace; 52- "Betsy's Wedding" star; 54- Drop ___ (moon); 55- Iowa city; 56- Sentry's shout; 59- Test site



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



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Photo shown here may be different from Macau specifications



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GOLF

Lahiri wearing 3 hats this World Championship

Doug Ferguson
Golf Writer, Shanghai

ONE year after Anirban Lahiri made his debut in the World Golf Championships, progress is measured by how much is at stake in the HSBC Champions.

He no longer is simply happy to be at Sheshan International alongside the world's top players.

India's best golfer now has a chance to wrap up the Order of Merit on the Asian Tour. Lahiri also is No. 15 in the Race to Dubai on the European Tour, so along with trying to state his case as rookie of the year, he still has a chance to work his way into the top five and qualify for the bonus pool.

And if that's not enough, it's critical for him to get his first season on the PGA Tour off to a strong start and to stay in the top 50 in the world (he's at No. 39).

"Obviously, my focus has changed," Lahiri said yesterday with an easy smile. "The event is still really important, but the perspective is radically different. I guess the golf isn't radically different. It's the same thing. You have to go out there and do the same things. But a lot has changed in the last 12 months."

It started early in the year when Lahiri won twice in three weeks on the European Tour, which shot him into the top 50 in the world and made him eligible for the majors and the WGCs. A tie for fifth in the PGA Championship locked up a spot in the Presidents Cup.

Before heading to South Korea, the 28-year-old made a detour to the Web.com Tour where he played well enough in two events to earn



Anirban Lahiri

a PGA Tour card. That was critical to get some rest ahead of a long stretch at the end of the year on the Asian and European tours.

Playing on two tours is difficult enough. Lahiri is trying to juggle three tours at once.

He chose to play the CIMB Classic in Malaysia last week to keep his lead on the Asian Tour and get a start on his PGA Tour season. But that meant skipping the Turkish Airlines Open, the first of four events in The Final Series on the European Tour.

"It's been a balancing act," he said. "But I think at the end of the day, if you play good, solid golf, everything else becomes secondary. All the great players play just 20 events and it's enough for them because they are good enough to do whatever they need to do. Now hopefully, that is something that I can aspire to do in the time to come."

Still, there are tough decisions ahead.

Winning the Asian Tour money title gives him a five-year exemption. His victories on the European Tour made him exempt through

2017. But his goal all along was to play the PGA Tour, and that's where his priorities lie for next season.

Whether he remains a man of three tours depends largely on how Europe alters its minimum number of tournaments required for membership.

"How extensively I play in Europe is something that I'm still considering," Lahiri said. "There's a lot of chopping and changing going on in the minimum number of events and how the criteria work, especially with the Olympics next year. The schedules are getting squeezed more and more, so there's a lot more events that are overlapping. But my focus is going to be primarily in America."

What brought Lahiri as much fame as any victory was a loss in singles to Chris Kirk, which proved to be the decisive match in the Presidents Cup. Lahiri's 4-foot birdie putt caught the lip and spun away, but he stayed longer than any International team player to answer any question and was quick to credit Kirk for making a big putt of his own.

He followed that with a runner-up finish in Macau and a tie for seventh in the Hong Kong Open.

Now he's trying to get on the kind of run that sparked him season nine months ago. He's been watching and admiring Matthew Fitzpatrick, the 21-year-old from England who won the British Masters and qualified for his first WGC this week.

"In golf, as you'll see with most players, we get on a run," Lahiri said. "When you get on a good run, you can really make it count. I had a good run early in the year and I made a big jump, and Matthew is doing the same thing. I remember playing with Jordan Spieth right here one year ago, and that was before he got on the biggest run that I've ever seen anyone get on. Runs are fantastic. Hopefully, both mine and Matt's continue."

Lahiri also played Sheshan International last year with J.B. Holmes, one of the longest hitters in the game. Lahiri has plenty of power himself — he won the Long Drive Competition at the PGA Championship this year — though he has learned the difference between what he calls "long, long and really long."

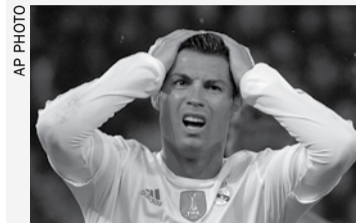
He's not in the league of Dustin Johnson and Bubba Watson. But he has more than enough.

