



SPORTING PLAYERS INSPIRE STUDENTS

P3 MDT REPORT



WSJ: GAMING RECOVERY UNLIKELY

The Wall Street Journal predicts that the gaming situation in Macau is set to deteriorate further in 2016

P3



SURVEY: EUROZONE ECONOMY SET FOR ROBUST YEAR

The Eurozone's economy is poised for a year of "robust expansion" following its best quarterly performance in 4 1/2 years

P15

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS



CHINA Rescuers have dug out dozens of bodies from a massive landslide that occurred at a construction waste dump in Shenzhen more than two weeks ago, bringing the death toll to 58, authorities said yesterday. The city government said authorities had identified 52 of the 58 bodies and that an additional 25 people remain missing.

CHINA "Anti-corruption campaigns hurt high-end luxury consumption, but mid-end luxury is more affordable for the middle class, and it will gain traction in China," said Larry Hu, head of China economics at Macquarie Securities Ltd. in Hong Kong. Investors are looking at a big trend of moving towards a more service- and consumption-driven economy in the mainland. [More on p9](#)



BANGLADESH The top court yesterday upheld a death sentence given to the leader of Bangladesh's largest Islamist party for atrocities and multiple killings he committed during the nation's independence war against Pakistan in 1971. The verdict came as a wave of deadly assaults late last year on foreigners, secular writers and members of the Shiite community intensified.

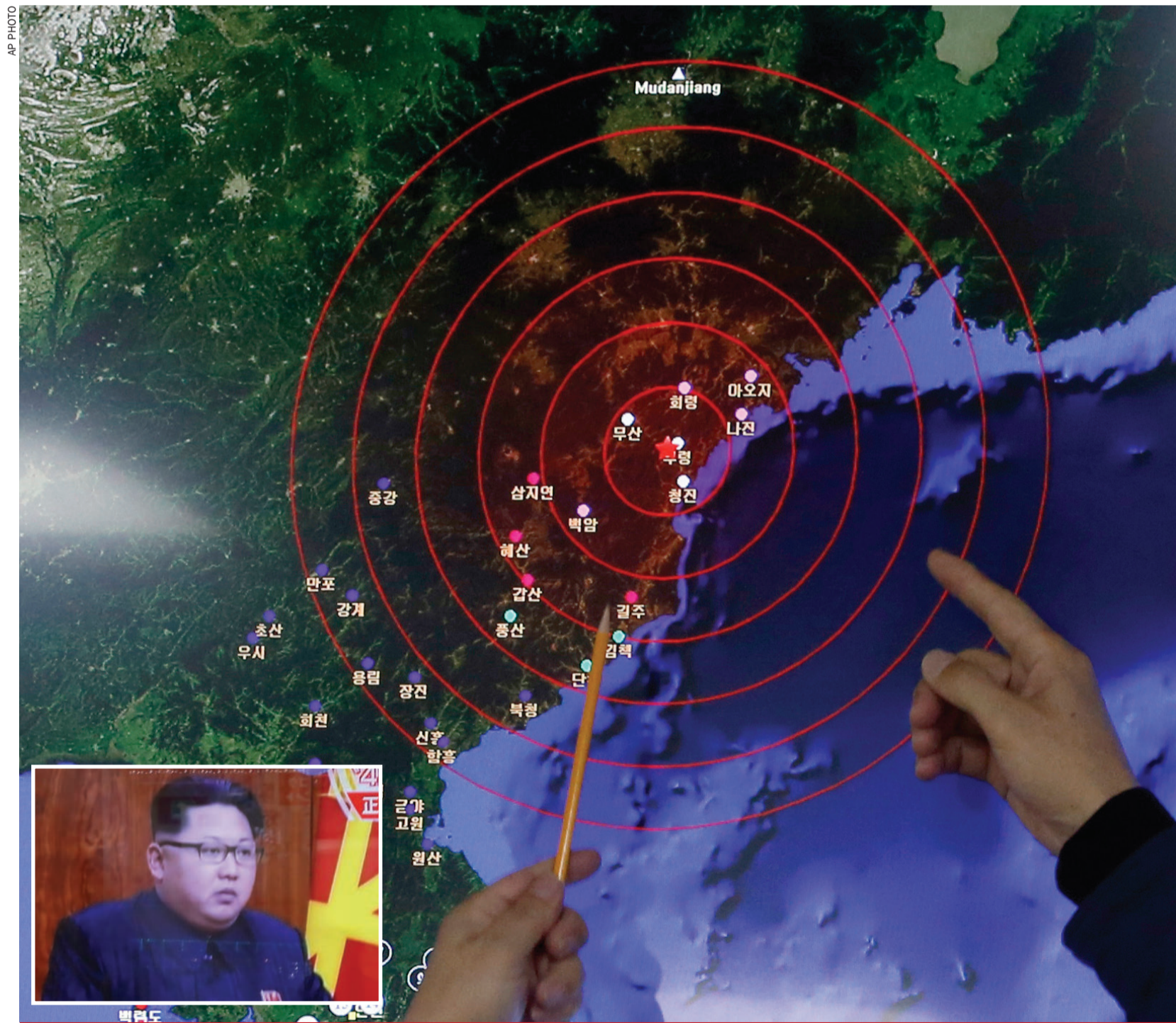
IRAQI officials say the Islamic State group has stepped up attacks on the western town of Haditha, where 45 Iraqi security forces and Sunni tribal fighters have been killed in clashes over the past three days.

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H-BOMB TEST

World, China condemn North Korea 'provocation'

P10,11



Angela Leong confirms HKD99.7 million junket theft

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Parents praise DSEJ's centralized application

THE Education and Youth Affairs Bureau's centralized application procedure for first-time kindergarten applicants started on Tuesday.

Parents will no longer have to queue overnight outside different schools to apply for admission, as the central application system allows applicants to fill out their child's information remotely and choose a maximum of six schools simultaneously.

"There is a huge difference, as it's now much faster and I don't have to queue up to different schools and get the application form. Before, many schools would have told me that all application forms are given out in mid-February, so that you don't even get the form when you get there. But it's different now and you can apply for six different schools at the same time.

It's much quicker and more efficient," a parent told TDM.

In previous applications, parents criticized authori-

Parents will no longer have to queue overnight outside different schools to apply for admission

ties for being inconsistent with the distribution and submission of application forms.

TDM's report stated that the bureau had already re-

ceived 1,900 applicants on the day the system was launched.

DSEJ's representative, Kong Chi Meng, noted that some parents completed the application forms within three minutes.

"We have talked to some parents and they've already done their research after we announced the school information on the first of this month. They've looked into the information and some parents were able to complete the registration process within three minutes," said the representative.

The application period ends on January 25, and parents will be informed about attending school admission interviews in February. Applicants who are unfamiliar with the Internet can visit DSEJ and register at one of the four counters available in the bureau.

Macau Orchestra returns to Beethoven



THE Macau Orchestra is set to play a chamber music concert titled "All About Beethoven" at Dom Pedro V Theatre on Saturday, January 16. They will present two iconic ensemble works from the influential German composer, Ludwig van Beethoven.

The orchestra will perform Beethoven's "String Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp minor," composed originally in 1826, which the Cultural Affairs Bureau says is both a technically challenging piece and a "remarkable and profound work."

Also planned for the night is another outstanding piece from the German composer, titled "Serenade for Flute, Violin and Viola in D Major." The piece features a delicate combination of the three musical

instruments, representing the work in a "clear, soft and elegant way."

The concert, which will commence at 8 p.m., is being held under the supervision and planning of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC).

In March last year, the Macau Orchestra held another Beethoven concert, titled "Obsessed with Beethoven," which featured two pieces: "Wind Octet in E-flat major" and "String Quartet No. 1 in F major."

Tickets for next Saturday's show are now available to the public and can be purchased at Macau Ticketing Network outlets. They are priced at MOP120 and MOP100. For more information, interested parties can visit the Macau Orchestra's website: www.icm.gov.mo/om.

STATISTICS

Currency in circulation fell 1.7 percent in November

ACCORDING to information released last week by the Monetary Authority of Macau, broad money supply continued to fall during November 2015. Meanwhile, total deposits fell faster than total loans, causing the banking sector's overall loan-to-deposit ratio to increase.

The total currency in circulation fell by 1.7 percent from last month to MOP469.7 billion. For November, the share of currency in circulation denominated in MOP stood at 30 percent, while that denominated in HKD and RMB amounted to 50.6 percent and 7.4 percent, respectively. The share in MOP increased by 0.8 percentage points from a month ago, while both HKD and RMB were slightly down from October.

On aggregate, resident deposits decreased by 1.8 percent from the preceding month to MOP457.7 billion, of which MOP deposits increased by about 1 percent. Meanwhile, HKD and RMB deposits fell 1.9 percent and 5.9 percent, respectively.

As for domestic loans, the priva-



te sector saw a marginal increase of 0.1 percent from a month ago to MOP389.3 billion. Analyzed by currency, MOP loans amounted to MOP255.8 billion, while loans granted in HKD and RMB amounted to MOP255.8 billion and MOP21.3 billion, respectively.

On the other hand, external loans slipped 1.3 percent to MOP382 billion, of which almost half was denominated in USD (MOP189.6 billion).

As such, the loan-to-deposit ratio for the resident sector grew by 0.9 percentage points to 66.9 percent, while the ratio for both the resident and non-resident sectors rose 0.8 percentage points in November to 90.7 percent.

