



ECONOMY SHRINKS 24 PERCENT

Macau saw GDP tumble 24.2pct in the 3 months through Sept, easing from the 26.4pct drop in the second quarter

P2



PACKAGE TOUR ARRIVALS DOWN YEAR-ON-YEAR

The number of package tour visitors (804,000) in October was down by 19.8 percent year-on-year

P5



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WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA A gas leak at a steel parts factory in eastern China kills 10 people and leaves seven others hospitalized. The Zouping County government says on its official microblog the leak occurred late Saturday and poisoned 17 people, five of whom died immediately. It says five more died early Sunday, and the cause of the leak is under investigation.

TAIWAN-CHINA Old foes China and Taiwan have swapped high-level convicted spies in a sign of goodwill linked to the first meeting ever between their presidents. *More on p10*

CHINA-ZIMBABWE Some immigration signs at Zimbabwe's main international airport are in Chinese, a sign of China's deep economic inroads in Africa, which Chinese President Xi Jinping will be visiting this week. Xi arrives today in Zimbabwe before heading tomorrow to South Africa. There, he will attend a forum on cooperation between Africa and China, whose investment on the continent hit more than USD3.5 billion last year.

JAPAN's whaling fleet leaves yesterday for the Antarctic for a three-month, scaled-down hunt, despite protests from opponents who say Tokyo has not proven that whales need to be killed for research. *More on p13*

PHILIPPINES-USA A Philippine court plans to deliver its verdict in the emotion-charged case of a U.S. Marine accused of murdering a transgender Filipino after discovering her gender when they checked into a hotel.

THAILAND Soldiers and police in military-run Thailand detain two top leaders of the anti-government Red Shirt movement as they were to visit a park celebrating past Thai kings that's at the center of a corruption scandal linked to the army.

Government to launch anti-cybercrime center, tighten video surveillance

P3 POLICY ADDRESS



Hong Kong will pay for MTR express rail to Guangzhou-Shenzhen

P10

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Economy shrinks 24pct as gambling malaise persists

Daniela Wei

MACAU'S economy contracted a fifth straight quarter as the world's largest center of gambling was pummeled by an economic slowdown in China and the government's attack on corruption which scared off high-rollers.

The region, which relies on gamblers for about two-thirds of economic output, saw GDP tumble 24.2 percent in the



A view of the Senado Square, Macau

The gambling market will gradually find its way to get used to negative factors.

ZHONGLU ZENG

three months through September, easing from the 26.4 percent drop in the second quarter, government data released yesterday showed.

Casinos in Macau have tried to reinvent themselves by focusing on tourists rather than hard-core gamblers, even as the chief executive predicted a third year of pull-back in the industry in 2016. Gambling revenue plunged a 17th straight

month in October, as increased visits over China's National Day holiday week failed to boost betting.

"The gambling market will gradually find its way to get used to negative factors such as China's economic slowdown and anti-corruption campaign," said Zhonglu Zeng, a professor of gaming studies and research at the Macau Polytechnic Institute. This

means Macau's economy may start improving on a quarter-on-quarter basis going forward, he said in a telephone interview.

The third quarter's economic contraction was due to the continuous decline in services exports, of which gaming plunged 37.4 percent and other tourism services fell 15.3 percent, Macau's Statistics and Census Service said in a statement on

PAULO CHAN TAKES OATH TODAY AS DICJ HEAD

PAULO CHAN, former Assistant Public Prosecutor-General, takes Office today as the new director of the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ). Chan's appointment comes after the retirement of former director, Manuel Joaquim das Neves. The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, stated previously that Chan's appointment was directly related to his experience in the Public Prosecutions Office, his legal knowledge and his multilingual skills. The Secretary also asserted that Mr Chan is capable of strengthening both the bureau's law enforcement capabilities and its efforts to "optimize" gaming regulation.

its website.

The local government is due as early as today to report gross gaming revenue for November, which is seen falling 31.5 percent according to the median estimate of six analysts surveyed by Bloomberg. The measure is down by 35.5 percent in the first 10 months of this year, government data showed. **Bloomberg**

EU-Macau Committee marks milestone in training cooperation

THE 20th European Union (EU)-Macau Joint Committee meeting, held here on Friday, concluded with the announcement of further cooperation in the fields of legal training and innovation.

The meeting allowed the two partners to review the latest developments in their relationship, to recognize existing efforts in bilateral co-operation, and to explore areas for further collaboration.

The delegation from Macau was led by Raimundo Rosário, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, while the EU delegation was led by Ugo Astuto, the Acting Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific at the European External Action Service.

Both delegations commended the cooperation between the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau and the Directorate-General for Interpretation of the European Commission for the training of qualified interpreters in the MSAR.

The delegations noted that the program satisfies the joint needs of Macau and the EU for qualified interpreters of both Chinese and Portuguese.

A memorandum for a new phase of a five-year training program for interpretation services was signed earlier this month, following the conclusions of two previous arrangements, the first of which began in 2010.

The legal field was another area that saw enhanced

cooperation at the Joint Committee meeting. The Third Macau-EU Co-operation Program in the Legal Field was adopted, seeking to strengthen Macau's legal system and to improve training for legal practitioners.

In addition, the two delegations launched a new phase in cooperation in the field of research and innovation, promoting the participation of Macau's research institutions and researchers in the EU's Horizon 2020 program.

Both sides expressed their willingness to extend cooperation into new areas of mutual interest, including information exchange in combatting human trafficking. **Staff reporter**

Civil servants set up association to promote positive image

Aries Un

OVER fifty civil servants have formed an association to connect the younger generation of civil servants with top-level officials. The group also aims to enhance the reputation of public servants through various initiatives.

The Macau Youth Civil Servants' Association's founding members were sworn in on Sunday in the presence of major officials and representatives of other youth-oriented organizations.

"The MSAR government has long valued the growth and development of youths. It's necessary to set up an organization exclusively to serve and provide a voice for young civil servants, as they are a great and valuable asset to the region," said the association's head, Lao Hio Fai, who works as a physician at the public hospital.

According to the latest figures from the Statistics and Census Service Bureau, close to 30,000 out of the



local workforce totaling approximately 400,000 are employed in public services. Furthermore, almost half of the government's manpower is under 40 years old, according to Lao, who stressed the need for such people to have a voice.

The association, whose initial membership base already includes representatives from across all public departments, seeks to continue recruiting more members to undertake a series of planned activities.

The association's head revealed that the group expected to attract secretary- and bureau-level officials, along with young civil servants, in gatherings to discuss social issues.

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2016 POLICY ADDRESS

Gov't to launch anti-cybercrime center, tighten video surveillance

Aries Un

SECURITY authorities plan to launch preparatory works next year for a new network security center as part of their premeditated anti-cybercrime efforts, the Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak hinted during a Legislative Assembly (AL) debate yesterday.

The department, which will operate under the Judiciary Police, seeks to tackle the variety of emerging security incidents in cyberspace, Wong noted. Such an initiative was initially slated for two years ago, but was later shelved as the authorities found it hard to employ related tech specialists under the existing remunerative package for civil servants.

The purportedly well-intentioned policy raised skepticism among some lawmakers who believed that it might compromise citizens' privacy as much as the citywide surveillance did. "On one hand they help prevent crimes and collect evidence as an important tool, but it remains a concern in society how the balance can be struck between security and safeguarding privacy," said lawmaker Chui Sai Peng.

The secretary played down the policy's possible public interest impacts, stressing that the initiative endorsed by the city's government was to monitor Internet data flow with "internationally recognized means" in an attempt



Wong Sio Chak (center)

to identify any potential risk beforehand for the sake of the "public interest."

"The establishment of the center and its related system has absolutely nothing to do with supervision and limitation of legal conduct," Wong proclaimed, "let alone deprivation of civil rights and freedom of speech."

He further stressed that the authorities had to firstly get the green light from the independent Office for Personal Data Protection before pres-

sing ahead with initiatives associated with probable compromise of privacy.

In addition, he cited the already-established systems regulating online activities in neighboring regions to bolster the formulation of the policy, which would still have to undergo an analysis and study next year.

In response to a lawmaker's inquiries over the expected efficacy of the 1620-camera surveillance system, Wong believed that the equipment arran-

It remains a concern in society how the balance can be struck between security and safeguarding privacy.

CHUI SAI PENG

ged in collaboration with the Infrastructure Development Office would be commensurate with expected standards, despite not being privy to the apparatus model and its cost in the debate.

"The cameras haven't begun operations yet; we have yet to know whether such technologies will meet our demand," he said, also pledging to review the performance of the surveillance cameras once they were put into service.

The installation of surveillance across the territory was expected to be completed within five years, with 219 cameras in the first phase becoming operational since June. The second and the third phases, involving 263 and 338 cameras respectively, are set to launch at the end of this year.

REPORT ON LATE CUSTOMS CHIEF'S DEATH RELEASED WHEN APPROPRIATE

SECRETARY FOR Security Wong Sio Chak pledged to unveil "a certain degree" of the outcome of the inquiry into late customs director-general Lai Man Wa's purported suicide only with her family's endorsement. During the legislative debate, the secretary was once again pressed for the motive behind the deceased's death by lawmakers Au Kam

San and Ng Kuok Cheong, who remain dubious of the episode. Wong revealed that investigators have now finished much of the probe. Upon completion, the report will have to be submitted to the Public Prosecutions Office for further review before the authorities confirm a final version. Yet no timeframe for the entire probe is as yet available.

'TOURIST POLICE' ON THE HORIZON

AUTHORITIES ANNOUNCED that additional manpower resources would be deployed to major tourist attractions next year, with duties specifically for crowd control and prevention of crimes. Following an ad hoc task force set up last August and its deployment in April this year around the Ruins of St Paul, the authorities decided to officially turn it into a response squad for contingencies in tourist spots such as the A-ma Temple and Lotus Square. Police officers with higher language proficiency are the potential candidates to be enlisted into the ever-expanding team, Public Security Police Force commissioner Leong Man Cheong said.

Current anti-terrorism efforts sufficient to meet all threats

ANTI-TERRORISM efforts are not subject to a scale that determines the extent of possible risks the region faces, with security forces maintaining the same alertness and response levels as if the region were facing an immediate or even high risk of terrorist assault, Wong Sio Chak explained in the legislative debate.

In response to lawmakers' interpe-

lations over the prospective setup of an index that describes the scale of terrorist threats to which Macau is subject, Wong said it was currently under official analysis, while recognizing the need to devise such an indicator.