"Back in India we have a term which is 'Sunday Special,' which is probably the best shot you could ever hit," Lahiri said. "If you were playing a video game, it's the one where Tiger hits it and the ball gets on fire. When I hit that, I'm probably 5 or 10 yards behind these guys. And that's pretty good." AP

FOOTBALL

REAL MADRID, MAN CITY ENSURE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE PROGRESS

GROUP A



AP PHOTO

Nacho scored two minutes after coming on for Real Madrid against PSG, capitalizing on a mistake from goalkeeper Kevin Trapp to score

from a tight angle after Toni Kroos' initial effort was deflected way off target. Trapp came out from his goal but was caught flat-footed when Nacho dinked the ball inside the far post.

The win gave Madrid 10 points from four matches, while PSG, which had more efforts and possession, remained on seven points.

"We delivered our best match of the season," former Madrid winger Angel di Maria said. "An outstanding display. We made a mistake and were punished. We played 10 times better than Real."

Shakhtar Donetsk, which defeated Malmo 4-0 in Ukraine, reached three points, the same as the Swedish club.

GROUP B

Wayne Rooney ended Manchester United's 404-minute goal drought, clinching a 1-0 victory over CSKA Moscow and sending the team top of the group.

Since scoring in the Russian capital in last month's 1-1 draw, United had gone through three domestic games without hitting the net — with Rooney particularly profligate.

The United captain squandered a golden chance in front of goal at Old Trafford before meeting Jesse Lingard's cross with a header in the 79th minute. United now has a one-point lead at the top of Group B over PSV Eindhoven, which beat Wolfsburg 2-0 after Juergen Locadia and Luuk de Jong scored in the second half.

GROUP C



EPA

Central defender Luisao's 67th-minute winner for Benfica over Galatasaray put the Portuguese club two points clear of Atletico with two

games to play. Galatasaray is third with four points. Raul Jimenez chipped the ball into the visitors' penalty area for Luisao to poke it into the net from close range. The Brazilian's goal put Benfica back into the lead after Lukas Podolski leveled the score in the 58th, canceling out Jonas' 52nd-minute opener. Galatasaray goalkeeper Fernando Muslera spectacularly denied Nicolas Gaitan twice in the last 15 minutes before the Argentine striker was shown his second yellow card and sent off with five minutes left. Yasin Oztekin squandered a chance to equalize, missing an open goal during a goalmouth scramble in added time.

GROUP D

Raheem Sterling scored his first Champions League goal to help Manchester City seal its place in the round of 16 with a dominant 3-1 win at Sevilla. The 20-year-old forward scored in the eighth minute and helped Fernandinho double the advantage three minutes later.

Sevilla's Benoit Tremoulinas scored in the 25th, only for former Sevilla forward Jesus Navas to set up Wilfried Bony for City's third in the 36th.

City moved first in Group D with nine points, one ahead of Juventus. Sevilla has three and can't overtake City because of their head-to-head record. Stephan Lichtsteiner scored one month after undergoing heart surgery to give 10-man Juventus a 1-1 draw at Gladbach.

Juventus had Brazilian midfielder Hernanes sent off for a reckless two-footed lunge on Alvaro Dominguez in the second half and needed veteran goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon to keep the home side at bay later on. AP

TENNIS IN ZHUHAI

Vinci beats Kuznetsova 6-4, 6-4 at WTA Elite

U.S. Open finalist Roberta Vinci won her first match at the WTA Elite Trophy, beating Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-4, 6-4 yesterday.

One break in each set proved enough for the fourth-seeded Italian, who saved all three break points she faced.

The tournament brings together 11 of the top players who did not qualify for last week's WTA Finals in Singapore, including Caroline Wozniacki, Jelena Jankovic and Venus Williams. Zheng Saisai of China was added to

the field as a wild-card entry.

The qualifiers compete in a four-group round robin format, with the winners of each group advancing to the semifinals.

Today, Kuznetsova will face Wozniacki, needing victory to keep alive her hopes of advancing.