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SJM Holdings executive director Angela Leong has confirmed that the company filed a police report for the alleged theft of HKD99.7 million from a junket company operating at L'Arc Macau.

Ms Leong confirmed that the case, as reported in the Times yesterday, involves a senior executive at the junket company who allegedly disappeared with the stolen money. She added that the suspected embezzlement had nothing to do with SJM and that she expects the police investigation to be swift and conclusive.

However, a MASTV report indicates that the suspect, surnamed Chan, was a supervisor for several of L'Arc's VIP rooms operating. He reportedly had a close working relationship with Angela Leong, who is also a lawmaker. The report, as cited in the Jornal Tribuna de Macau, indicated that "he [the suspect] was

GAMING

Angela Leong confirms HKD99.7 million junket theft

■ **Angela Leong says the embezzlement case is unrelated to SJM**

someone that she [Angela Leong] trusted."

According to an ET Net News report, the stolen money "was originally for junket commission payment for December."

The Judiciary Police (PJ)



Angela Leong

received a complaint about the case on January 3, and subsequently revealed that at least one depositor and investor claimed the suspect had illegally raised capital for a junket operator in 2015.

Even before the incident, gaming analysts were pessimistic about the junket industry's outlook for 2016. The Union Gaming Securities Asia issued a note last week saying that the junkets face "an even tougher 2016 than 2015," forecasting that VIP gaming revenue would shrink by another 12 percent this year.

Sporting players inspire Portuguese School students



António Conceição Junior (left) and two Sporting footballers pictured with a EPM student

SPORTING Clube de Macau (SCM) conducted a workshop on education yesterday at the Portuguese School of Macau, where five of the club's professional football players shared their experiences and answered students' questions.

ld reach out to the Chinese-speaking community in the future.

"It's very inspiring because the idea came from the players themselves. As the president, I immediately thought it was a very good idea to reach out to the community and the stu-

players, they are representing the Portuguese community. "To come and visit here, we were able to transmit ideas on how to be a good sportsman. We are sharing experiences that we have," he said.

Some students agreed that the club's great impact on the community was due to the large Portuguese population in Macau.

Eleventh grade student Duarte voiced his admiration for the discussion around the conciliation of sports and education. "Being students, our main job and task is to get good grades and prepare ourselves for the future. Sports are a good way of giving you life lessons. In school, you get books; in football, you get friends and mature advice."

As the 2016 season of Macau's top-flight football championship (Elite League) approaches, players from SCM are positive about their forthcoming performance. They said they are building a good team and have been working since early November.

"I think we can do good things this season. Last year was not so good, we finished in fifth position, but we are stronger than last year. We train to achieve our goal," Pyo added.

SCM president said that the team would try their best. Despite claiming that it was still too early to comment, he stated his belief that the group would be successful.

■ We were able to share ideas on good sportsmanship

PYO JUNIOR

The players encouraged students to stay healthy in mind and body, in order to build a solid foundation for their future careers.

SCM's president, António Conceição Junior, said that the students' response was very satisfying, and expressed his hopes that SCM wou-

dents responded very well," the president remarked while speaking to the Times.

Vitor Almeida, one of the players, acknowledged the development of football in Asia and said he hoped to see more local growth for the sport.

Another player, Pyo Junior, stated that, as Sporting

WSJ lays it on the table: 2016 unlikely to see recovery



An employee directs passengers to board a shuttle bus for Galaxy Macau casino resort

THE Wall Street Journal predicts that the gaming situation in Macau is set to deteriorate further in 2016, due to an oversupply of gaming resorts and dwindling demand, which saw room prices in the MSAR fall by 17.8 percent in November 2015 compared with a year earlier.

Opinions on when, and if, Macau's gaming sector will make its long-anticipated recovery vary greatly, with some analysts predicting that 2016 will mark the end of the city's five-year slump, while others insist that revenues could remain disappointing well into next year.

The WSJ says that the demand for gaming facilities has fallen due to institutional factors that the opening of new casino-resorts will not alleviate.

China's slowing economy, combined with a corruption crackdown, has kept the high rollers away, it says.

■ The opening of new casino resorts may not be a game changer

In contrast to bullish investors, who have posited that the high occupancy rate in Macau indicates a bottleneck in supply, some are suggesting that the new wave of resorts opening in Macau is driving down room prices and occupancy rates, thus impacting profitability.

Room rates dropped by 17.8 percent in November 2015 when compared with a year before, while the WSJ reports that hotel occupancy rates are also declining.

The market impact may be heightened this year as Sands' Parisian, the Wynn Palace and MGM Cotai add another 6,200 new rooms to the supply, which is expected to draw some demand away from existing resorts.

Those who have placed their hopes in non-gaming elements may also be disappointed, the WSJ notes, as Studio City's opening did little to stymie the decline in gross gaming revenue.

Macau's gaming resorts seem to lack the same "pull" with mass-market gamers that they once had with the VIP segment. Coupled with the fact that Macau's brand is not quite – or at all – associated with family-friendly tourism, 2016 may not bring the recovery that many are eagerly awaiting.

Staff reporter

Coloane stilt houses could become cultural shops

A local government official has proposed the transformation of Coloane's empty stilt houses into cultural and creative products stores in order to promote tourism, Macau News reports.

Islands Community Services Consultative Committee member Ku Man Tai, who also sits on the board of the Macau Islands Industrial and Commercial Association, proposed the idea at a meeting with government officials on Tuesday.

Stilt houses stand elevated above water level by (often) slim wooden beams that support the underside of the structure. They are an integral part of Coloane's cultural memory and are popular with tourists exploring the "Coloane Heritage Walk," which meanders through the historic village on the island.

Ku estimated that there



Coloane village

are around 20 stilt houses in the area near the Coloane ferry pier, most of which have been empty for a while.

"The remaining stilt houses are either restaurants or dried food shops," said Ku at the meeting. "There are not many [shopping] options for tourists [in the area]."

Ku met with government

officials from the Marine and Water Bureau on Tuesday at a community center in Rua da Ponte Negra in Taipa, run by the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau.

Ku added that the government could consider allowing residents to operate hostels in some of Coloane's village houses,

which could attract more visitors and boost the island's tourist trade.

The Marine and Water Bureau's Vessels and Crew Department chief, Lei Veng Seng, who also attended Tuesday's meeting in Taipa, said that the long-delayed Macau-Guangdong individual yacht travel scheme should be launched within the first half of 2016.

According to Macau News, Lei said that the Shenwan Town Marina in Zhongshan is now undergoing final inspections.

The Marine and Water Bureau's director, Susana Wong, had previously told the press that she expected the scheme to commence operations by the end of last year.

Once open, the Shenwan Town Marina will be the first of its kind on the mainland to make yachts available for visitors from Macau.

US-Punjabi rapper to play LMA

AMERICAN-PUNJABI rapper Hi-manshu "Heems" Suri is set to perform a live show on Friday at 9:30 p.m. at the Live Music Association (LMA) in Macau.

A former member of an alternative hip hop group from New York City called "Das Racist," Heems is known for his witty take on urban society and humorous lyrics, which make satirical comments on politics and contemporary culture.

He has featured as a guest on tracks from well-known groups such as "Vampire Weekend" and "Small Black." In 2012, the rapper released two solo mix tapes, "Nehru Jackets" and "Wild Water Kingdom."

After "Das Racist" split in 2012, Heems headed to Bombay, India, to begin work on his solo album. The debut studio album, entitled "Eat Pray Thug," was released early last year to favorable reviews.

Time Out New York wrote that the album "juxtaposes cold-blooded hedonism and scathing social commentary." Meanwhile, a reviewer from Pitchfork Media observed a deeper side to the album, noting that "a handful of songs draw directly on his experiences as an Indian-American in a post-9/11 world [and they are] painful, emotional, and deeply quotable."

Tickets can be purchased at the door for MOP120, or in advance at the Macau Design Center or the Portuguese Bookshop for MOP100.

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

THE Hong Kong Jockey Club was celebrating this week after the New Year's Day commingling numbers were ascertained, indicating better-than-expected results for the betting organization.

According to the South China Morning Post, on New Year's Day the Jockey Club received a record-breaking HKD57.5 million from commingling activities, up 23 percent from the same day last year.

The biggest contributors came from gamers in Singapore and the U.S., which funded HKD22.9 million and HKD11.9 million, respectively. Trailing behind was Europe (HKD8.7 million), Australia and New Zealand (HKD8.5 million) and finally, Macau – which solely contributed HKD5.5million.

Commingling activities refer to the practice of merging wagers from abroad into a single

Smiles all round as HK Jockey Club finds new revenue stream



An employee guides a horse as it swims in an equine swimming pool at the Sha Tin Racecourse, operated by Hong Kong Jockey Club

betting pool that, according to betting agencies, results in greater stability on returns and

potentially better dividends. Accordingly there seems to be a correlation between the size of the betting pool and the confidence of customers.

It is a practice that is proving gradually more popular in places like New Zealand, which has a relatively small betting market. "Kiwi" punters are able to combine their wagers with those of Australia, potentially offering better dividends.

The SCMP notes that the new commingling structures are relatively new and that the numbers recorded in Hong Kong are anything but spectacular.

Indeed the figures pale in comparison with Macau, which, even during the slump observed last year, took in an average of more than MOP600 million each day in gaming revenue.