"Although we don't have such an index in Macau at the moment, the risks are relatively low," claimed

Wong.

Given that estimate, the Secretary for Security reckoned the existing deployment of security measures were "secure" and "safe" enough to respond to any unexpected violence.

"The set-up of a safety index is simply an issue to consider in the future," said Wong. "It does not yet affect our anti-terrorism efforts."

IFT students thanked for support of creative industries

Final year students of the Tourism Retail and Marketing Management program at the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) have successfully completed a visual merchandizing and store design project. The project was organized to support two companies in the development of various stores. Number 55 Co. Ltd and Number 81 Co. Ltd are the companies responsible for the development of a number of stores in Rua de Nossa Senhora do Amparo and Patio de Chon Sau, and also "One Creative Arts Department Store." The companies are currently assessing opportunities to turn some of these ideas into reality by forming teams of IFT students once they graduate. It is hoped that projects like these will support the MSAR government's strategic vision for economic diversification.

TIS makes technology investment splash



The International School of Macao (TIS) says it has invested heavily in technological resources in recent years, leading to a number of new initiatives and technology purchases that have benefited some 1,250 students. "The amount of technology, as well as the use of technology, continues

to grow at TIS," Technology Coordinator Mel Varqa remarked. According to a press release, the new technologies include the institution's investment in new "wired" lockers, which feature power sockets for charging laptops and other mobile devices. The latest purchases include two 3D printers and a CNC laser cutter, which are used primarily by the high school's robotics program. TIS says that it now employs two full-time technology integration staff members who provide technological support and who help teachers integrate technology into the classroom.

CRIME

Drugs and illegals found over the weekend

Renato Marques

AT least two cases involving drug trafficking and consumption were detected by the Judiciary Police (PJ) over the weekend, with all those involved having entered Macau illegally.

Police announced at a press conference yesterday that last Saturday a staff member from a Cotai hotel alerted the authorities to what they suspected were drug-related activities occurring in one of the hotel rooms. The PJ headed to the location and, with the help of the Public Security Police Force (PSP), managed to intercept one of the suspects and a second one shortly after, inside the casino.

A search of the first suspect revealed 2.86 grams of the drug known as "Ice" and a further search of the hotel room resulted in the discovery of a further 2.28 grams of the same substance. The first suspect, aged 43, is a mainlander who

entered the territory illegally. He was taken into custody, accused of drug trafficking and consumption. The other suspect is a 29-year-old local woman. She was accused of providing support to illegal activities.

The PJ also reported the discovery of a second similar crime, which was detected in the early hours of Sunday. A man who was barred from entering a casino was subsequently searched by authorities, finding him in the possession of 2.49 grams of Ketamine, 4.28 grams of "Ice" and 3 pills of "magu" (methamphetamine). A further search to his room revealed a further 2.21 grams of "Ice". This search of his room also revealed the presence of two other people, one man and one woman. The three, ranging between 22 and 25 years old, were all mainland residents. As in the previous case, they had entered Macau illegally. Further investigation revealed two other people, aged 28 and

29, who were also mainlanders but who held legal permits to be in Macau. Both had rented the room and assisted the suspects.

In this case, the first suspect was detained and accused of drug trafficking and consumption, the second of drug trafficking, the third of drug consumption, and the fourth and fifth of providing support to illegal activities.

In a different case reported earlier, the PSP caught a man in the early hours of the same morning in a document search operation. He presented a forged entry form to the officers, which he later revealed to have been bought in the mainland for MOP10. This man had also entered Macau illegally, traveling in a speed boat, a mode of transportation that he claimed to have cost him RMB5,000. The 26-year-old decided to use this method because he had a previous record and had been banned from entering the region until 2020.

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TOURISM

Package tour visitors bounce from Sept



INFORMATION released by the Statistics and Census Service indicates that although the number of visitors to Macau travelling on package tours (804,000) for October was down by 19.8 percent year-on-year, the figure is up by 11.8 percent compared with the previous month.

For the first ten months of 2015, the number of visitors on package tours totaled 8,222,000, down by 9 percent when compared with the

same period of 2014.

Compared with October last year, the number of tourists travelling on organized group tours from major destinations was mostly down across the board. Those arriving from mainland China (669,000) tumbled by 17.9 percent year-on-year, while those from the Republic of Korea (23,000), Hong Kong (17,000) and Taiwan (40,000) dropped by 36 percent, 27.9 percent and 38.4

percent, respectively.

Visitors on package tours from Japan, however, increased by 11 percent year-on-year to a total of 14,000.

There were 104 hotels and guesthouses operating by the end of October, providing 32,000 guest rooms, up by 13.1 percent year-on-year. With a number of new hotels commencing operations, the number of guest rooms in four-star hotels increased by 38.7 percent year-on-year to 7,700.

The number of tourists checking into hotels and guesthouses totaled 896,000 for October 2015, up by 4.2 percent year-on-year. Guests from mainland China (586,000) and Hong Kong (116,000) increased by 5.2 percent and 20.3 percent, respectively. The average length of stay rose by 0.1 nights year-on-year to a new high of 1.5 nights.

As for outbound Macau residents, October 2015 saw a 4.6-percent drop year-on-year in those using travel agency services. Based on the share of total visitors, mainland China again overtook other destinations by a large margin (76.9 percent), while Korea (5.7 percent) and Taiwan (5.1 percent) fared worse.

In the first ten months of this year, the number of outbound residents using travel agency services totaled 1,260,000, down by 0.5 percent year-on-year.

University of Macau confers 57 PhD degrees



Up to 600 graduates were granted higher education degrees last Saturday by the University of Macau (UM) in an occasion that saw a record-high number of doctorate degree recipients, totaling 57. Of the total, 520 were awarded a Master's degree while 42 obtained postgraduate diplomas.

Hugo Pinto wins local journalism award for second time

Hugo Pinto has won the Fundação Oriente (Orient Foundation) Journalism Award for a report titled "As novas regras do jogo" (literally, "The new rules of the game"). It is the second time that Mr Pinto, a journalist at Radio Macau, has won the accolade, which includes a MOP50,000 cash prize. The Orient Foundation said in a statement that the work is of "an exceptional quality," focusing on a theme that has great social impact. Two honorable mentions were awarded to Inês Santinhos Lopes and Filipa Queiroz. The prizes will be presented at the Orient Foundation delegation in Macau (Casa Garden) next Monday at 6.30 p.m.

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Andrew Mayeda

Did China's yuan really pass the IMF test? You'll know soon

INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde and some two dozen officials on the fund's executive board were gathering yesterday at headquarters in Washington for one of the most-anticipated decisions outside of actually approving loans for nations in crisis.

The question inside the 12th-floor, oval boardroom: whether to grant China's yuan status as a reserve currency by adding it to the fund's Special Drawing Rights basket. The SDR, created in 1969, gives IMF member countries who hold it the right to obtain any of the currencies in the basket - currently the dollar, euro, yen and pound - to meet balance-of-payments needs.

While there's little suspense in the main thrust of the expected approval - Lagarde already announced that fund staff had recommended the yuan be included and that she supported the finding - the IMF is likely to give more details on how it arrived at the decision.

The IMF's highest decision-making body is its board of governors, a group of mostly finance ministers and central bankers from its 188 member countries. The board of governors has delegated most of its powers to the executive board, made up of 24 executive directors who represent the membership.

The executive board, which meets more than 200 times a year, usually makes decisions based on consensus, rather than formal votes. Mark Sobel, the U.S. executive director who answers to the Obama administration, wields the most power, with a 17 percent voting stake. Together, the Group of Seven countries control 43 percent of the vote, making them a formidable bloc. China, which holds a 3.8 percent voting share, is represented by former People's Bank of China official Jin Zhongxia.



Here's what to look for in yesterday's decision and its immediate aftermath:

WHETHER YUAN DESERVED IT

In her Nov. 13 statement, Lagarde said staff determined the yuan is "freely usable," the test for inclusion. But five months ago, the currency appeared to fall short of the mark. Following yesterday's decision, the IMF will probably release a detailed staff report on the review, shedding more light on how the fund's economists arrived at the new conclusion.

According to the fund, freely usable currencies must be widely used to make payments in global transactions, and widely traded in major exchange markets. Key indicators include

the share a currency makes up of official reserves, international banking liabilities and global debt securities, as well as the volume of use in foreign-exchange markets.

In a July report, IMF officials found the yuan ranked seventh among currencies as a share of official reserves, behind the four SDR members as well as the Australian and Canadian dollars. The yuan constituted 1.1 percent of official reserves, compared with 63.7 percent for the U.S. dollar. The yuan also ranked outside the top five in terms of debt securities and currency trading, according to the report.

WEIGHTING IN BASKET

The board's decision should include the weighting the yuan

will be assigned within the basket, and the staff paper may explain the basis for the proportion. The dollar currently accounts for 41.9 percent of the basket. The euro accounts for 37.4 percent, the pound 11.3 percent and the yen 9.4 percent.

In the preliminary report in July, IMF staff estimated the yuan would have a weight of about 14 percent to 16 percent.

The weighting will affect the interest countries pay when they borrow from the IMF.

POLITICAL REACTION

The reaction to the decision by governments and politicians will show how much of a flash point China's economic and political rise remains in the world. The U.S., in particular, will

have to walk a fine line. The Obama administration initially insisted China implement more financial reforms to win America's support for the yuan's inclusion in the SDR basket.

But after presidents Barack Obama and Xi Jinping met at the White House in September, the administration softened its position, saying the U.S. would support inclusion as long as the yuan meets the IMF's criteria.

MORE REFORM CONDITIONS

To give SDR users the time to adjust, the IMF has decided any changes to the basket will wait until the end of September.

In their July report, fund staffers highlighted a range of operational challenges of adding the yuan to the basket. Countries that hold SDRs, for example, need to have access to yuan-dominated securities to manage their reserves and hedge risks. Also, the IMF will need to identify a reliable interest-rate benchmark to calculate the rate paid by SDR borrowers.

China has addressed some of these issues, committing to issue three-month treasury bills every week and opening its onshore bond and currency markets to foreign central banks.

But the IMF will probably require more conditions to smooth the transition, said Domenico Lombardi, director of the global economy program at the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo, Ontario.