In yesterday's other singles match, third-seeded Karolina Pliskova beat Jankovic 6-4, 3-6, 6-2. Pliskova will next meet Sara Errani in her final round robin match today in nearby Zhuhai. AP



Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia

opinion

World Views

Editorial Board, Bloomberg

CHINA SHOULD DETHRONE ITS GDP TARGET

China's leaders have been busy lately, finalizing the country's new five-year plan. The details won't be announced for a while, but most observers aren't much interested in the fine points anyway. They'll focus on the new target for growth in gross domestic product - which seems likely to be around 6.5 percent, lower than before but still higher than many economists think is realistic.

The fixation on the growth target is a mistake for observers and China's policy makers alike. The government should do all it can to promote rapid sustainable growth - but now that China is a semicapitalist economy, what that number turns out to be is beyond official control.

Many commentators - Western and Chinese - have long thought China should just drop the target altogether. Pressure to meet the number drives local officials to pump up wasteful investment, adding to an aggregate debt pile that's approaching 300 percent of GDP, according to McKinsey. Outright fudging of data is another byproduct. This undermines the government's credibility and fuels concern that the economy's problems are worse than they look. Setting a lower and more plausible target would help, but it wouldn't address the main issue.

Scrapping the GDP target outright would be best, but failing that, it ought to be de-emphasized. The government has already moved in this direction. In its previous five-year plan, it drew attention to other benchmarks, aimed at measuring the quality rather than quantity of growth. Goals for green development - cutting emissions, improving energy efficiency, increasing the use of renewables - were meant both to protect the environment and to encourage the shift from smokestack industries to services.

Another way to emphasize the quality of growth is to track progress on indicators such as employment and social housing. These give a better sense of how ordinary Chinese are faring. Party leaders could underline the message by relying on such measures when assessing local officials. The latter need to know their promotions depend on factors more closely connected to their performance.

Other intermediate targets could help restructure the economy and improve how capital is allocated. The government has started asking state banks to lend more to small and medium-sized enterprises, for instance, many of which are privately owned and more efficient than the state-run behemoths that have traditionally vacuumed up the bulk of cheap loans. More capital needs to flow to firms earning high returns.

Something else worth targeting is inflation. A more explicit monetary-policy goal would strengthen China's broader policy framework and help the People's Bank of China fend off deflation fears. It would also help make the central bank's decisions more transparent and predictable - increasingly important as China moves to open up its financial system.

Intermediate targets of this sort are less likely to become fetishes, or to distract policy makers and officials from the tasks at hand. Fuller discussion of means as well as ends would be valuable, too. How exactly will welfare benefits be extended to more urban migrants, for instance, or stronger land rights granted to farmers? Which new sectors will be liberalized and when? How will the central government make the fiscal position of local governments truly sustainable?

Economic targets, correctly conceived, are framed to serve a larger purpose. Enshrining them as ends in themselves - especially in the form of a single disobedient number - is asking for trouble.

THE CLIMATE: DROUGHT IN SOUTH AFRICA AFFECTS TOWN'S DRINKING WATER

Residents of a South African coastal town say their drinking water "tastes like the sea" as a worsening drought affects fresh water sources, according to a local newspaper.

Citizens of Port Shepstone in KwaZulu-Natal province lined up with buckets for fresh water distributed by officials as one of the driest periods in 50 years increased the salt content of rivers, reported the South Coast Herald newspaper. Elsewhere in the province the levels of dams have

dipped to about a third of capacity, according to South Africa's ministry of water and sanitation.

An estimated 2.7 million households, about 18 percent of the population, are affected by the drought, according to the ministry of water and sanitation. The ministry declared the KwaZulu-Natal and Free State provinces as disaster areas and warned that rural communities in two more provinces face water shortages. South Africa's capital, Pretoria, also implemented water restrictions.



A pedestrian walks past residential buildings in the Tai Kok Tsui district of Hong Kong

Hong Kong second most at risk of housing bubble

HONG Kong ranks second in a list of cities most at risk of a property bubble, according to a report released by investment bank UBS. The report entitled "UBS Global Real Estate Bubble Index" measured 15 "world cities" and ranked them according to the risk posed by over-valued property prices, taking into account ratios between average earnings, and property prices and rents.

Hong Kong ranked second most at risk with a score of 1.65, only just behind London on 1.88. Sydney was the third most at risk, according to the report, with a score of 1.39.