However, the activities have the potential to grow in the near future, as they are becoming increasingly popular with overseas betters looking for better returns.

These sorts of activities contributed around HKD3 billion to the Hong Kong Jockey Club's annual turnover last season. And if the resul-

ts of Friday can be replicated at the season's next 80-plus meetings, commingling could provide a good prospect for the horseracing organization to significantly buff its revenue.

The news also coincides with the arrival of the Jockey Club's new commingling development director, George Irvine. The new director has been tasked with finding ways to grow the new side of the business, according to the SCMP, indicating that commingling may be the next big thing for the club in 2016. **Staff reporter**

Recipients of fashion design subsidies announced

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has announced a total of eight candidates from the 2015 Subsidy Program for Fashion Design Marketing that are to be awarded subsidies of up

to MOP160,000. The financial support will be directed toward sample making and the production of promotional materials.

IC launched the program in 2013 to promote

the sustainable development of the fashion industry in Macau.

The judging panel, comprising industry professionals from Macau and Hong Kong, selected the eight finalists after two

rounds of reviews.

An IC press release stated that some 50 percent of the scheme's candidates were first-time applicants. Moreover, there was a growth in the percent of applicants

who registered trademarks for their brands. This reportedly shows that local fashion designers are "aware of brand protection and pay close attention to intellectual property."

One of the judges noted that the business planning of this edition's

entrants was more mature than candidates in previous years, and that the recent applicants have gradually found their market positioning. Others added that, some applicants focus more on the details of the design than the practicality of the garments.

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TPP

Business group hopes to boost momentum for trade pact



Business Roundtable President John Engler

Kevin Freking, Washington

LEADING business groups, often at odds with President Barack Obama, are looking to give momentum to one of his priorities before he leaves office: approval of a trade pact linking 12 nations along the Pacific Rim that make up 40 percent of the world economy.

The Business Roundtable, made up of chief executive officers from large U.S. companies, endorsed the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement yesterday. A trade group representing manufacturers did the same earlier in the week.

Their influence could make supporters in Congress more eager to take the agreement up in an election year. Senate Majority Leader

Mitch McConnell recently urged Obama to hold off on sending the agreement to Congress before the elections, warning that it didn't have the votes.

John Engler, president of the Business Roundtable, and a former Republican governor of Michigan, said his organization is hoping Congress will approve the pact before it heads home for its August recess.

"The hope is to send the signal now that we're getting pretty comfortable with the agreement and let's get ready to give it serious consideration," Engler told The Associated Press.

The trade agreement took more than five years to stitch together. Participating nations would reduce or eliminate thousands of tariffs that apply to foreign-made

goods. The agreement also rolls back regulatory requirements, such as the need to establish an office in a particular country or partner with a local entity, in order to access their markets.

Several presidential candidates in both parties as well as members of Congress have panned the Trans-Pacific Partnership since agreement on the deal's terms was announced in October. Donald Trump said it's a "terrible deal." Democrat Hillary Clinton said "it didn't meet my standards."

That's led to questions about whether Congress would pass the trade pact, even though lawmakers just last year passed legislation designed to speed TPP's passage without the threat of amendments or filibuster. Support from business

groups could ease some lawmakers' concerns about the political environment.

The trade group representing manufacturers came out with its endorsement Monday. The group's president and CEO, Jay Timmons, said that without the agreement, the United States would be ceding economic leadership to other global powers, letting them set the rules of economic engagement in the region.

The group has frequently clashed with the Obama administration over new environmental regulations and recently sued to stop stricter limits on smog-causing pollution.

Labor unions have come out overwhelmingly against the trade agreement, saying it will drive wages down, and it's clear that for Obama to get a legacy-setting victory, he'll have to rely on the Republican party to push the legislation to victory. Engler said he's confident that the pact would end up getting more votes than the fast-track legislation that passed last year.

He said not all members of the Business Roundtable supported TPP, but there was broad consensus.

"We cannot have a robust economy if the goal is to make things here and sell it to ourselves," Engler said.

The White House said it welcomed the endorsements and that it showed that companies big and small feel the agreement is vital to their ability to compete globally. **AP**

AVIATION

Malaysia Airlines lifts decried bag ban on Europe flights



MALAYSIA Airlines yesterday lifted a much-criticized ban on checking in baggage on flights to Paris and Amsterdam, a day after limiting bags to lighten the plane and save fuel.

The airline had banned check-in baggage for Tuesday and Wednesday flights to the two European cities due to "unseasonably strong headwinds" on a longer flight path it was taking. Passengers slammed the airline on social media and suggested it could have reduced the number of passengers or refused to carry freight instead.

The airline told The Associated Press that it "uniquely has been using a routing (to Europe) via Egypt, which has been up to two hours longer than other carriers" for safety reasons.

Headwinds over the past four days exceeded 200 knots, which can burn up to 15 percent more fuel on its Boeing 777-200 aircraft, it said.

It lifted the ban less than 24 hours after imposing it after concluding it could take a shorter route.

The airline in an e-mail to the AP said it does a daily risk assessment to determine the most optimum route for flights and that currently, it is taking "a more northerly route." It didn't elaborate.

A Malaysia Airlines jet flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot down by a missile in eastern Ukraine in 2014, killing all 298 people on board. Earlier that year, a Malaysia Airlines flight heading to Beijing disappeared and is believed to have crashed in the Indian Ocean. **AP**

corporate bits

MANDARIN ORIENTAL GETS HEAD START ON CNY CELEBRATIONS

The Mandarin Oriental Hotel has announced a series of packages and celebrations to hail the Chinese New Year next month, including luxury breakfast buffets, themed afternoon teas, and other dining experiences.

Guests will have an array of dining options for the festive period – ranging from a dim sum lunch to an eight-course traditional Chinese set dinner. The menus will be available from February 1 through 22.

The hotel also says that it will host a traditional Chinese lion dance procession from 10:30 a.m. on February 8, to be accompanied by the roar of firecrackers and the



distribution of "Lai See" envelopes.

Additionally, from January 11 to February 7, the Mandarin Oriental Cake Shop will offer two hampers, which

are being festively-titled the "Luck and Happiness Hamper" and the "Happiness and Fruitfulness Hamper," priced at MOP3,388 and MOP4,388, respectively.

'POON CHOI' SEAFOOD HAMPERS FOR CNY AT CONRAD MACAO

To usher in the Year of the Monkey, the Conrad Macao in Cotai Central is presenting a range of Chinese New Year offerings on various dates throughout January and February, including an all-you-can-eat buffet and an afternoon high tea.

The hotel's signature restaurants – Dynasty 8, Grand Orbit, and The Lounge – will offer guests a traditional set menu, an elaborate buffet, and an afternoon tea experience, respectively.

In addition, Dynasty 8 has announced a promotion for four-person "Poon Choi" hampers, which each include prawns, abalone, dried oysters, fish maw rolls and roast duck.

"In ushering in the Year of



Poon Choi hamper served at restaurant, Dynasty 8

the Monkey, we are pleased to offer our guests a wide choice of Chinese New Year dining inspirations," said Bede Barry, vice president of hotel operations.

"It's a time to enjoy the celebrations with family and friends, and we remain mindful of the diverse needs and tastes of our discerning clientele," Barry added.

MINING

Malaysia to ban bauxite mining in Pahang for 3 months

MALAYSIA'S government said it will ban the mining of bauxite in central Pahang state for three months from Jan. 15 to regulate the industry after its unfettered growth last year caused sea and air pollution.

Bauxite mining began in central Pahang state in 2013 but production surged from mid-2014 amid strong demand from China after Indonesia banned bauxite exports and India raised ore tariffs. Bauxite is an aluminium ore and the world's main source of aluminium.

The mining sparked a public furor after it was blamed for contaminating the sea and some rivers in Pahang's capital of Kuantan, turning the waters red again last month after heavy rains. The water pollution first

occurred in May last year. The transportation of the red earth by dozens of lorries also kicked up dust and caused unhealthy air, officials said.

"From Jan. 15, everything will come to a standstill," Natural Resources Minister Wan Junaidi Jaafar told a news conference. Under a three-month moratorium, he said bauxite mining in Pahang will be halted and the focus will be on clearing 12 large stockpiles of red earth containing the ore and to build proper washing and storage facilities.

Malaysia is the main supplier of bauxite to China with exports last year hitting more than 20 million tons, up sharply from just under a million tons in 2014. **AP**

MARKETS

China announces plan to limit large share sales

Joe McDonald

CHINA plans to restrict stock sales by large shareholders once a ban imposed in July to stop a slide in prices is lifted this week.

Stockholders who own more than 5 percent of a company will be required to sell shares through private transactions to "avoid shocks to the market," the China Securities Regulatory Commission said on its microblog.

Regulators are winding down emergency measures imposed after China's main market index plunged more than 30 percent in June.

The six-month ban imposed on sales by large shareholders expires today. Financial analysts have warned that would lead to a new round of selling and more volatility.

AP PHOTO



A Wall Street sign is seen near the New York Stock Exchange in New York

Markets are jittery after the benchmark fell by nearly 7 percent on Monday and trading was

halted for the day.

Restrictions on large sales will allow regulators "to realize the or-

derly withdrawal of temporary measures for the extraordinary volatility of the market," said the CSRC statement dated Tuesday.