"The IMF membership have come to grips with the fact the renminbi has capital controls, but the PBOC's commitment will be key," Lombardi said. **Bloomberg**

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Frederik Balfour

Hong Kong art auction feels China slowdown in sales drop

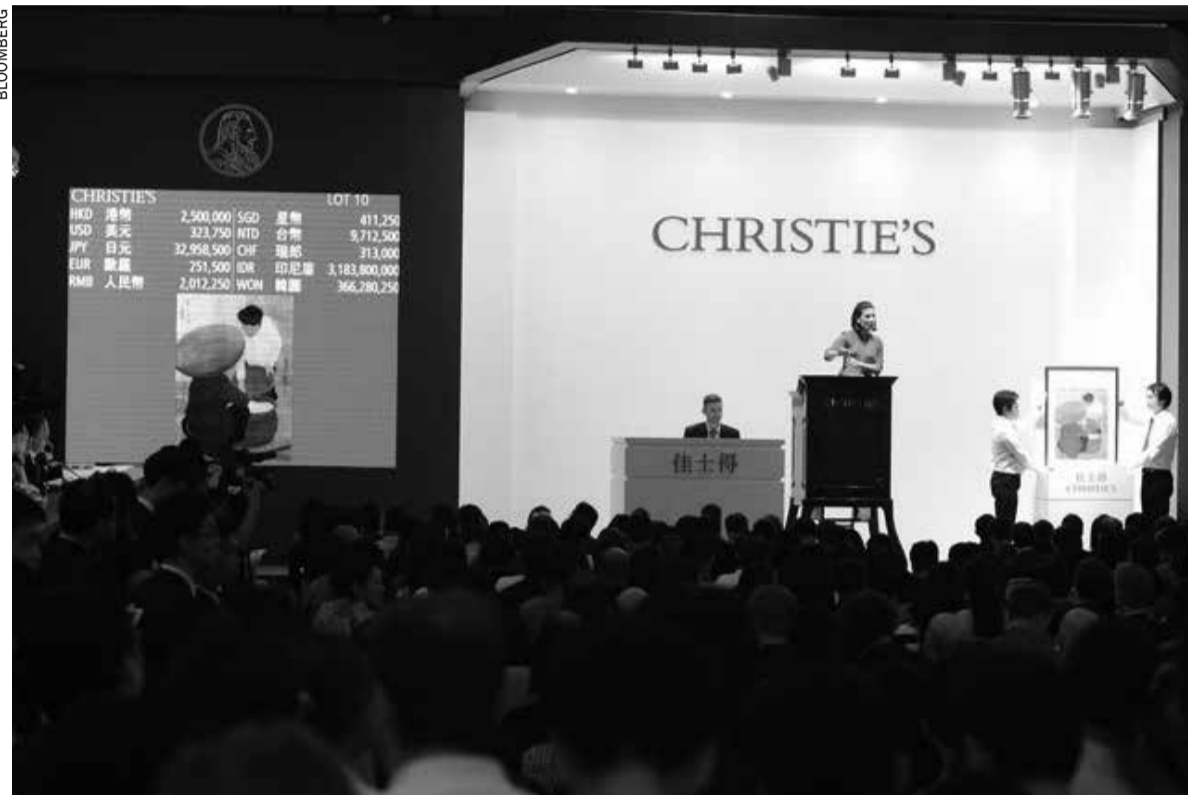
CHINA'S economic slowdown, government anti-corruption measures and fleeing speculators are causing a chill in the Hong Kong art auction market, Christie's Nov. 28 International Hong Kong evening sale showed.

The London-based auction house sold HKD507.9 million (USD66 million) worth of art at its Asian 20th Century and Contemporary auction, compared with HK\$636 million at a similar event a year ago, and HK\$935 million in November 2013. Saturday's sale was the marquee event of Christie's six-day Hong Kong autumn auction marathon.

"It's softer this season for sure," said Hong Kong-based adviser Jehan Chu, who runs Vermillion Art Collections. "There is uncertainty, especially over the economic and political outlook in China, that has made people skittish."

The slowdown could also reflect a shift in buying patterns by wealthy Chinese clients who are spending larger sums in New York and Europe as they embrace more western works. For example, Chinese billionaire Liu Yiqian paid \$170.4 million for Amedeo Modigliani's reclining nude woman, at Christie's New York on Nov. 10, almost three times the total of the Hong Kong evening sale.

Liu, who flies around the world for free on the miles he earns by paying for his art with his American Express Centurion card, was in Hong Kong for the V.I.P. preview but has not yet decided whether to participate in this auction, his daughter Betty said. The autumn event kicked off with wine sales on Nov. 27 and runs to tomorrow, when Chinese works of art and ceramics are auctioned. The entire sale, estimated to earn HK\$3.1 billion, includes Asian



art, jewelry, watches, wine, furniture, women's handbags and contemporary ink.

There is uncertainty, especially over the economic and political outlook in China, that has made people skittish.

JEHAN CHU
VERMILLION ART COLLECTIONS

Francois Curiel, chairman for Asia Pacific at Christie's, says that the economic slowdown notwithstanding, results for jewelry sales in Geneva and modern art in New York this month show the resilience of Chinese buying power. "In Geneva and New York 31.8 percent of sales went to Asians, and a large proportion of that went to China," he said in advance of the Christie's Hong Kong autumn auction marathon.

Those figures were boosted by two purchases by Hong Kong billionaire Joseph Lau, who set an auction record when he paid 48.6 million Swiss francs (\$47 million) for a blue diamond in Geneva at Sotheby's on Nov. 11, a day after paying 28.7 million Swiss

francs for a pink diamond at Christie's.

The highlight of Christie's evening sale was a 20th century painting by Chinese artist Sanyu titled "Vase of Chrysanthemums on a Yellow Table" that sold to a telephone bidder for HK\$46 million, more than triple its high auction estimate set by Christie's of HK\$15 million.

Christie's also sold HK\$71 million worth of wine on Nov. 27 and 28, where the top lot was a 12-bottle case of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, Romanée-Conti 1988, Grand Cru, Côte de Nuits, which fetched HK\$1.04 million.

The slowdown in demand from mainland clients for Christie's traditional sales categories has prompted it to

look for other ways to appeal to new buyers. Its international real estate arm is also re-doubling its efforts, and held a private seminar on Nov. 29 on buying vineyards in Bordeaux and Oregon.

One property it's flogging: a vineyard in the Entre Deux Mers region that produces 30,000 bottles a year for 689,000 euros (\$729,000), which is "the same price as a tiny Wan Chai apartment," said Lily Li, at Bordeaux broker Maxwell-Storrie-Baynes.

Christie's is also selling rare Stradivari and Guarneri del Gesù violins and a cello in Hong Kong for the first time in a selling exhibition - where unlike an auction, the prices are determined in advance - to tap into the mainland love of classical music. The instruments have a combined value of \$65 million.

"Music is a good way of connecting with people and to connect with people who otherwise might not be connected," said Jonathan Stone, chairman of Asian Art at Christie's. "This is not about compensating for any perceived changes in other markets, it's very much an addition."

Christie's also faces added competition from Phillips, which is holding its inaugural Hong Kong watch auction on Dec. 1, offering 350 timepieces estimated to raise \$13.5 million. The star lot is a white gold automatic perpetual wristwatch with moon phases and a leap year indicator by Patek Philippe. The watch has a high estimate of \$2 million.

Bloomberg

corporate bits

HEBE TIEN, YOGA LIN AND JANICE YAN PERFORM AT 'TAIWAN MUSIC SERIES' FINALE

Studio City Event Center (SCEC)'s branded 'Taiwan Music Series' continued for the third consecutive week on Saturday night as 'Supernova Diva' Hebe Tian, hot idol Yoga Lin and Taiwan TV reality talent-show winner, Janice Yan hit the stage for the series finale.

"It is such an amazing experience for us to perform at this ultra-modern event center. The exclusivity of this world-class venue gave us a great opportunity to get close and cozy with our fans. We hope our melodies have touched the heart and soul of all music lovers tonight," said Hebe Tien and Yoga Lin. The artists also visited The House of Magic, Asia's first multi-theater studio which hosts a rotation of



international guest magicians visiting and performing at Studio City.

CTM SETS UP MULTIPLE DONATION CHANNELS TO SUPPORT WALK FOR A MILLION 2015

This year, CTM will continue to support the annual "Walk For A Million" charity event through a range of resources and service supports. Moreover, over 300 staff CTM members will participate in the Walk For A Million to be held on 13th December.

To support the forthcoming "Walk For A Million", CTM will continue its cooperation with the Charity Fund from the Readers of Macao Daily News to set up donation channels through CTM's Internet and Mobile networks, aiming at expan-

ding fund-raising channels. From now on until to 31st January 2016, CTM mobile postpaid customers can make a donation of MOP30 to the Charity Fund by keying in "#132#" and pressing "send" on their mobile phones. For Internet customers, they can access the donation webpage (<https://services.macao.ctm.net/walk-4million/index.en.php>) to donate MOP30 to the Charity Fund. There is no limit on the number of donations and no extra charge will be imposed by CTM.

ST. REGIS MACAO COMPLETES FIRE DRILL

The St. Regis Macao, Cotai Central successfully completed a fire drill Friday in preparation for its first guest arrivals on December 17. 300 team members participated in the 10:30 a.m. drill, demonstrating the emergency-response readiness of the 38-storey, 400-key luxury hotel.

The emergency simulation assumed a hotel room fire on the 9th floor, including one person trapped in an adjacent hotel room and smoke in the corridor. The Fire Services Department dispatched five fire brigades and two ambulances to the scene.

"Safety and security of our staff and guests is of paramount importance to us and we are grateful for the critical support provided by the Fire

Services Department and the Public Security Police Force during this exercise," said Paul Cunningham, General Manager of Operations for The St. Regis Macao. "Everyone followed proper emergency measures during today's fire drill, demonstrating our ability to provide a safe exit for staff, guests and visitors in emergency situations."



Ralph Jennings, Taipei

TAIWAN

OLD foes China and Taiwan have swapped high-level convicted spies in a sign of goodwill linked to the first meeting ever between their presidents.

Each side released the convicts and allowed them to return home before Chinese President Xi Jinping and Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou met Nov. 7 in Singapore, Taipei's presidential office said in a statement yesterday.

China released two convicts and Taiwan released one, the statement said. It was issued after the spy swap was reported earlier yesterday by the Taipei-based China Times newspaper, which said the two Taiwanese had been initially sentenced to death in China.

Chinese officials also confirmed the releases, but didn't say they were part of an exchange.

"This is in accordance with the mutual goodwill due to the Ma-Xi meeting," Taiwanese presidential office spokesman Charles Chen said in the statement. "President Ma hopes goodwill exchanges can continue and achieve additional specific achievements."