However, it is Hong Kong that has the worse affordability levels in relation to property prices (non-rents), as local and global investment thrusts them higher and out

of the reach of the average skilled service worker's wages. According to the report, it takes such a worker an average of 21 years to be able to buy a 60-square-meter home in Hong Kong, while it takes 14 years in London, and only 11 in New York.

Partly as a result of a credit boom, the UBS report evaluates current Hong Kong property prices to be "200 percent higher than in 2003." Meanwhile, "Rents have grown by 35 percent in real terms and inflation-adjusted incomes [have] stagnated."

"This has made Hong Kong one of the world's most expensive cities for private housing," said Claudio Sapatelli, the Head of Global Real Estate at UBS's chief investment office.

UBS stated that the outlook for property in Hong Kong is

darkening following weaker economic growth in mainland China, a worsening job market and a risk of rising interest rates.

UBS expects property prices to decline by more than 10 percent by the end of next year, while investment group CLSA forecasts a 17-percent fall in the next 27 months.

Macau was not included in the UBS selection. However, the data available for this year indicates that, after more than quintupling in value over the past six years, residential prices in the MSAR are heading for their first year of declines since 2008, in line with a gambling revenue slump in the region. Real estate broker Jones Lang LaSalle Inc. forecasted earlier this year that home prices may drop 15 percent this year. **Staff reporter**

SINGAPORE

Young Australian jockey dies in high-rise fall



Tim Bell rides on Tinto at The Oaks Day

AN up-and-coming Australian jockey died after falling 12 floors to the ground from his Singapore apartment, police said yesterday.

Tim Bell, 22, "was found lying motionless at the foot of the building" late Tuesday, a police statement said. It said an unconscious Bell was taken to Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, where he died from his injuries.

"Police are investigating the unnatural death," the statement said.

Bell rode 135 winners in his first season as

a senior jockey, winning the 2013-14 Brisbane jockey's premiership. He was runner-up last season. A three-month riding contract with the Singapore Turf Club was to end in December.

The club said in a statement that unconfirmed reports suggest Bell fell while trying to climb into his apartment, after locking himself out. Trainer Steven Burridge, who was instrumental in bringing Bell to Singapore, called the man's death a tragedy.

"Timmy had the whole future ahead of him and not only could he ride, but he was also such a great young man, and was very driven to become a very good jockey," Burridge said.

Bell was a lightweight jockey who could ride at 50 kilograms. He rode a Group 3 winner less than two weeks ago, partnering Sebrose to victory in the 150,000 Singapore dollar (USD107,478) El Dorado Classic.

His parents, Grant and Keiley Bell, released a statement thanking racing fraternities and authorities for their son's career. "Tim will always be remembered as our little hero and best mate," the statement said. **AP**

Station	Air quality
Roadside	65-85 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	65-95 Moderate
Ambient	65-95 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS



USA Donald Trump is demanding as much as USD75 million from hundreds of condo owners in Panama City's Trump Ocean Club, alleging that its directors wrongfully fired his company as administrator managing the luxury building that is the tallest in Central America.



RUSSIA-SYRIA Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed hope yesterday that diplomats will agree on a list of opposition groups that should be invited to U.N.-brokered peace talks on Syria. Moscow previously lamented there is no agreement in the U.S.-led coalition in Syria on who should be declared legitimate opposition to Syrian President Bashar Assad's government - or should be targeted like the Islamic State group.

UK British police and spies will get new powers to comb through citizens' online activity under a new law regulating cyber-snooping. The Investigatory Powers Bill is designed to regulate authorities' access to Internet activity. It replaces a patchwork of laws, some dating from the Web's infancy. Civil liberties groups are alarmed by reports that the government will make Internet service providers keep records of users' Web and social media activity for a year so that they can be accessed as part of criminal or terrorist investigations.

NORWAY Police say a record number of 196 asylum-seekers in one day have crossed into Norway from Russia at a remote Arctic border post. Police said yesterday the migrants arrived Tuesday, mostly by riding across on newly bought bicycles because pedestrian crossings are not allowed at the border in Storskog. Norwegian NTB news agency said 174 refugees had arrived Monday from Russia and more than 3,000 people have used that route to enter northern Norway.