The market benchmark more than doubled between late 2014 and its June 12 peak as millions of novice investors bought shares.

The collapse in prices triggered a panicked response by Beijing, which banned large sales, cut interest rates, canceled initial public stock offerings and ordered state companies to buy shares.

Chinese leaders had encouraged the public to buy in hopes of raising money to overhaul state industry. The market rout alienated small investors who were left holding shares worth less than they paid.

Authorities say shares bought by state companies will be transferred to China's sovereign wealth fund to avoid depressing prices by selling them in the open market. The ban on new IPOs was lifted in November. **AP**

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Jointly Present a Business Luncheon with Guest Speaker: Oliver Tong

Associate Director, Jones Lang LaSalle on *Retailing in Macao - Up to the Next Level?*
Followed by short update on Macao Real Estate Market
Wednesday, 27th January 2016



Venue: Ocean Room I, 1/F
Mandarin Oriental, Macau
12.30: Drinks
1 pm: Lunch
1.45 pm: Presentation by Oliver Tong
2.30 pm: Close

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Annie Lee

As a boy in China in the 1970s, Jason Zhuang Xiangsong was captivated by comics based on the legendary Monkey King and dreamed of creating a Chinese version of Astro Boy - a renowned Japanese animated character who flies through the air on rocket-propelled feet.

Now Zhuang, chief executive officer of China Animation Characters Co., has managed to soar high himself. His company had the best-performing initial public offering in Hong Kong last year, returning more than 125 percent to investors between its March debut and the end of the year.

"We are very confident in our business model," Zhuang, 46, a native of Chaozhou in Guangdong province who in 2013 started his company making toys based on cartoons licensed from Japan and has been diversifying into animation-focused amusement centers in malls, film-making and virtual reality games.

Along with China Animation, the next two top-performing consumer-focused companies that went public in Hong Kong last year, lingerie-maker Regina Miracle International Holdings Ltd. and cinema operator Imax China Holding Inc. highlight a shift in Chinese buying habits. They returned 102 percent and 76 percent respectively on the index of Hong Kong IPOs with at least USD50 million in market value tracked by Bloomberg. As Beijing's three-year austerity and anti-graft campaigns curb displays of wealth, rising average wages over three decades have spawned a working and middle-class with more discretionary cash.

"Anti-corruption campaigns hurt high-end luxury consumption, but mid-end luxury is more affordable for the middle class, and it will gain traction in China," said Larry Hu, head of China economics at Macquarie Securities Ltd. in Hong Kong. "Investors won't neglect the big trend of moving towards a more service- and consumption-driven economy."

China Animation fell 1.8 percent by the close of Hong Kong trading Monday, trimming the stock's gain since its debut to 108 percent amid a broader sell-off in Chinese markets. Regina Miracle slipped 0.9 percent, while Imax China declined 4.1 percent. The Hang Seng Index retreated 1 percent.

There's room for growth. Recreation currently accounts for 9 percent of personal consumption spending in China, compared with 16 to 18 percent in the U.S., Japan and Korea, Goldman Sachs Group Inc. analysts wrote in a September report.

Millennials - typically born after 1980 - grew up in a more stable China than their paren-

Thirst for fun fuels IPOs doubling investors' money



'Star Wars: The Force Awakens,' which opens in China Saturday, could gross as much as 1.5 billion yuan

ts and are exposed to Western culture, which "will make them the prime consumer group to drive spending on leisure," the report said, citing sports, travel, media and online gaming as key areas to monetize.

Box office takings in the country are expected to grow 20 percent a year over the next five years to reach \$18.8 billion in 2020, overtaking the U.S. market in 2017, according to Credit Suisse Group AG. That's benefiting large-screen cinema operator Imax Corp.'s China unit.

"We're very bullish on how the Chinese movie industry is going to evolve," Richard Gelfond, CEO of the Ontario, Cana-

Anti-corruption campaigns hurt high-end luxury consumption, but mid-end luxury ... will gain traction in China.

LARRY HU
MACQUARIE SECURITIES

da-based parent company, said in an interview. "I think there are less entertainment options in China than in the U.S., for example, meaning sports leagues, concerts and other things like that."

Imax currently has 268 screens in China, plans to open more than 200 more, and expects to invest as much as \$20 million in two Chinese movies a year, according to data provided by the company. Imax has "lots of capital" looking for more opportunities, Gelfond said.

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens," which opens in China including on Imax screens Saturday, could gross as much as 1.5 billion yuan (\$230 million) in the country, according to Nomura Holdings Co.

China Animation's growth plan focuses on developing animated characters, both for screen and amusement parks. It currently derives more than 90 percent of sales making toys for Japanese animators, and about 9 percent from an amusement park it opened a year ago in a Shanghai shopping mall.

Revenue rose 21 percent to HKD259 million (\$33 million) in the six months ended Sept. 30, the latest period reported. The company is targeting its sales contribution from the

theme parks and virtual reality businesses to rise to 50 percent by the end of this year, Zhuang said.

Licensed from Tokyo-based video game-maker Sega Sammy Holdings Inc., its Joypolis indoor theme park touts a digital aquarium and is scheduled to add a roller coaster featuring animation characters and virtual reality machines.

"We saw that the traffic and Chinese people's consumption power in the theme park was far higher than we had expected," said Zhuang, who's preparing two more shopping mall-based Joypolis parks in China. "In the past, we only read small-sized comic books, and we had very limited animation films, such as Astro Boy, showing in cinemas. Now it's more diversified."

Zhuang's creation to rival Astro Boy is a purple-haired, singing and dancing virtual pop singer named Violet who has released singles and held performances, including a concert in Shenzhen that sold 4 million yuan worth of tickets last year, he said. China Animation is currently producing a movie based on the doe-eyed, three-dimensional cartoon girl, scheduled to hit cinemas this year, he said.

For revenues to grow, characters need to resonate with

audiences, said Tom Doctoroff, Asia Pacific CEO at advertising agency J Walter Thompson Co.

"The question is if it's going to be a franchise that deepens over time, and that's where I am skeptical," said Doctoroff, who has worked in China since 1998 and written books on selling to Chinese consumers. "As long as you have that loyalty or the consistent level of quality, I think then investors are going to be satisfied."

Consumer sectors including gambling, high-end liquors and luxury gifts have suffered from President Xi Jinping's crackdown on graft, according to a Morgan Stanley report in December.

Among the large consumer IPOs in Hong Kong, Chow Tai Fook Jewellery Group is languishing at one-third of its offer price, while luxury goods-maker Prada Spa and casino operator MGM China Holdings Ltd. have both plunged more than 35 percent below their 2011 Hong Kong debuts.

While demand in the luxury sector has been negatively affected by anti-graft activities, "it is still unclear whether we have seen the bottom yet," Morgan Stanley analysts including Louise Singlehurst wrote in a Dec. 15 report.

Yet high-end lingerie could be regarded as safe from scrutiny as it's not used as a gift in return for official favors, and even gem-encrusted bras are generally not worn to be shown in public. More Chinese consumers prefer branded intimate wear now, due to rising living standards and income levels, according to consultancy Frost & Sullivan's president of Greater China, Neil Wong.

The lingerie market in China has been growing in the double digits since 2010 and exceeded \$20 billion as of 2014, the consultancy said.

That's a boon for Hong Kong-based Regina Miracle, whose factory in Shenzhen produces lingerie for premium brands such as Victoria's Secret, Calvin Klein and Under Armour. Its October public offering made Chairman Hung Yau Lit a billionaire.

"By definition it's not for ostentation, it's not to show off," said John Hooks, director of high-end Italian lingerie-maker La Perla, which has eight China boutiques and plans to open as many as four more by the end of 2017. "We're not really affected by a lot of the more public clampdowns on conspicuous consumption." **Bloomberg**

North Korea's nuclear test further imperils relations with China

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

CHINA sees North Korea's claim to have conducted its first hydrogen bomb test as yet another act of defiance, and will likely retaliate by joining tougher United Nations sanctions and could possibly even impose its own trade restrictions.

Yesterday's test was staged close enough to the border to send palpable tremors into northeastern China, prompting schools to be evacuated. The political reverberations in Beijing will likely be just as dramatic, boding ill for a relationship already under strain.

"Relations will become colder than ever," said Lu Chao, director of the Border Studies Institute at the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences in the northeastern province that borders North Korea.

North Korea acted "willfully in disregard of the opposition of the international community, including China, and caused a real threat to the lives of the Chinese people living along the border," Lu said.

Despite its ally status, N. Korea did not inform Beijing of the test beforehand

China's Foreign Ministry said it would summon Pyongyang's ambassador to Beijing to lodge a formal protest, and said environmental officials were monitoring air quality near the border though they had found nothing abnormal so far.

"China firmly opposes this nuclear bomb test by North Korea," ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters at a daily briefing. "North Korea should stop taking any actions which would worsen the situation on the Korean Peninsula."

Despite its ally status, the North did not inform China of the test beforehand, South Korea's National Intelligence Service said.

Lu said he expects China to strictly implement any new U.N. sanctions, as well as take a tougher line on economic cooperation projects in both the public and private sectors. He also expected Chinese companies to shy away from future business with the North, seeing it as an unsafe investment destination.



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying speaks during a briefing at the Chinese Foreign Ministry in Beijing

"That will have a huge impact on North Korea's economy," Lu said.