The two sides have been separately ruled since Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists lost the Chinese civil war of the 1940s to the Communists and re-based their government in Taiwan. China regards

Taipei says it has swapped convicted spies with Beijing

AP PHOTO



Protesters carry signs denouncing the meeting in Singapore of Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping outside of the Songshan Airport in Taipei, Saturday, Nov. 7

Taiwan as part of its territory and insists the two sides eventually reunify. That split kept relations icy until Ma took office in 2008 and set aside the political dispute to build trust through talks on trade, transit and investment. His summit with Xi, though it produced no formal agreements, was a capstone of that effort.

China first sent back

Chu Kung-hsun and Hsu Chang-kuo on Oct. 13, the China Times said. Both were colonels who had worked for Taiwan's Bureau of Military Intelligence and were arrested in 2006.

China "kidnapped" them along the Vietnamese border, said Alexander Huang, strategic studies professor and military specialist at Tamkang

University in Taiwan. Their rank makes them their government's highest-level convicted spies in China "in recent memory," he said.

China and Taiwan periodically ask each other to release espionage convicts, Huang said, and a wife of one of the Taiwanese colonels once traveled to China to press the case.

The two from Taiwan initially received death sentences for espionage, but they were later commuted to 20-year prison terms, the China Times said.

Taiwan followed up with the release of China's Li Zhihao, the president's office statement said. Local media said he was about 70 years old and called him China's "man

in black." He was serving a life sentence, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said.

"The release took place before the Ma-Xi meeting and was announced only today," Huang said. "Now people are saying the releases were to show goodwill on both sides before the summit."

Taiwanese Defense Ministry spokesman Lo Shao-he said the releases were announced in Taiwan because they had been reported by the China Times, and that normally it was "inappropriate" to reveal information in such cases.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office, when asked about the issue, confirmed the releases in a brief faxed statement, but said nothing explicitly about an exchange with Taiwan.

Many people in Taiwan worry that their government has grown too close to Beijing, giving a lead in opinion polls to the chief opposition party candidate ahead of the Jan. 16 presidential election.

China is asking that Taiwan return a second person convicted of espionage, the China Times reported. **AP**

HONG KONG

Gov't to pay for MTR's express rail to Guangzhou-Shenzhen

Kyunghee Park and Alfred Liu

THE Hong Kong government agreed to bear the costs for MTR Corp's railway project linking the city to mainland China more than a year after a cost blowout led to inquiries by lawmakers and the departure of senior executives at the train operator.

In return for the government paying for the HKD84.4 billion (USD11 billion) project, which connects the southern Chinese cities of Guangzhou and Shenzhen, MTR said yesterday it would pay a special dividend to its shareholders. The government, as a majority owner of the train operator, will get HK\$19.51 billion in the payout, MTR said in a statement to the

Hong Kong stock exchange.

MTR will bear any additional cost if it exceeds the budget for the project, which is expected to be operational in the third quarter of 2018. The new budget is slightly lower than an earlier forecast of HK\$85.3 billion, MTR said.

The agreement yesterday brings to an end wrangling between the government and MTR over who should take responsibility for the delay and budget blowout, with former Chief Executive Officer Jay Walder departing one year ahead of his contract expiry. The rail was initially scheduled to be completed this year for HK\$65 billion.

The company believes "the agreement provides a viable

and pragmatic solution to take forward and complete the express rail link project," MTR said in the statement.

The rail link is 75 percent completed, Hong Kong Secretary for Transport Anthony Cheung said at a briefing in the city. The government reserves the right to take legal action against MTR if it isn't satisfied with the implementation of the project and for any cost overruns, he said.

MTR will pay out a special dividend of HK\$4.40 a share, with other stakeholders getting HK\$6.25 billion in total. Hong Kong's government owned 75.7 percent of MTR as of Oct. 31, the train operator said.

The express rail link will cut travel time between the main-



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land and Hong Kong to help foster trade and services, which will bolster the city's long-term competitiveness as a gateway to China, MTR said. Hong Kong lawmakers in January 2010 approved funding for the high-speed rail line, whose completion had been delayed at least twice.

Shares of MTR, which were suspended from trading yesterday, fell 1.2 percent to close at HK\$36 on Friday. Trading will resume at 9 a.m. today.

MTR posted net income of HK\$8.2 billion in the six mon-

ths ended in June, 3.5 percent more than a year earlier, helped by a sale of land. **Bloomberg**

HKD 84.4b

The new cost
of the project

COP 21

Obama, Xi tout close Sino-US climate coordination

Nancy Benac, Paris

PRESIDENT Barack Obama yesterday touted close U.S. cooperation with China on climate change as vital to world efforts to slow global warming, even as he acknowledged persistent differences with China's President Xi Jinping over cybersecurity and maritime security.

Huddling with Xi on the sidelines of the Paris climate conference, Obama said nowhere had coordination with Beijing been more critical or fruitful than on climate change. He credited U.S. and Chinese leadership with leading 180 nations to make their own pledges to curb emissions in the run-up to the Paris talks.

"Our leadership on this issue has been absolutely vital," Obama said.

Yet Obama also invoked hot-button issues that have long vexed U.S.-China relations as he and Xi opened their meeting. The United States has

Our leadership on this issue has been absolutely vital.

BARACK OBAMA



U.S. President Barack Obama, left, meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping during their meeting held on the sidelines of the COP21, United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Le Bourget, outside Paris

complained bitterly about cyber-attacks against the U.S. emanating from China, and Obama has spoken out regularly against China's assertive moves in disputed waters in the East China Sea and South China Sea.

Obama said the U.S. and China had developed a "candid way of discussing these issues," adding that he hoped to build on that tradition during his meeting with Xi. "Our teams have found ways to work through

these tensions in a constructive fashion," he said.

The global response to the attacks that killed 130 here two weeks ago have cast a somber mood over the talks, and Obama encouraged China to play a bigger role addressing the crisis, and specifically called for Beijing's help in securing a political transition in Syria. He expressed condolences over the killing of a Chinese hostage by IS and said it "indicates that this is a threat to all of our

nations."

The Chinese leader, speaking through a translator, said that global worries made it even more important for the U.S. and China to work together. He called for the U.S. and China to build a new model of cooperation, using diplomatic language long preferred by Beijing.

"The world economy is recovering slowly, terrorism is on the rise, and climate change is a huge challenge. There is more instability and uncer-

tainty in international situations," Xi said.

Obama's meeting with Xi at the opening of the two-week Paris conference was designed to underscore the need for all nations to come together on a strong agreement to combat climate change. China emits about 30 percent of the world's greenhouse gases and the U.S. about 16 percent.

Both countries have sought to use their cooperation on the issue to ramp up pressure on developed and developing countries alike to pledge ambitious cuts. In a joint announcement last year, Obama pledged to cut U.S. emissions up to 28 percent over the next decade, while Xi announced China would cap its growing emissions by 2030 or sooner.

As the conference kicked off, the U.S. State Department announced early yesterday that the U.S. was pledging USD51 million to a global fund to help poorer countries adapt to climate change. The U.S. contribution joins pledges from Germany, Canada, Italy and others to total \$248 million.

The Obama administration didn't specify where the U.S. dollars would come from. Obama has struggled to convince the Republican-run Congress to fund his climate goals, amid concerns from critics in the U.S. who say his energy plan is unattainable and could be wiped away by his successor.

During the two days of talks, Obama was slated to give a brief speech about the budding agreement and meet with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He also planned a dinner with French President Francois Hollande and a meeting with island nations hit hard by climate change before returning to Washington today. **AP**

POLLUTION

Heavy smog chokes Beijing as Xi arrives in Paris

SMOG levels spiked in Beijing yesterday, highlighting the environmental challenges facing China as President Xi Jinping arrived in Paris for global climate talks.

The concentration of PM2.5, fine particulates that pose the greatest risk to human health, went "beyond index" in the afternoon, according to a U.S. Embassy monitor. The PM2.5 level was 678 micrograms per cubic meter near Tiananmen Square, the Beijing government said. The World Health Organization recommends average 24-hour exposure to PMI of 25 or below.



Vehicles drive along a road with a traffic sign reading "Visibility low, slow down your speed" on a heavily polluted day in Beijing

Public outrage over air pollution has been a catalyst for China's transformation into a driving force for a breakthrough deal in Paris. Leaders including U.S. Beijing on Sunday raised its air

pollution alert to orange, the second-highest level in its four-tier system, for the first time in 13 months. The heavy pollution in Beijing won't clear up until tomorrow, according to the environment bureau. The city will ask some factories to suspend or limit production and construction sites to stop transporting materials and waste while the orange alert is active, it said.

Under the orange alert, people are advised to cut down on outdoor activity, while the elderly and people with heart and lung ailments should stay inside.

Severe pollution was also reported in at least 17 other cities around Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei and Shandong, according to the Ministry of Environmental Protection. Shanghai's air was also heavily polluted, the second worst level on a six-grade scale, with the PM2.5 reading at 170.4 micrograms per cubic meter as of 12 p.m. yesterday, the city's Environmental Monitoring Center said on its website.

The potential for heavy pollution days is greater in winter due to weather conditions and increased energy consumption for heating, said Dong Lian-

sai, climate and energy campaigner at Greenpeace East Asia.

As pollution levels surged in Beijing, the government also announced on Sunday that it had achieved its targets for reducing major pollutants outlined in its five-year plan ending 2015 ahead of schedule, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. Air quality in more than 300 Chinese cities improved in the first three quarters from a year earlier, though average concentrations in 80 percent of the cities exceeded national standards, said Greenpeace's Dong. **Bloomberg**

SOUTH KOREA

Parliament ratifies free trade pact with China

Youkyung Lee,
Business Writer, Seoul

SOUTH Korea's parliament yesterday approved a free trade pact with China after opposition lawmakers secured a USD1.4 billion relief package for farmers.

The ratification, which comes five months after the trade pact was signed, paves way for the deal with South Korea's largest export market to take effect this year. South Korea already has trade deals with the European Union and United States.

Lawmakers passed the deal after agreeing to spend 1.6 trillion (\$1.4 billion) won over the next decade on tax breaks and other aid for farmers and fishermen.

The main opposition party was against ratifying a deal that would hurt agriculture and fisheries. Both industries feared greater competition from less expensive Chinese imports.

To further appease concerns about the deal's impact, lawmakers agreed to seek donations to establish a 1 trillion won fund for the agriculture and fishing industries over the next decade.