At the same time, China has an aversion to any action that might contribute to the collapse of the regime in Pyongyang, on whose behalf China fought in the 1950-53 Korean War. China fears a collapse could bring a wave of refugees and violence surging across the border, along with a possible U.S. military presence in the North.

China has signed on to previous rounds of U.N. sanctions, and Chinese officials and scholars have typically said that the country has limited additional leverage to wield against North Korea.

"China's attitude is tough, but the means at its disposal are limited," said Jin Qiang, a professor at Yanbian University's Institute of Northeast Asia Studies in Jilin province bordering North Korea.

Chinese experts routinely state that Beijing's aid is not as substantial as some in the West imagine. Nor is North Korea's demand for Chinese oil big enough to serve as an effective tool, with other conduits available to Pyongyang, including smuggling on the high seas, Jin said.

"It seems that China has been put into a difficult position," Jin said. "All China's efforts are aimed at curbing North Korea to prevent the situation from deteriorating, but they've failed."

Relations have cooled notably since Kim Jong Un's ascension to power in 2011, and the reclusive leader has yet to pay a visit to his most important sponsor and ally. Chinese President Xi Jinping is believed to be unwilling to invest much political capital into ties with the North.

Recent years have seen ups and downs in relations.

China has long been frustrated by the North's refusal to rejoin six-nation nuclear disarmament

talks hosted by Beijing, and its insistence on going ahead with missile launches and nuclear tests. The shock 2013 execution of Kim's uncle Jang Song Thaek, who was known to be close to China, was seen as a setback to ties.

Kim also was seen by some as snubbing Xi by staying away from a mammoth military parade in Beijing in September marking the end of World War II — an event attended by South Korea's President Park Geun-hye.

Relations were seen as improving with the appearance of the Communist Party's fifth-ranking leader, Liu Yunshan, at an October military parade in Pyongyang to mark the 70th anniversary of the Workers' Party. In a conspicuous public display of affection, Liu and Kim sat side by side on the observation deck, then clasped hands and raised them aloft like champion athletes as the world's media looked on.

Then, in yet another twist, an all-female band formed personally by Kim abruptly left Beijing in December after cancelling its three scheduled concerts in the Chinese capital. China said only that the Moranbang Band's performances were called off "due to communication issues at the working level."

Speculation among Korea watchers focused on the possibility that thin-skinned North Koreans were protesting over a perceived slight from the Chinese side, possibly over the song selection or guest list.

Public opinion among many ordinary Chinese has hardened against the North, although support remains strong for the government to continue to prop up the North rather than risk chaos and a possible U.S. presence along China's border. Many Chinese are wary of the U.S. military's activities in Asia. AP

H-bomb dwarfs Hiroshima detonation, may fit on missile

THE announcement from North Korea that it had carried out a nuclear test brought to the front lines of global attention a phrase not often heard since the Cold War — "the H-bomb."

As opposed to the atomic bomb, the kind dropped on Japan in the closing days of World War II, the hydrogen bomb, or so-called "superbomb" can be far more powerful — experts say, by 1,000 times or more.

North Korea's first three nuclear tests, from 2006 to 2013, were A-bombs on roughly the same scale as the ones used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which together killed more than 200,000 people. Pyongyang announced yesterday that it had detonated its first H-bomb; while seismic data supported the claim of a large explosion, there was no immediate way to confirm the type.

Atomic bombs rely on fission, or atom-splitting, just as nuclear power plants do. The hydrogen bomb, also called the thermonuclear bomb, uses fusion, or atomic nuclei coming together, to produce explosive energy. Stars also produce energy through fusion.

"Think what's going on inside the sun," says Takao Takahara, professor of international politics and peace research at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo. "In theory, the process is potentially infinite. The amount of energy is huge."

The technology of the hydrogen bomb is more sophisticated, and once attained, it is a greater threat. They can be made small enough to fit on a head of an intercontinental missile.

"That the bomb can become compact is the characteristic, and so this means North Korea has the U.S. in mind in making this H-bomb announcement," says Tatsujiro Suzuki, professor at the Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition at Nagasaki University.

But the H-bomb requires more technology in control and accuracy because of the greater amount of energy involved, he said. Both the A-bomb and H-bomb use radioactive material like uranium and plutonium for the explosive material.

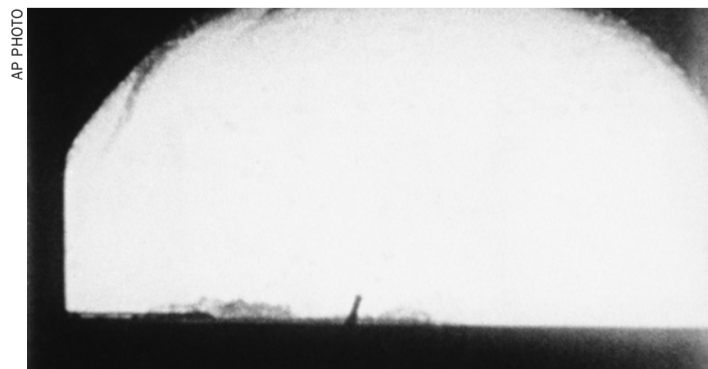
The hydrogen bomb is in fact already the global standard for the five nations with the greatest nuclear capabilities: the U.S., Russia, France, the U.K. and China. Other nations may also either have it or may be working on it, despite a worldwide effort to contain such proliferation.

The hydrogen bomb was never dropped on any targets. It was first successfully tested in the 1950s by the U.S., in bombs called Mike and Bravo. Soviet tests soon followed.

The crew of a Japanese fishing boat that unknowingly went into the waters near the nuclear testing of Bravo got acute radiation sickness. Since the 1960s, nuclear tests have gone underground to reduce radioactive fallout.

Terumi Tanaka, head of Nihon Hidankyo, or the Japan Federation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations, has been working to ban nuclear weapons for years and was stunned by reports of the H-bomb test.

"It defies hopes for progress," he said. "I am outraged." AP



This May 21, 1956, file photo shows the H-Bomb "Cherokee" over Bikini Atoll, Marshall Islands

N. Korea says it conducts successful powerful H-bomb test

Foster Klug, Seoul

NORTH Korea said it conducted a powerful hydrogen bomb test yesterday, a defiant and surprising move that, if confirmed, would be a huge jump in Pyongyang's quest to improve its still-limited nuclear arsenal.

South Korea's spy agency and outside nuclear experts cast strong doubt, however, saying the estimated explosive yield from North Korea's fourth nuclear explosion was much smaller than what even a failed H-bomb detonation would produce.

The doubts didn't stop jubilation and pride in Pyongyang. A North Korean television anchor, reading a typically propaganda-heavy statement, said a test of a "miniaturized" hydrogen bomb had been a "perfect success" that elevated the country's "nuclear might to the next level." State media later crowed that its "H-bomb of justice" lets it stand firm against U.S. aggression.

A large crowd celebrated in front of Pyongyang's main train station as the announcement was read on a big video screen, with people taking videos or photos of the screen on their mobile phones and applauding and cheering.

In Seoul and elsewhere there was high-level worry. South Korean President Park Geun-hye ordered her military to bolster its combined defense posture with U.S. forces and called the test a "grave provocation" and "an act that threatens our lives and future." Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said, "We absolutely cannot allow this."

Washington and nuclear experts have been skeptical about past North Korean claims about H-bombs, which are much more powerful and much more difficult to make, than atomic bombs. A confirmed test would further worsen already abysmal



A TV screen shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at a shop in Tokyo

relations between Pyongyang and its neighbors and lead to a strong push for tougher sanctions on North Korea at the United Nations. The Security Council quickly announced an emergency meeting.

Whatever the type of the test, North Korea's fourth nuclear explosion will likely push Pyongyang's scientists and engineers closer to their goal of building a bomb small enough to place on a missile that can reach the U.S. mainland.

A successful H-bomb test would be a big new step for the North. Fusion is the main principle behind the hydrogen bomb, which can be hundreds of times more powerful than atomic bombs that use fission. In a hydrogen bomb, radiation from a nuclear fission explosion sets off a fusion reaction responsible for a powerful blast and radioactivity.

A South Korean lawmaker said the country's spy agency told him in a private briefing that Pyongyang may not have conducted an H-bomb test given the relatively small size of

the seismic wave reported.

An estimated explosive yield of 6.0 kilotons and a quake with a magnitude of 4.8 (the U.S. reported 5.1) were detected, lawmaker Lee Cheol Woo said the National Intelligence Service told him. That's smaller than the estimated explosive yield of 7.9 kilotons and a quake with a magnitude of 4.9 that were reported after the 2013 nuclear test, he said, and only a fraction of the hundreds of kilotons that a successful H-bomb test's explosion would usually yield. Even a failed H-bomb detonation typically yields tens of kilotons, the NIS told Lee, who sits on the parliament's intelligence committee.

A miniaturized H-bomb can trigger a weak quake magnitude, but only the U.S. and Russia have such H-bombs, Lee cited the NIS as saying.

While also noting the quake magnitude was likely too small for an H-bomb test, Jaiki Lee, a professor of nuclear engineering at Seoul's Hanyang University, said the North could have experimented with a "boosted" hybrid bomb that uses some nuclear fusion fuel along with more conventional uranium or plutonium fuel.

After North Korean leader Kim Jong Un bragged of H-bomb capabilities in December, nuclear expert Jeffrey Lewis also questioned Pyongyang's ability to build such a bomb.

But, he wrote on the North Korea-focused 38 North website, "The North has now had a nuclear weapons program for more than 20 years. This program has yielded three nuclear tests. North Korean nuclear scientists have access to their counterparts in Pakistan,

possibly Iran and maybe a few other places. We should not expect that they will test the same fission device over and over again."

In Pyongyang, meanwhile, the announcement was greeted with an expected rush of nationalistic pride, and some bewilderment.

Kim Sok Chol, 32, told The Associated Press that he doesn't know much about H-bombs, but added that "Since we have it the U.S. will not attack us."

University student Ri Sol Yong, 22, said, "If we didn't have powerful nuclear weapons, we would already have been turned into the slaves of the U.S."

It could take weeks before the true nature of the test is confirmed by outside experts — if they are able to do so at all. North Korea goes to great lengths to conceal its tests by conducting them underground and tightly sealing off tunnels or any other

This is indeed a wakeup call ... I am convinced it will have repercussions on North Korea and international peace and stability.

LASSINA ZERBO
UN TEST BAN TREATY ORG

vents though which radioactive residue and blast-related noble gases could escape into the atmosphere.

The U.S. Air Force has aircraft designed to detect the evidence of a nuclear test, and such aircraft could be deployed from a U.S. base on the Japanese island of Okinawa to search for clues. Japanese media said Tokyo has also mobilized its own reconnaissance aircraft for sorties over the Sea of Japan to try to collect atmospheric data.

North Korea's previous nuclear test was in early 2013, and Kim Jong Un did not mention nuclear weapons in his annual New Year's speech. Some outside analysts speculated Kim was worried about deteriorating ties with China, the North's last major ally, which has shown greater frustration at provocations and a possible willingness to allow stronger U.N. sanctions.

Just how big a threat North Korea's nuclear program currently poses is something of a mystery. North Korea is thought to have a handful of rudimentary nuclear bombs and has spent decades trying to perfect a multistage, long-range missile to eventually carry smaller versions of those bombs.

Some analysts say the North hasn't likely achieved the technology needed to manufacture a miniaturized warhead that could fit on a long-range missile capable of hitting the U.S. mainland. But there is a growing debate on just how far the North has advanced in its secretive nuclear and missile programs.

North Korea needs nuclear tests for practical military and political reasons. To build a credible nuclear program, the North must explode new nuclear devices — including miniaturized ones — so its scientists can continually improve their designs and technology. Nuclear-tipped missiles could then be used as deterrents, and diplomatic bargaining chips, against its enemies — and especially against the United States, which Pyongyang has long pushed to withdraw its troops from the region and to sign a peace treaty formally ending the Korean War.

"This is indeed a wakeup call," Lassina Zerbo, the head of the Vienna-based U.N. Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization, which has a worldwide network of monitoring stations to detect nuclear testing, told AP by phone. "I am convinced it will have repercussions on North Korea and international peace and stability." AP



North Koreans watch a news broadcast on a video screen outside Pyongyang Railway Station

PHILIPPINES

US Marine convicted of killing local transgender appeals

Jim Gomez, Manila

A U.S. Marine has asked a Philippine court to reverse his conviction in the killing of a transgender Filipino and sought a bail and a reduction of his six to 12-year jail term, his lawyer said yesterday.

Lawyer Rowena Garcia-Flores said she would insist that her client, Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton, did not kill Jennifer Laude in a motel room after they met in a disco bar in October 2014 and that his sentence should be eased because he surrendered to authorities.

In December a judge convicted Pemberton of homicide, not the more serious charge of murder as prosecutors sought — and sentenced him to a lighter jail term than what the victim's family sought.

The regional trial court judge in Olongapo city, northwest of Manila, said she downgraded the charge because conditions such as cruelty and treachery



In this Dec. 1, 2015, file photo, convicted U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton, center, is escorted to his detention cell upon arrival at Camp Aguinaldo in suburban Quezon city, northeast of Manila

had not been proven.

The court will start to hear Pemberton's appeal today.

"We're going for an acquittal," Flores said by telephone. "He defended himself because he felt he was being coned but he did not kill Laude."

In case the court upholds the conviction, Flores said she and other defense lawyers asked the court to consider easing Pemberton's sentence because he surrendered to authorities and that he had "no intention to commit so grave a wrong."

The killing sparked anger in the Philippines and reignited calls by left-wing groups and nationalists for an end to America's military presence in the country at a time when the U.S. is reasserting its dominance in Asia and Manila has turned to Washington for support amid an escalating territorial dispute with China.

Pemberton, an anti-tank missile operator from New Bedford, Massachusetts, was one of thousands of American and Philippine military personnel

who participated in joint exercises in the country in 2014. He and a group of other Marines were on leave after the exercises and met Laude and her friends at a bar in Olongapo, a city known for its nightlife located outside Subic Bay, a former U.S. Navy base. At least two witnesses testified that Laude was a sex worker.

Pemberton, 21, has been detained at a compound guarded by Philippine and American security personnel, at the main military camp in metropolitan Manila, and not in an ordinary jail as demanded by Laude's family.

The emotional case has sparked concerns about special treatment for visiting American forces, and left-wing activists have called on the government to fight Pemberton's appeal.

Another Marine, Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison on charges of raping a Filipino woman in 2005. He was held at the U.S. Embassy in Manila until a Philippine appeals court overturned his conviction in 2009, allowing him to leave the country amid anti-U.S. protests.

"If we allow Pemberton's conviction to be reversed or reduce his sentence, this will send a wrong message to U.S. soldiers: That they can commit crimes and get away with it," left-wing activist Renato Reyes said. **AP**

THAILAND

Police say French tourist dead after boat hits her

A French woman died after being struck by a boat while snorkeling in southern Thailand on Tuesday, police in the resort province of Krabi said. Marine Police Lt. Col. Anurak Parinyasatirkul said the 52-year-old woman was snorkeling with her family but no one else was injured. He said police believe she died from a head wound that might have come from a sharp object such as a propeller. Anurak said police traced the boat, which had a crew of Myanmar nationals, to further up the Andaman coast in Phuket. Two people, from China and Australia, died Saturday in separate swimming accidents at the island of Koh Samui.

AUSTRALIA

Boy in stable condition after shark attack

An 11-year-old boy was in a stable condition in hospital yesterday after he was mauled by a shark on the Great Barrier Reef off the Australian east coast, officials said. The boy was attacked by a black tipped reef shark on Tuesday afternoon as he waded off a beach at the Heron Island tourist resort northeast of the coastal town of Gladstone, Queensland Ambulance Service paramedic Brad Lawson said. Officials have not released the victim's name or commented on media reports that suggest he is an Italian tourist on vacation with his family.

Filipinos raped by Japanese WWII troops demand compensation

A group of elderly Filipino women raped by Japanese troops during World War II called for compensation from Japan yesterday, following Tokyo's pledge of USD8.3 million for South Korean women forced into Japanese military-run brothels during the war.

The women's lawyers said they were also exploring the possibility of filing cases with United Nations bodies and holding Philippine President Benigno Aquino III liable for allegedly failing to support the case of the women against Japan.

Isabelita Vinuya, the 84-year-old president of Malaya Lolos — a group of Filipino women abducted and raped by Japanese troops in their village — urged the Philippine government to support their demand for justice



Four of the remaining 32 alleged WWII sex slaves clench their fists along with their legal counsel Harry Roque, center, to demand compensation and apology from the Japanese Government during a news conference in Manila,

from Japan.

"We have appealed more than once or twice to our government to help us, support us before Japan so that we can be given justice for the sufferings we went through during World War II," Vinuya said at a news conference, adding that many of the women have died without seeing justice.

Japan and South Korea announced last week that they had se-

ttled their decades-long standoff over wartime sex slaves, with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe apologizing and agreeing to contribute 1 billion yen (\$8.3 million) for a foundation to help support the victims. Historians say tens of thousands of women from around Asia were sent to frontline military brothels to provide sex to Japanese soldiers.

"Is there a diffe-

rence in the rape of a South Korean and a Filipino woman?" Harry Roque, the Filipino victims' lawyer, said at Wednesday's news conference. "The answer is there should be none, because rape is a crime against women and is prohibited by international humanitarian law and is recognized as an international crime."

He noted that South Korea's Supreme Court had ordered the government to fight for the rights of the Korean victims, but that the Philippines' top court dismissed in 2010 a case filed by Vinuya and 70 other women urging the court to compel the government to press their claims against Japan. The Philippine court also denied an appeal filed by the women.

Vinuya said she was 13 when the Japanese

troops raped women and children in her village of Mapaniqui in Pampanga province, around 60 kilometers (37 miles) north of Manila. The troops also razed homes and killed men in the village. Three other women at Wednesday's news conference said they were teenagers when they were raped during the siege.

Vinuya said that only 32 of more than 90 women from her victims' group are still alive. Only 70 of 174 from another such group, the Lila-Filipina, are alive, according to its head, Richilda Extremadura.