Once put into effect, the deal would eliminate tariffs on \$42 billion of South Korea's imports from China and on \$73 billion in South Korean exports to China. Eventually, it will remove tariffs on more than 90 percent of goods. Autos and rice remain protected.

South Korea's government said the deal would create about 54,000 jobs over the next 10 years and bring other economic benefits, such as boosting sales of fashion items, cosmetics and electronics goods made by small-and-medium Korean companies in the Chinese market.

South Korea, Asia's fourth-largest economy, has been struggling to boost exports, which sank 16 percent in October from over a year earlier, the biggest drop in six years.

Earlier in November, South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang agreed during their meeting in Seoul to work toward ratifying the deal by the end of the year.

South Korea was China's fourth-largest trading partner in 2014 after the U.S., Hong Kong and Japan. AP



S Korean protesters from a farmers' group hold signs during a rally denouncing the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between S Korea and China in front of the National Assembly in Seoul

NEW ZEALAND

Malaysian diplomat pleads guilty to indecent assault

Nick Perry, Wellington

A Malaysian military officer who was extradited to New Zealand after earlier leaving the country under the protection of diplomatic immunity pleaded guilty yesterday to indecent assault.

Muhammad Rizalman Ismail faces a maximum of seven years in prison. He had earlier pleaded not guilty to more serious charges, including assault with the intent to rape. The court is scheduled to hear disputed facts in the case Friday ahead of any sentencing.

A police summary said the 21-year-old victim, Tania Billingsley, was alone in the bedroom of her Wellington home in May 2014 and watching a movie on her laptop when Rizalman, who worked at the Malaysian Embassy, broke in.

Rizalman took off his pants and underwear before opening the unlocked front door, the summary said. Inside the house, he took off his jacket and, wearing only a shirt, pushed open the bedroom door, saying "Can I come in?" according to the summary.

Billingsley began screaming and Rizalman grabbed both her shoulders, the summary said. The pair struggled before Billingsley managed to push Rizalman out of her bedroom and run to a bathroom where she called police.

Billingsley had bruises and marks on her arms and suffered considerable emotional trauma from the incident, the summary said.

Rizalman was arrested and charged at the time but returned to Malaysia less than two weeks later under diplomatic immunity protection. The case quickly became embarrassing for both countries.

New Zealand initially blamed Malaysia for invoking immunity but then later conceded its officials may have given the mistaken impression they did not oppose Rizalman returning home.

The Associated Press does not identify victims in sexual assault cases, but Billingsley decided to identify herself in July 2014 and to speak out publicly, saying she felt frustrated and angry Rizalman had been able to leave.

Rizalman returned to New Zealand following months of delay after Malaysia's government said he needed to undergo physical and mental examinations to ensure he was fit to stand trial, and lawyers drafted a special extradition document. AP

AUSTRALIA-MEXICO

Mexican authorities search for 2 missing Australian tourists after report men's van found

Maria Verza, Mexico City

FRRIENDS of two Australian tourists missing for more than a week in Mexico are looking to work with authorities in determining what happened to the men following a report that their burned van may have been found with two bodies inside in the drug gang-plagued state of Sinaloa, one of the friends said Sunday.

Dean Lucas and Adam Coleman were traveling from Edmonton, Alberta, to Mexico and had been scheduled to arrive on Nov. 21 in the city of Guadalajara but failed to appear, Coleman's girlfriend, Andrea Gomez, told The Associated Press from Guadalajara.

The families of the two men issued a statement through Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade saying they were aware of reports that the men had gone missing during a surfing trip to Mexico.

The families added that they were aware Mexican officials had located the



In this Nov. 21 photo, Mexican authorities inspect a burnt out van suspected to belong to a couple of missing Australian tourists, in Sinaloa, Mexico

van the men were using. The statement said "a tragic event has occurred" and the families feared for their sons, but stressed that they were waiting for details to be confirmed.

Officials in Sinaloa declined to comment about the matter.

Gomez initially said that she and Lucas' partner, Josie Cox, would go to the Sinaloa capital of Culiacan yesterday

with items that could provide DNA for testing to see if the two bodies reportedly found inside the burned van were the Australians. Gomez said that Cox arrived in Mexico on Sunday with Lucas' dental records and that Gomez had "pieces of dreadlocks" given to her by Coleman.

"Everything points to it being them because the van matches; it had a bicycle. But nothing is confirmed yet," Gomez said.

She later said that she and Cox would go first to Mexico City to contact the Australian Embassy rather than go to Sinaloa.

A statement from the Australian foreign ministry said consular officials were working with Mexican authorities to locate the two men.

The missing Australians who were driving Cox's van had been scheduled to meet Gomez in Guadalajara, she said. She said she and Cox put out an alert on social media after reporting the men missing. AP

JAPAN

Whaling fleet set to leave for Antarctic

Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo

JAPAN'S whaling fleet will leave today for the Antarctic for a three-month, scaled-down hunt, the government said, despite protests from opponents who say Tokyo has not proven that whales need to be killed for research.

Yesterday's announcement comes days after Japan submitted its final plan to the International Whaling Commission after the commission's scientific committee said earlier this year that it was not convinced that whales needed to be killed for research on whale stock management and conservation.

The expedition will be the first since the International Court of Justice ruled last year that the hunts were not truly scientific, forcing Tokyo to revise its Antarctic whaling plans. Last year, Japan did go to the Antarctic, but its research did not involve killing any whales.

Japan says lethal sampling is indispensable to obtain data on the maturing ages of whales.

Under Tokyo's revised proposal, it plans to catch up to 333 minke whales each year over the next 12 years, about one-third of what it used to kill, the Fisheries Agency and the Foreign Ministry said in a joint statement yesterday. The



In this Nov. 12, 2004 file photo, family and the crew of Japan's research whaling vessel Nisshinmaru bid farewell as the ship departs from Shimonoseki, western Japan, for the Antarctic Ocean

plan will be evaluated after six years.

Australia, which brought the International Court of Justice case against Japan, said it might send a boat to shadow the Japanese fleet.

Australian Attorney General George Brandis told the Senate

that Australia was "very disappointed" by the resumption of whaling and had taken the matter up at "the highest levels" in a bid to get Japan to change its mind.

If diplomacy fails, Australia will consider sending a Customs and Border Protection

Service patrol boat, Brandis said. He did not say what role such a boat might play, but it would likely try to gather evidence of illegal conduct.

Japan's actual catch has fallen in recent years in part because of declining domestic demand for whale meat. Protests by the

anti-whaling group Sea Shepherd have also contributed to the lower catch. The government has spent large amounts of tax money to sustain the whaling operations.

Japan plans to catch up to 333 minke whales each year over the next 12 years

Fifteen environmental and animal rights groups, including Dolphin & Whale Action Network, Greenpeace and Friends of Earth, said in a joint statement that there is no future for the whaling business, and that Japan's government should stop using taxpayers' money just to keep the debt-ridden whaling operation alive.

"We strongly demand that the government not start any new research whaling programs, and instead take on new measures that contribute to ocean conservation," they said.

The International Whaling Commission imposed a commercial ban on whaling in 1986, but Japan has continued to kill whales under an exemption for research. AP



Rugby League player Manu Vatuvei, front, helps place the casket carrying the body of Jonah Lomu into the hearse during the public memorial for the former All Black at Eden Park in Auckland

WORLD Rugby Chairman Bernard Lapasset led the tributes to Jonah Lomu at a public memorial yesterday, saying the former All Blacks winger was a giant whose contribution to the sport "cannot be overstated."

Thousands of mourners, many wearing replicas of Lomu's No. 11 jersey, crowded Eden Park for

the final public memorial for the rugby great who died Nov. 18 aged 40. A private family burial service will be held in Auckland today.

Lapasset, who flew to New Zealand from France, joined Prime Minister John Key and former All Blacks in paying tribute to Lomu's contribution to rugby and his charity work.

NEW ZEALAND

Thousands crowd Eden Park for Jonah Lomu memorial

Lapasset described Lomu as "a giant of a man (who) leaves a giant space in world rugby. He will forever be a big part of rugby's story."

Key recorded a video tribute in Paris, where he is attending the world climate conference, saying Lomu made a real difference in people's lives.

"He proved that you can come from anywhere in New Zealand in any background and make it to the top," Key said.

One of the most moving tributes came from pupils of Lomu's former school, Favona Primary in South Auckland, who wrote and performed a tribute song.

The pupils sang of Lomu as "No. 11, our friend in heaven."

The memorial opened with a traditional haka and powhiri, or welcome, performed by indigenous Maori representatives of Auckland's Ngati Whātua people. Lomu's coffin was then carried into the stadium by pallbearers including former All Blacks Michael Jones, Frank Bunce, Joeli Vidiri and Jerome Kaino, as well as New Zealand rugby league player Manu Vatuvei.

The coffin was followed by Lomu's wife Nadene, who wore a woven skirt which is a traditional Tongan symbol of respect and mourning, and by Lomu's sons Brayley, 6, and Dhyreille, 5.

Mourners watched a video montage of high

points in Lomu's rugby career, including a tribute paid to Lomu by British singer Elton John during his recent concert tour to New Zealand.

Former All Blacks coach John Hart spoke on behalf of Lomu's wife and children, thanking mourners and expressing gratitude for the tributes that had poured in from around the world.

Hart recounted Lomu's almost 20-year struggle with the debilitating kidney illness nephrotic syndrome which eventually forced his retirement and is thought to have contributed to his death.

Lomu first became aware of the illness in 1995, but kept it secret from the public and from

teammates until he was forced to undergo regular dialysis treatments. Hart said Lomu's illness meant he played all of his career at only 80 percent capacity.

"It's frightening to think what he could have done on the field had he not played with such a huge medical handbrake," he said. "He overcame tremendous hurdles throughout his life but never, ever complained. He was a fighter until the very end."

Lomu, who underwent a kidney transplant in 2004, played 63 tests for New Zealand and Hart described him as rugby's "first superstar" who "left his huge footprint around the world." AP

TURKEY

PM: Ankara won't apologize to Russia over downing of jet

Jamey Keaten, Brussels

DEFYING calls from Moscow, Turkey's prime minister said yesterday that his country won't apologize to Russia for shooting down a warplane operating over Syria, saying the Turkish military was doing its job defending the national airspace.