Extremadura also called on Japan to compensate former sex slaves and rape victims from the Philippines and 11 other countries and urged President Aquino to initiate talks with Japan. **AP**



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Competition : 2015 World Dragon Boat Racing Championships
Total : MOP\$2,355,000
Coach : Han Weifeng
Athletes : Ng Kam Hong; Lam Chon Wong; Ao Ieong Keng Kit; Cheang Ka Lok; Lei Keng San; Chan Kai Chong; Wong Fei Fu; Chao Ka Hou; Lok Oi Kan; Tam Si Long; Leong Choi Wan; Leong Lai Sze Racy; Leong Hou Lam; Wu Wing Yan; Wong Cheong Seng; Loi Chi On; Cruz Cabrales de Bernardes; Luz Elena; Chu Hao Lei; Nascimento Gaspar; Rosita Xavier; Sin Kuan Mui; Fong Hong Ieng; Ng Chi Ian; Ho Seong U; Lam Io Sang; Lei Chi Fong; Hong Wai San; Leong Kin Pong; Chan Ka Meng; Lou Kuok Hei; Cheang Iat Wa; Wong Chon Iong; Ip Soi Pou; Fung Sin Ieng

Cycling Team

Competition : 13th Asian Indoor Cycling Championships
Total : MOP\$227,500
Coaches : Lou Weng Meng; Kuan Sok Mui
Athletes : Wan Chi Kit; Lei Fai; Ho I Lam; Ho I Teng; Chan Hou Pong

Bodybuilding Team

Competition : 49th Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championships
Total : MOP\$22,500
Coach : Lau Fong Peng
Athlete : Lee Marco Alfredo

Special Olympics Sports Team

Competition : 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games
Total : MOP\$1,237,000
Coaches : Wong Io Meng; Siu Yu Ning; Iong Kit Man; Leong Chi Kin; Leung Chi Wa; Lo Peng Kun; Lei In Tong; Wong Ion Kao
Athletes : Liu Ka Hou; Cheang Sio Long; Chu Kai Chong; Fong Chi Fong; Huang I Ian; Leong Ieng Wa; Sou Chi Ngai; Leong Wai Chon; Lam Chit Wai; Tang Hoi Kei; Cheong Lai Kuan; Wong Hoi Man; Tam Man Hou; Pun Pak Ieong; Chan Lai Nei; Cheng Man Chong; Lo Ka Lei; Lam Kin Wai; Leong On In; Chang Chak Kuan; Kuok Sai Chan; Leong Ka Weng; Kwok Oi Ieng; Cheong Im Ha; Wong Si Nga; Sam Kit; Tam Chan Kit; Sou Wai Pan; Pak Hoi Chong; Chan Chon; Chio Wai Hou; Che On; Sam Chou Meng; Chan Kit Fong; Lo Wai Fong; Pun Meng; Lao Mei In; Ng Man I; Yu Ka Man; Ieong Chi Peng; Iong I Kei; Ng Man Pou; Lo Kam Fong; Cheong Cho I; Lam Hong Chu; Chao Kam Fong; Wong Kin Hong; Ng Teng Fei; Chen Yu Chia; Lei Weng I; Chan Wai Meng; Leung Sio In; Ng On Kei; Cheang Mei Leng; Choi Sio Ha; Ng Weng San; Wong Hio Tong; Ho Seng Hin; Kuok Chi Kin; Cheong Teng Hong; Ha Ka Cheong; Mak Kim Fong; Ao Weng On; Lou Ka Chon; Chan Na U; Chao Sio On; Lam Chon Man; Lei In Teng; Wong Hio Man; Ng Chi Man

Deaf Sports Team

Competition : 2015 Asia Pacific Deaf Games
Total : MOP\$25,000
Coach : Ando Kenta
Athlete : Hoi Long

Wushu Team

Competitions : 8th Asian Junior Wushu Championships, 13th World Wushu Championships
Total : MOP\$2,065,000
Coaches : Iao Chon In; Leong Hong Man; Huang Yanhui; Qin Zhijian
Athletes : Wu Chi In; Sou Cho Man; Chan Kun Hong; Wong Kui Sin; Ho Chon Ieng; He Weng I; Lei Kit Wa; Huang Junhua; Chio Wai Keong; Wu Nok In; Chong Ka Seng

Xiangqi Team

Competitions : 14th World Xiangqi Championship, 17th Asian Xiangqi Championship
Total : MOP\$255,000
Coach : Chen Bupeng
Athletes : Cao Yanlei; Lei Kam Fun

Shuttlecock Team

Competition : 8th Shuttlecock World Championship
Total : MOP\$325,000
Coach : Lam Kam Hung
Athletes : Wong Weng Man; Leong On Kei; Lam Ka Man

In accordance with "The Regulation of Attribution of Certificates of Merits in Sports", the following athletes and coaches are awarded certificates of merits as encouragement and recognition of their achievements:

Dragon Boat Team

Coaches : Han Weifeng; Chang Wa Ieng
Athletes : Ng Kam Hong; Lam Chon Wong; Ao Ieong Keng Kit; Cheang Ka Lok; Lei Keng San; Chan Kai Chong; Wong Fei Fu; Chao Ka Hou; Lok Oi Kan; Tam Si Long; Leong Choi Wan; Leong Lai Sze Racy; Leong Hou Lam; Wu Wing Yan; Wong Cheong Seng; Loi Chi On; Cruz Cabrales de Bernardes; Luz Elena; Chu Hao Lei; Nascimento Gaspar; Rosita Xavier; Sin Kuan Mui; Fong Hong Ieng; Ng Chi Ian; Ho Seong U; Lam Io Sang; Lei Chi Fong; Hong Wai San; Leong Kin Pong; Chan Ka Meng; Lou Kuok Hei; Cheang Iat Wa; Wong Chon Iong; Ip Soi Pou; Fung Sin Ieng

Bowling Team

Coach : Yiu Man Yau
Athletes : Lee Tak Man; Dias Ma Zoé; Dias de Souza, Verónica

Canoe Team

Coach : Wong Chan Kung
Athletes : Cheong Sin Yi Louisa; Ng Si Cheng; Chau Weng In

Cycling Team

Coaches : Lou Weng Meng; Kuan Sok Mui
Athletes : Wan Chi Kit; Lei Fai; Ho I Lam; Ho I Teng; Chan Hou Pong

Bodybuilding Team

Coach : Lau Fong Peng
Athletes : Lee Marco Alfredo; Wong I Cheng; Pang Chi Man; Ieong Weng Kuan; Cheong Chi Wa; Wong Chong Ieong

Dance Sport Team

Coaches : Choi Lai Fong; Zhou Daxing
Athletes : Tam Ka Pan; Vong Weng Lam; Lam Chi Tong; Pun Wun; Fong Wai Kin; U Mei Kok; Chiu Choi António; Lao Hio I; Lai Ka Wun; Jin Tim; Chan Ngok Wai; Lai Keng Pui; Lao U Tou; Ng Iok San; Che Tim Long; Lo Ka Weng; Chan Chon Kit; Dos Santos Kaewmanee Celina

Fencing Team

Athletes : Ho Peng I; Ho Ka U; Huang Liya

Ice Sports Team

Coach : Li Liping
Athletes : Ho Chi Hin; Kam Chi Chon; Ho Seng Chon; Lo Weng Kuan; Lo Weng Chi; Cheong Sin I; Ng Weng I

Judo Team

Coaches : Kase Jiro; Chong Ka Lok; Lo Chi Wai; Leong Siu Pou; Guerra, Emanuel Frederico; Silva, Aqino Da; Chang Choi Chan; Lei Joao Luiz Baptista
Athletes : Chan Ian Ian; Chan Si Meng; Lei Cheng I; Lio Chon Hou; Cheang Ka Mei; Lao Ka Cheng; Ng I Kei; Wong Ka Lei; Che Ka Sin; Fong Hoi Lam; Tong Ka Io; Lei Chi In; Li Ka Tung; Costa Ao Miguel; Iau Ka Him; Ho Chi Weng; Leung Chi Lou; Lai Wang Kit; Chek Tak Chong; Leong Lai Tong; Chan Chi Wai; Wong Ka Cheng; Ao Ieong Hang Io; Chong I Peng; Ng Lei Wai