Amid high tensions that have elicited concerns from the U.N. chief, Ahmet Davutoglu also said Turkey hopes Moscow will reconsider economic sanctions announced against Turkish interests in the wake of last week's incident. The Turkish resort town of Antalya is "like a second home" to many Russian holidaymakers, he said, but refused to yield on Turkish security.

"No Turkish prime minister or president will apologize ... because of doing our duty," Davutoglu told reporters after



Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu speaks during a media conference at NATO headquarters in Brussels

meeting NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in Brussels. "Protection of Turkish airspace,

Turkish borders is a national duty, and our army did their job to protect this airspace. But if

the Russian side wants to talk, and wants to prevent any future unintentional events like this,

we are ready to talk."

Turkey is a member of the NATO alliance.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told The Associated Press on Sunday that he's deeply concerned about tensions between Russia and Turkey after Turkish F-16s shot down a Russian warplane on Nov. 24.

Russia on Sept. 30 began airstrikes in Syria that it says are focused on fighters of the Islamic State, but which some observers say target other rebel groups and are aimed at bolstering the forces of President Bashar Assad. Russia insists that the plane that was shot down did not intrude on Turkish airspace.

Davutoglu insisted a violation occurred, and said Turkey had repeatedly warned Russia about incursions into its airspace.

"We also made very clear that the Turkish-Syria border is a national security issue for Turkey. So it was a defensive action," Davutoglu said. He repeated Turkish assertions that there were no IS fighters in the area.

"We have been telling our Russian friends that their bombardments against civilians on our border is creating new waves of refugees which do not go to Russia or to any other country — but coming to Turkey," he said. **AP**

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Pope Francis meets with Muslims in mosque visit

Nicole Winfield and Krista Larson, Bangui

POPE Francis ventured into a volatile Muslim neighborhood of Central African Republic's capital yesterday and brought his message of reconciliation to the city's main mosque, insisting that Christians and Muslims have long lived peacefully together here and that religion can never justify violence.

Under heavy security, Francis crossed into the PK5 neighborhood where Bangui's Muslims have been unable to leave for months because of the armed Christian militia fighters who surround its perimeter. The pope traveled in his open-air vehicle through the neighborhood despite the security risks. Armed U.N. peacekeepers stood guard in the minarets of the mosque.

The pope's visit immediately ushered in a greater sense of freedom to the beleaguered area. In what had been a no-man's land separating



Pope Francis waves to the crowd on the occasion of his visit at the Central Mosque in Bangui's Muslim enclave of PK5

the Muslim enclave from the rest of the city only the day before, thousands crossed over into the area chanting "war is over" in the local Sango language after the pope's departure. Some followed the pope's entourage all the way to the sports stadium for a final Mass before he heads back to Italy.

Francis had insisted on coming to the PK5 neighborhood to appeal for peace in a country where two years of Christian-Muslim violence has divided the capital and forced nearly 1 million people to flee their homes. The once vibrant markets of PK5 have now been largely shuttered and many of the Muslim-owned bu-

sinesses stand in ruins.

About 200 men seated inside the mosque welcomed Francis, who sat on a sofa. In comments to the chief imam, Francis insisted that Muslims and Christians are brothers and must behave as such. "Christians and Muslims and members of traditional religions have lived peacefully for many years," he said. "Together, we say no to hatred, to vengeance and violence, especially that committed in the name of a religion or God."

The pope's visit to the mosque marked the highlight of his three-nation African tour, with previous stops in Kenya and Uganda. **AP**

ISRAEL

Court convicts 2 youths in 2014 killing of Palestinian teen

Daniella Cheslow, Jerusalem

A Jerusalem court yesterday convicted two Israeli youths in the grisly killing last year of 16-year-old Palestinian Mohammed Abu Khdeir, while delaying the verdict for the third and chief suspect in the case due to a last-minute insanity plea.

The killing of Abu Khdeir, who was burned to death, was in revenge for the killing of three Israeli teens in the West Bank — slayings that set off a chain of events that led to the 50-day Gaza war in the summer of 2014.

Yesterday's verdict could further increase Israeli-Palestinian tensions amid a two-month wave of violence that has been convulsing the region.

In the ruling, Judge Jacob Zaban of Jerusalem's District Court determined that the ringleader, 31-year-old Yosef Haim Ben David, and two Israeli minors — whose names were not released — snatched Abu Khdeir off an east Jerusalem sidewalk in July 2014 and burned him alive in a forest west of the city.

The judge determined that Ben David drove the car while his two accomplices beat Abu Khdeir unconscious in the back seat. Once they reached the forest, one accomplice helped Ben David douse Abu Khdeir with gasoline. Then Ben

David lit the match, according to Zaban.

The Palestinian youth's death triggered violent protests and was a milestone in an escalation of violence that led to the Israel-Hamas war. The three suspects were arrested shortly after the July 2, 2014 abduction and confessed to the killing to investigators with Israel's Shin Bet, the security agency said. **AP**

ISRAEL SUSPENDS CONTACT WITH SOME EU GROUPS OVER LABELING

ISRAEL ON Sunday suspended contacts with European Union representatives on Mideast peace issues to protest the 28-nation bloc's decision to label Israeli exports from the West Bank. Israel has been up in arms since the EU announced last month that goods produced in settlements must have special labels and cannot say they were made in Israel. Israel has said the decision is discriminatory and unfairly singles out the country, while the EU says it is a technical matter to clarify the origins of the products. Israel's Foreign Ministry announced late Sunday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had ordered contacts frozen until a "reassessment process is completed."

Seth Borenstein and Angela Charlton, Le Bourget

COP 21

Leaders of warming Earth meet in Paris to cut emissions

ADDRESSING the twin threats of global warming and extremist violence, the largest group of world leaders ever to stand together kicked off two weeks of high-stakes climate talks outside Paris yesterday, saying that by striking an ambitious deal to cut emissions they can show terrorists what countries can achieve when they are united.

The gathering of 151 heads of state and government comes at a somber time for France, two weeks after militants linked to the Islamic State group killed 130 people around Paris. Fears of more attacks have prompted extra-high security and a crackdown on environmental protests — and threaten to eclipse longer-term concerns about rising seas and increasingly extreme weather linked to man-made global warming.

“The challenge of an international meeting has never been so great because it’s the future of the planet, the future of life,” French President Francois Hollande said after a moment of silence for attack victims in France, Lebanon, Iraq, Tunisia and Mali.

“There are two big global challenges that we must face,”



An artwork entitled 'One Heart One Tree' by artist Naziha Mestaoui is displayed on the Eiffel tower ahead of the 2015 Paris Climate Conference

he added, urging leaders to create a world free from both environmental destruction and extremist violence.

Many of the leaders paid their respects at sites linked to the attacks on their way to the conference. President Barack Obama, in a late-night visit, placed a single flower outside the con-

cert hall where dozens were killed, and bowed his head in silence.

“We stand with Paris,” said U.N. climate change agency chief Christina Figueres said at talks near Le Bourget airfield, just north of the city. “The city of light, now more than ever, is a beacon of hope

for the world.”

On Sunday, hundreds of thousands of people rallied around the world, calling on the leaders to make real progress at the talks. Violence erupted after one peaceful demonstration in Paris, and hundreds of people were arrested. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon took note of the protests in his opening remarks.

“The future of the people of the world, the future of our planet, is in your hands,” Ban told negotiators. “We cannot afford indecision, half measures or merely gradual approaches. Our goal must be a transformation.”

Ban, Hollande and other leaders called for a binding agreement and emphasized the role of private industry and money in solving what Hollande called “the climate crisis.” They said the world must keep future warming to no more than another degree Celsius (1.8 de-

grees Fahrenheit) from now, and if possible half that to spare island nations threatened by rising seas.

The world has already warmed nearly 1 degree Celsius since the beginning of the industrial age, and 181 nations have made pledges to combat man-made carbon dioxide pollution. The negotiators are tasked with building a global treaty by the end of next week.

“We just have 11 short days before us,” French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said as he took over as president of the negotiations. “Success is not yet assured, but it is within our grasp... The eyes of the world are upon us and there are great hopes.”

Added the outgoing president, Peruvian Environment Minister Manuel Pulgar-Vidal: “We can show to the world that we can work together against climate change and against global terrorism.” AP

AD

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what's ON



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 TIME: 7pm
 VENUE: Ground Floor Gallery, Second Floor Gallery and Open Spaces of Ox Warehouse
 ADMISSION: free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2853 0026

MACAU ARTS WINDOW TRIVIA: PAINTINGS BY VONG CHI HANG
 TIME: 10am-7pm
 (No admission after 6:30 pm, closed on Mondays)
 UNTIL: December 13, 2016
 VENUE: Macau Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
 ADMISSION: MOP5
 (Free on Sundays and public holidays)
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

ARTIFACTS OF EXCELLENCE - SEAL CARVINGS BY LUO SHUZHONG FROM THE MAM COLLECTION
 TIME: 10am-7pm
 (Closed on Mondays, No admission after 6:30 pm)
 UNTIL: February 28, 2016
 VENUE: Macau Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
 ADMISSION: MOP5
 (Free on Sundays and public holidays)
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

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

PHOTOGRAPHS OF OLD TEMPLES IN MACAU
 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)
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Offbeat

FIJI SEVENS TEAM TO THE RESCUE AS PASSENGER TAKEN ILL

The world champion Fiji sevens rugby team has been praised after stepping in to assist cabin crew during a medical emergency on a flight from Fiji to Brisbane last week.

When an elderly female passenger was taken ill, England-born team coach Ben Ryan and team doctor Emosi Taloga immediately provided medical assistance.

Cabin crew had started lunch service when the emergency occurred, but were forced to stop while the passenger was attended to. The Fiji players, without being asked, rose to continue serving lunch to passengers, then moved through the cabin to retrieve trays and rubbish when the meal had been completed, team co-manager Paula Bio told the Associated Press.

One player assisted cabin crew by holding an oxygen mask to the face of the ailing passenger for more than an hour.

"It shows the humble side of the Fijian people when those kind of unexpected situations occur anywhere," Bio said. "It's the image of the Fiji players and also our beloved Fiji."

A passenger aboard the Virgin Australia flight, Ryan Fee, told Australia's News Corp. the actions of the Fiji players had been a "fantastic bit of team work."

"When the air hostesses were all flustered the team got up to finish serving food and then assisted with the cleanup of trays for the entire plane," Fee said.

The Fiji team was heading to Brisbane on its way to Dubai for the first round of the World Sevens circuit.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	Publicity
14:55	Debate on Security Policy Report for 2016 (Live)
20:00	Documentary Series
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:40	Non-Daily Port. News
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:05	RTPi Live

cinema

CINETEATRO

26 Nov - 02 Dec



THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY PART 2

ROOM 1

(2D) 2.15, 4.45, 9.45 pm

(3D) 7.15 pm

Director: Francis Lawrence

Starring: Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson,

Liam Hemsworth

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 137min

KEEPER OF DARKNESS

ROOM 2

2.30, 4.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Nick Cheung

Starring: Nick Cheung, Kuo Tsai Chieh, Louis Chueng

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 105min

RETURN OF THE CUCKOO

ROOM 2

7.30 pm

Director: Patrick Kong

Starring: Chi Lam Cheung, Chairmaine Sheh

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 86min



VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

ROOM 3

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Paul McGuigan

Starring: James McAvoy, Daniel Radcliffe

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 109min

MACAU TOWER

26 Nov - 16 Dec

KEEPER OF DARKNESS

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Nick Cheung

Starring: Nick Cheung, Kuo Tsai Chieh, Louis Chueng

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 105min

this day in history



1955 BLACK WOMAN CHALLENGES RACE LAW

A black woman has been arrested by police in Montgomery, Alabama, after refusing to give up her seat on the bus to a white person.

Mrs Rosa Parks now faces a fine for breaking the segregation laws which say black Americans must vacate their seats if there are white passengers left standing.

It is not the first time Mrs Parks, who is a seamstress, has defied the law on segregation.

In 1943 she was thrown off a bus for refusing to get on via the back door, which was reserved for black passengers. She became known to other drivers who sometimes refused to let her on.

Today Mrs Parks left Montgomery Fair, the department store where she was employed doing repairs on men's clothing, as usual.

She said she was tired after work and suffered aches and pains in her shoulders, back and neck.

When she got on the bus she realised the driver was the same man, James Blake, who had thrown her off twelve years before.

As more white people got on and the seats filled up, he asked her to give up her seat and she refused.

He threatened to call the police and she told him to go ahead.

She was subsequently arrested and charged with violating segregation law.

She will now appear in court on Monday 5 December.

Mrs Parks is a youth leader of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and her husband, Raymond, a barber, has taken part in voter registration drives.

Between them the couple have worked for many years to improve the lot of black Americans in the southern United States where rigid segregation laws have been in force since the end of the Civil War in 1865.

Last year a group of professional black woman in Montgomery, the Women's Political Council, protested to the mayor about segregation on the buses, warning him they were planning a boycott.

The NAACP has also tried to challenge the laws on segregation in the courts and Mrs Parks has been involved in raising money to defend a 15-year-old student, Claudette Colvin, who was removed from a bus in March of this year for refusing to give up her seat to a white man.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Five days later, thousands of black citizens boycotted the buses in Alabama - to mark the day Mrs Parks was due in court. She was fined USD10 (the equivalent of about \$70 in 2003), plus \$4 costs.

She challenged the verdict and the NAACP decided to use her case as a test against city and state segregation laws.

Later that same evening, the young preacher Martin Luther King addressed a crowd of several thousand at Holt Street Baptist Church and called for the boycott to continue.

Nearly all Montgomery's 40,000 black citizens took part in the bus boycott, which lasted for 381 days.

On 20 December the Supreme court upheld the decision of a lower court to end segregation on Alabama's buses.

Mrs Parks was sacked from her job and in 1957 left Montgomery for Detroit following harassment. She later became a special assistant to Democratic congressman John Conyers until her retirement in 1988.

She died in October 2005 - an icon for the civil rights movement - almost exactly 50 years after her famous bus boycott began.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Jump on that big, fat opportunity — you need to relish it for all it's worth!

Taurus April 20-May 20 You can count on plans and people today — even the stuff you've been questioning should be pretty solid.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Things are bothering you under the surface today, but you may not be able to plumb the depths in time to figure out what's up.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 An unavoidable issue comes your way today — so prepare yourself! It may be somewhat early, which means you can wrap it up and then take the rest of the day off.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 It's a good day for you to share your passions with new people — you may win a few converts, or at least impress them with your enthusiasm!

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You know better than most how hard work pays off — and early today, you get a reminder of how right you are!

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Your limits are closer than you'd like, but you still have a ways to go before you risk bumping up against them.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Big ideas are on the table — make sure that yours are mixing and mingling, too!

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You think for yourself — much more so than most people — and today, that quality is shining brightly!

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Your plans are coming together in a great way today — so make sure that you're looking ahead to see what you can do in the future.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Can you maintain focus? If so, today should be golden. If not, you may have to get help from a friend or boss who can keep you on task.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You need a new boss — which could mean a new job or even a new career! Try to push yourself out there and find something that can work with every aspect of your being, if that's possible.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Bern's river; 5- Slippery; 9- Hey, over here!; 13- Asset; 14- Alpaca's cousin; 16- Kansas city; 17- Driving aids; 18- Inventor Howe; 19- ___ about; 20- Spanish hero; 22- Serenaded; 24- Resembling a feather; 27- Trig function; 28- Builds; 29- Diminished; 33- We're off ___ the Wizard; 34- Capricorn's animal; 35- Sandberg of baseball; 36- Tummy muscles; 37- Heavy footwear; 38- Fond du ___ Wis.; 39- Cut of beef; 41- Singer Redding; 42- Flora and fauna; 44- Work boot feature; 46- Shelter for a dog; 47- Withdraw by degrees; 48- Pledge; 49- Place of confinement; 52- First name in advice; 53- West Point inits.; 57- Tailor's line; 58- Runs without moving; 60- Encounter; 61- Actress Swenson; 62- ___ Rica; 63- Nick and Nora's pooch; 64- Before long; 65- Dove sounds; 66- Call for

DOWN: 1- Appropriate; 2- Draft choice; 3- Feel bad about; 4- Spirit; 5- Chooses; 6- "Dallas" matriarch; 7- Put down; 8- Peruvian singer Sumac; 9- Explorer; 10- Album unit; 11- Place for a coin; 12- Poi source; 15- Aids; 21- Behind schedule; 23- Ques. response; 24- Flower parts; 25- Asimov classic; 26- Monster's nickname; 27- Chairs; 29- Sarge's superior; 30- Thermoplastic yarn; 31- Maternally related; 32- Sticker; 34- Boarded; 37- Pert. to plants; 40- Reporter; 42- Wager; 43- Brutal; 45- Sign of summer; 46- Topeka's state; 48- ___ a customer; 49- Pitchfork-shaped letters; 50- City in Western Nevada; 51- Villainous character in Shakespeare's "Othello"; 52- As well as; 54- Zaire's Mobutu ___ Seko; 55- Dole (out); 56- Somewhat; 59- ER VIP



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Ciaran Fahey, Berlin

BOXING

HE threatened to walk away from boxing if he lost to Wladimir Klitschko, or even if he won. Now the always unpredictable Tyson Fury says he intends to be a great heavyweight champion.

"I hope to have many more defenses of these titles in future," Fury said after outpointing the Ukrainian last weekend and taking his WBA, IBF, WBO and IBO heavyweight belts in a huge boxing upset. "If I could be half as good a champion as Wladimir Klitschko, I'd be very, very happy."

The 39-year-old Klitschko had reigned for 9 1/2 years since beating Chris Byrd for the IBF belt in Mannheim in 2006. He defended the title 18 times and hadn't been beaten since losing to Lamon Brewster in Las Vegas in 2004.

But the unbeaten Fury — 12 years Klitschko's junior — made the older man look ordinary at the 55,000-seat soccer stadium in Dusseldorf, as the Briton lived up to the promises that few had taken seriously beforehand.

A rematch beckons, a stipulation the Klitschko camp insisted upon in the fight contract.

"So, to be continued. But we can't yet say how or when or where," Klitschko said.

Fury, now 25-0 with 18 knockouts, said he would happily fight again in Germany.

"It doesn't really matter to me where I fight. If you say I'm fighting in Japan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, America, wherever it has to be, it has to be," Fury said. "I'd like to come back to Germany again to fight

After beating Klitschko, Fury wants to be 'great champion'

■ The unbeaten Fury — 12 years Klitschko's junior — made the older man look ordinary at the 55,000-seat soccer stadium in Dusseldorf

Wladimir. I enjoyed it. I got a great reception from the German fans. The German people really did show me some love."

Fury had been entertaining them all week. He serenaded Klitschko with his own version of the Bette Midler song "Wind Beneath My Wings" on Wednesday, and he celebrated beating him by singing Aerosmith's "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing" in the ring to his wife Paris, who is expecting their third child.

The build-up to the bout had been dominated by Fury's antics and trash-talking, as well as disputes over the gloves, canvas and finally the hand-wrapping before the fight. The next will likely be more



Ukraine's Wladimir Klitschko, right, and Britain's Tyson Fury

of the same, with a lucrative payout for the participants.

"The interest in the next fight will be crazy," said Klitschko's older brother Vitali, the former WBC champion. "We know Wladimir's potential and that's the question: In a rematch do we see him back in his old form or that today was no accident? Only he can answer this question. I'll just say that we didn't see much of Wladimir's potential (against Fury)."

Klitschko dropped to 64-4

with 53 knockouts after contesting his 28th title fight. Time is not on his side with his 40th birthday coming up in four months. Fury, on the other hand, is only likely to improve.

"I'm a fighter, so I will take on all challengers. I want to be a great champion. So I could do it all again. I came here tonight, took the world titles, so whatever happens next is a blessing," said Fury, who is of Irish-Gypsy heritage and comes from a bloodline of ba-

re-knuckle champions on both sides of his family.

"It's a very great honor for me to be sat here, champion of the world four times over. It's not come easy. Twenty-five fights now, three world title eliminators, so I earned my right to be here. I wasn't given anything for free," Fury said. "Everybody wrote us off, said we had no chance ... we all believed we could do it, we came here and we done it."

Fury was scornful when asked about a potential bout with Deontay Wilder to unify the four major titles. The American holds the WBC title that was vacated by Vitali Klitschko to concentrate on politics in 2013. The older Klitschko is the current mayor of Kiev.

"Can you not count? I've got four," Fury said as he counted the belts. Then: "Why do we need to mention Deontay Wilder? Let's have a laugh at his name shall we?"

But Fury was keen to pay tribute to Klitschko, before verbally punching Wilder again.

"This man has been on top for so long, he's reigned as champion of the world for the longest," Fury said. "If Deontay Wilder wants a unification fight he's going to have to wait, because Wladimir Klitschko has a round two — ding ding ding!" AP

BASKETBALL | NBA

Great Kobe Bryant says he will retire at end of season

AFTER 20 years in a Lakers uniform and a lifetime in basketball, Kobe Bryant determined that his aching body and his passion for the game had both grown weaker than his excitement about the future.

That's when Kobe decided he could only wait a few more months to begin his life after the Lakers.

Bryant announced yesterday (Macau time) that he will retire after this season, ending a landmark 20-year NBA career spent entirely with Los Angeles. He was serenaded with cheers throughout the struggling Lakers' 107-103 loss to Indiana, beginning his farewell tour through the league with a clear mind and a burgeoning curiosity about his next chapter.

"I had to just accept the



Los Angeles Lakers forward Kobe Bryant

fact that I don't want to do this anymore, and I'm OK with that," the dry-eyed, smiling Bryant said after the game.

The 37-year-old Bryant made the long-anticipated declaration in a post on The Players' Tribune on Sun-

day, writing a poem titled "Dear Basketball."

"My heart can take the pounding. My mind can handle the grind. But my body knows it's time to say goodbye," wrote Bryant, the third-leading scorer in NBA history. "And that's OK. I'm ready to let you go. I want you to know now. So we both can savor every moment we have left together. The good and the bad. We have given each other all that we have."

When the Lakers hosted the Indiana Pacers on Sunday night, fans expecting an unremarkable regular-season game for the struggling home team instead received a letter from Bryant in a black envelope embossed with gold.

The theatricality of Bryant's announcement fit

a dramatic career that has included five championship rings and 17 All-Star selections during two decades with the Lakers, giving him the longest tenure with one team in NBA history.

Bryant went straight from high school in suburban Philadelphia to his favorite childhood team in 1996. He became the top scorer in Lakers history with offensive creativity and resourceful athleticism that inspired the generation of fans and players who missed Michael Jordan's peak, but grew up on the dynamic exploits of the Lakers' latest superstar.

"Kobe was my Jordan," said Southern California native Paul George, who scored 39 points for Indiana to beat the Lakers after Bryant missed a late 3-point

shot to tie it. "Watching him win championships when I was growing up, that's who I idolized. That was the standard."

But Bryant's last three seasons have ended early due to injuries, and he played in only 41 games over the previous two years. He has struggled mightily in the first 16 games of this season with mostly young teammates on a rebuilding roster, making a career-worst 32 percent of his shots and dealing with pain and exhaustion every day.

Yet to Bryant, the current state of his game is no tragedy.

"There's so much beauty in the pain of this thing," Bryant said. "It sounds really weird to say that, but I appreciate the really, really tough times as much

as I appreciate the great times. It's important to go through that progression, because I think that's where you really learn about the self."

In recent months, Bryant repeatedly said he didn't know whether he would play another season, clearly hoping for a rebound in his health and the Lakers' fortunes.

Neither has happened, and the ever-impatient Bryant didn't wait any longer to decide his future.

"Kobe Bryant is one of the greatest players in the history of our game," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "Whether competing in the Finals or hoisting jump shots after midnight in an empty gym, Kobe has an unconditional love for the game." AP

opinion

Our Desk
Renato Marques



THE GRAND PRIX AND 'DIVERSIFICATION'

The 62nd edition of the Macau Grand Prix came to an end on November 22. In times when "diversification" seems to be a major political buzzword seemingly fit for any occasion, the Grand Prix has been honored with it.

The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Mr Alexis Tam, took several opportunities to refer to the event as "a great example of diversification."

Yet I was thinking, is that really what "diversification" means? If it is, Macau has, in fact, been diversifying for 62 years already without even knowing how necessary it would be in the future.

Honestly, I do not agree this time with Mr Tam. On the contrary, as is the case in any other major business sector in the territory, I think that we also need to "diversify" the Grand Prix.

The Grand Prix is, so far, the region's biggest event. However, it is not new, having been a fixture for over 60 years now, always being one of the more significant events in the calendar year. In the past, some even said it was the major motorsports event of the entire Asian region, and that might have been true. Although we all wanted to keep that title on display on our trophy shelf, it has been a while since the Macau Grand Prix lost it. Maybe we just did not realize it because we did not bother to raise our heads and look around.

For the last two years, I have had the privilege of attending another event, not very far from Macau (just a little farther than Coloane). I am talking about the Singapore Grand Prix. With this in mind, I would like to note that I am using this just as an example, not with any inferiority complex that I sometimes see when people refer to the city-state: it really is just an example.

The Singapore GP, like any other worldwide motorsport event, features a main race and also several support events. The Formula 1 is, of course, the "Queen" of the races - what the Formula 3 is to Macau. But it is not my point to compare apples with oranges.

I am talking about "diversification" - or so I think. Therefore, rather than comparing the figures from the "on-track" audience, which I could do in a fairly simple manner in order to emphasize the huge differences between the events, instead I focused on talking about the "off-track" audience, which in my opinion is more relevant.

According to official figures, the 2015 edition of the Singapore GP registered an audience of 55,000-60,000 people exclusively attending the daily "after race program" concerts, which represents roughly 63.2-69 percent of the audience number to the main event.

Why does this happen? In my opinion, it is simple to understand. I will leave you with just a few names of the artists who participated in the last two years on this "side programme" - Bon Jovi, Maroon 5, Pharrell Williams, Spandau Ballet, Robbie Williams, MAYDAY, John Legend, Pet Shop Boys, Ziggy Marley, Jennifer Lopez. The list appears endless. The Singaporean model for this racing event, although being far from being perfect, has a clear advantage over the Macau equivalent. It is an event designed for people who like racing - locals and, above all, tourists. But it is also made for those who do not like racing at all, and that is where the difference or, like I say, the "diversification" can truly be seen.

THE BUZZ IN 2016 SINGAPORE TO GET MICHELIN GUIDE

The Michelin Guide, long regarded as the world's foremost authority of culinary merit, is set to put out a Singapore edition in 2016, The Straits Times reported yesterday.

"This will be the first time a South-east Asian country gets its own guide," the paper says. However, Singapore is the fourth country in Asia - after Japan, Hong Kong and Macau - to earn the distinction.

Well-known firm Michelin, opened by brothers Andre and Edouard Michelin, first hit upon the idea to distribute free maps to French motorists in 1900, in a bid to boost demands for its tires. As the guide's popularity grew, the company started to produce guides to other countries and realised the restaurants section was by far the most well-received.

Michelin then decided to hire inspectors to rate and critique restaurants, recalls the Straits Times.

HOBOKEN

Sinatra's birthplace commemorates his 100th its way

Shawn Marsh, Trenton, NJ

CHICAGO was his kind of town, L.A. was his lady and he certainly was a big part of New York, New York. But despite a love-hate relationship, the mile-square New Jersey city where Frank Sinatra was born is finding the centennial of his birth to be a very good year.

Throughout 2015, Hoboken has remembered its native son, who died in 1998 at age 82, with outdoor screenings of his movies, a "Sinatra Idol" competition and concerts that will be capped by a centennial birthday bash on Dec. 12 at the Stevens Institute of Technology, which awarded the high school dropout an honorary degree in 1985.

The small-scale event is not generating the same buzz as "Sinatra 100 - An All-Star Grammy Concert" tomorrow in Las Vegas, featuring Tony Bennett, Lady Gaga, Celine Dion and other performers.

Even so, the Hoboken Historical Museum has seen a 300 percent jump in visitors since opening a Sinatra exhibit in early August and has hired extra staff, director Robert Foster said.



Dion has been added to a list of performers singing in honor of Frank Sinatra next month

"Whenever we do something on Sinatra, people come out of the woodwork," Foster said. "We enjoy the fans because they are so loyal and he means so much to them."

Lacking any major items that belonged to Sinatra, the museum tells his story through media displays and visitors receive a map with their \$4 admission that features Sinatra sites.

Greta Wilson, who was born and raised in Hoboken, said Sinatra is "always the first thing" people ask her about when they learned where she is from.

"They always wanted to

know if I had seen him in a store or a movie theater or some other place in town, and if he was like a regular person or if he acted like a stuck-up movie star," she said.

A plaque marks the former building at 415 Monroe St. where Sinatra was born in 1915 to middle-class parents. "He had a nice life," said Chuck Granata, who co-produces and engineers the "Nancy for Frank" satellite radio program with Sinatra's oldest daughter, Nancy. "Frank was not poor and was probably one of the more fortunate kids growing up."

His mother made sure her son had nice clothes and even a car, which helped him gain a spot in 1935 with the singing group the Hoboken Four. They won first prize on a national radio program for amateur entertainers, and Sinatra started along a path that led to big bands, bobby soxers and fame.

However, some Hoboken residents felt Sinatra had forgotten them, reflected in the reception he got when he rode on a float in a 1947 parade and was pelted with tomatoes, according to biographer Ed Shirak. Sinatra later called Hoboken a sewer. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Paulo Coutinho, Hong Kong



Symphony of lights. A junk sails across the deep waters of Victoria Harbor on a bright moonlit night (viewed from the Clock Tower promenade, Kowloon).

Station	Air quality
Roadside	75-105 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	75-105 Moderate
Ambient	75-105 Moderate

WORLD BRIEFS

THAILAND-FRANCE A French drug trafficker who was part of a notorious international network that authorities say copied tactics from Hollywood's "Fast and Furious" films is arrested in Bangkok.

NEPAL's top political leaders meet with representatives of the Madhesi ethnic group who are protesting against the new constitution to try to end a months-long crisis, but no agreement is reached.



USA The suspected gunman in a deadly shooting at a women's health clinic that offers abortions said "no more baby parts" after his arrest, a law enforcement official said. But police said they will not disclose why Robert Lewis Dear opened fire at the Planned Parenthood clinic, killing three people. Colorado Springs police said in a statement that they are sealing the warrants related to the case against 57-year-old Robert Lewis Dear. They are not providing information on the weapon used in Friday's shooting, a timeline of events or a motive.

GERMANY Hamburg residents rejected the German port city's bid to host the 2024 Olympics in a public referendum on Sunday. Opponents to the bid won with 51.6 percent of the vote, with 48.4 percent in favor.



GREECE-TURKEY A highly unusual online exchange took place on Twitter between the prime ministers of Greece and Turkey early yesterday before the former deleted his tweets - but only from the English version of his account. The official English-speaking account of Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras (@Tsipras_eu) posted four tweets addressed to his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu, needling him about Turkey's downing of a Russian jet and Turkey's violations of Greek airspace.