Special Olympics Sports Team

Coaches : Siu Yu Ning; Hoi Ioi Kuan; Chan Hoi Leng; Wong Io Meng; Leong, Miguel Marcelino Campos; Lai Ka Pou; Wong Ion Kao; Chan Chon Fai; Iong Kit Man; Zhang Hua; Feng Xi; Leung Chi Wa; Chan Ka Wan; Mok Cheng Man; Wu Peng Koi; Tam Sin Ieng; Chao Pui I; Chan I Vo; Ho Chi Chong; Chiang Hoi Ian; Ng Iek Wang; Chio Wai Man; O Chi Wa; Chang Chia Ling; Leong Chi Kin; Sequeira Miguel Rosario; Leong Ka Pek; Lo Peng Kun; Wong Si Ka; Lei In Tong; Kuok Chan Heng; Leong Iok Heng
Assistant : Lai Ka Ian; Hoi Ka Wai; Lo Lai San; Chan Ngan Ieng; Ng Weng I; Wong Wai Wong; Stefan Kühn;
Coaches : Leong Ka Weng; Lam Kin Wai; Leung Sio In; Kuok Kin Wai; Leong Chi Chon; Ho Seng Hin; Chao Kam Fong; Wan Tin Chao; Chu Kai Chong; Wong Chi Kwan; Wong Kin Hong; Leong Ieng Wa; Ng Teng Fei; Choi Sio Ha; Che On; Chan Chon; Ng Weng San; U Keng Fai; Wong Si Nga; Choi Weng Ian; Sin Kei Cheong; Lai Lok Man; Ao Ieong In; Lam Hong Chu; Cheng Man Chong; Kong Cheng Man; Ho Ka Wai; Chan Chi Meng; Mio Ngai Hang; Leong Wai Kit; Lam Kin Wai; Cheang Sio Long; Fong Chi Fong; Pun Meng; Lo Wai Fong; Lao Mei In; Ng Man I; Yu Ka Man; Kuok Chi Kin; Choi Nok Io; Liu Ka Hou; Huang I Ian; Leong Wai Chon; Sou Chi Ngai; Lam Chit Wai; Tang Hoi Kei; Cheong Lai Kuan; Lei Weng I; Cheong Teng Hong; Wong Hoi Man; Chen Yu Chia; Tam Man Hou; Chan Wai Meng; Cheong Im Ha; Cheang Mei Leng; Chan Na U; Lou Ka Chon; Li Jiaxuan; Chan Lai Nei; Lei In Teng; Ieong Chi Peng; Iong I Kei; Ng Man Pou; Lo Ka Kio; Pun Pak Ieong; Ha Ka Cheong; Mak Kim Fong; Chao Sio On; Lam Chon Man; Ng Chi Man; Leong Leng Hin; Lo Ka Lei; Lo Kam Fong; Cheong Cho I; Ao Weng On; Lao Pui Wan; Tam Chan Kit; Sam Kit; Pak Hoi Chong; Sou Wai Pan; Ng On Kei; Teixeira de Azevedo, Paulo Alexandre; Lee Sze Yuen; Sam Chou Meng; Chio Wai Hou; Chang Chak Kuan; Kuok Sai Chan; Chan Kit Fong; Leong On In; Kwok Oi Ieng; Wong Hio Tong; Wong Hio Man

Swimming Team

Coaches : Lei Wa Hon; Zhang Zilin; Ying Jingli; Du Biyun; U Sio Fan; Wang Ruihua; Li Songfang
Athletes : Mak Sok Iun; Sam Choi Lin; Chan Chok Wa; Mok Yun Cheung David; Vai Tae Veng; Leong Sut Chan; Leong Sut In; Choi Sut Ian; Choi Sut Kuan; Ho Iek Lam; Lei Wai Shing; Ng Pui Lam; Leong Kam Cheong; Tang Hio Fong; Lei Meng Hin; Chao Man Hou; Lei On Kei; Chou Kit; Kuan I Cheng; Tan Chi Yan; Ku Nga Kei; Ngou Pok Man; Yum Cheng Man; Long Chi Wai; Choi Weng Tong; Lei Cheok Ian; Leong Mei Han; Li Ni; Lei Cheuk Sze; Chau Cheng Han; Choi Nok Lam; Hoi Mei Si; Chan Chi Ian; Chio Un Tong; Chio Weng Tong

Disabled Sports Team

Coaches : Kuan Fong Tak; Leong Wai Sam; Pun Wai Kun
Athletes : U Choi Hong; Ip Chi Keong; Lam Oi Man; Chu Cheng Lao

Squash Team

Coach : Lim Chee Ming
Athlete : Yeung Weng Chi

Deaf Sports Team

Coach : Ando Kenta
Athlete : Hoi Long

Taekwondo Team

Coaches : Kim Jun Woo; Chao Iat Keong
Athletes : Cheung Hei Teng; De Assunção, Alba Merilda; Liu Qing; Feng Xiao; Hao Chao; Loi Leong San; Lok Weng Heng; Maricic Nikola; Wong Chi Cheng; Wu Cheng On; Ho Chi Tong; Lam Hio Tong; Pau Saksit

Wushu Team

Coaches : Iao Chon In; Leong Hong Man; Huang Yanhui; Qin Zhijian
Athletes : Wu Chi In; Sou Cho Man; Chan Kun Hong; Wong Kui Sin; Ho Chon Ieng; He Weng I; Mui Weng I; Leong Hou Cheong; Cheung Ioi Chit; Wong Sam In; Han Soi Wa; Lei Cheok Ieong; Hung Si Fan; Weng Pek I; Lei Kit Wa; Huang Junhua; Chio Wai Keong; Wu Nok In; Chong Ka Seng; Li Yi

Chess Team

Coach : Ho Hou Meng
Athletes : Ip Seng Tou; Lei Ka Chon

Xiangqi Team

Coach : Chen Bupeng
Athletes : Cao Yanlei; Lei Kam Fun

Shuttlecock Team

Coach : Lam Kam Hung
Athletes : Wong Weng Man; Leong On Kei; Lam Ka Man; Tam Chi Kin; Ho Man Chon



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Scott Bauer & Jill Colvin
Sioux Center, Iowa

USA ELECTIONS

Cruz downplays Trump raising concerns over Canadian birth

TED Cruz tried to make a joke out of Republican presidential rival Donald Trump raising questions about whether the Texas senator's birth in Canada could be a liability if he becomes the party's nominee.

Trump told the Washington Post in an interview this week that Cruz's Canadian birthplace and his holding a double passport was a "very precarious" issue that "a lot of people are talking about." Trump has ramped up his attacks on Cruz since the Texas senator sprinted ahead of the billionaire real estate mogul in some opinion surveys in Iowa whose caucuses kick off the state-by-state nominating contests.

Cruz, in response to questions about Trump's comments, said the best way to respond was to laugh it off and "move on to the issues that matter." He first reacted on Twitter, posting a link to a video from the 1970s television show "Happy Days" showing the character Fonzie water skiing over a shark. The moment, known as "jumping the shark," has come to refer to the use of a gimmick to halt the decline of a television show or other effort.

"What the American people are interested in is not bickering and back and forth," Cruz



Donald Trump

told reporters before a town hall in Sioux Center that drew hundreds of people. Cruz was concluding the second day of a six-day swing through Iowa before the Feb. 1 caucuses, while Trump was holding a rally in New Hampshire.

The U.S. Constitution says only a "natural born Citizen" may be president. Legal scholars, however, generally agree the description covers foreign-born children of U.S. parents.

Cruz was born in Calgary, Alberta, in 1970 while his parents were working in the oil business there. His mother, Eleanor, is from Delaware, while his father, Rafael, is a Cuban who became a U.S. citizen in 2005. Cruz has said that because his mother is a citizen by birth, he is also one. Under U.S. law, anyone born to a U.S. citizen is granted citizenship no matter where the birth takes place.

Cruz renounced his Canadian

citizenship in 2014, amid speculation he was preparing for a presidential run.

But that didn't stop Trump from raising the issue Tuesday.

"Republicans are going to have to ask themselves the question: 'Do we want a candidate who could be tied up in court for two years?' That'd be a big problem," Trump said in The Washington Post interview. "It'd be a very precarious one for Republicans because

he'd be running and the courts may take a long time to make a decision. You don't want to be running and have that kind of thing over your head."

Trump was one of the loudest voices questioning whether President Obama was born in Kenya and thus not eligible to be U.S. president. Obama is an American citizen; his father was Kenyan, his mother American, and was born in Hawaii.

Previous foreign-born Americans — notably Republicans John McCain and George Romney — have run for president with some mention, but no serious challenges, of their eligibility.

The comments mark a reversal for Trump, who in September downplayed Cruz's birthplace in an interview with ABC.

"I hear it was checked out by every attorney and every which way and I understand Ted is in fine shape," he told the network then.

But Trump has been ratcheting up his attacks on Cruz in recent weeks. **AP**

Survey suggests eurozone economy set for robust year



German Chancellor Angela Merkel, left, speaks with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras

THE 19-country eurozone's economy is poised for a year of "robust expansion" following its best quarterly performance in 4 1/2 years, a closely watched survey indicated yesterday.

Financial information company Markit said its purchasing managers' index — a measure of activity across the manufacturing and services sectors — rose to a four-month high of 54.3 points in December from 54.2 the previous month. That monthly growth rounded off the best quarterly performance since the middle of 2011, according to Markit.

"The eurozone economy

starts 2016 on a solid footing and well placed to enjoy a year of robust expansion," Markit's chief economist Chris Williamson said.

Despite the findings, Williamson said the eurozone economy is still not running on all cylinders. Overall growth in 2015 is only expected to be around 1.5 percent and France, Europe's second-largest economy, continues to lag. In December, France barely grew at all — its PMI survey reading was 50.1, just ahead of the 50 threshold that marks expansion and contraction.

"Germany, Italy, Spain and Ireland are all enjoying strong

expansions, but France is showing signs of stalling once again," he said. "A rebound in France is needed to help drive a strong year of growth for the region as a whole."

Still, Williamson said he was encouraged to see firms in many countries in the eurozone taking on staff in increased numbers, "suggesting that businesses are preparing for stronger demand in the coming year by boosting capacity."

The eurozone economy has been recovering for over two years now but it has failed to pick up much momentum. Growth over the past year or so has been stuck in a narrow range between 0.3 percent and 0.5 percent on a quarterly basis despite tail winds such as low oil prices, a big monetary stimulus from the European Central Bank and a weaker euro.

Over recent months, the outlook has gotten a little bit murkier, largely because of developments in China, where growth has been moderating. Inflation in the eurozone has also been very low and even negative at times, raising concerns that consumers may put off spending in anticipation of lower prices ahead and that businesses may fail to invest and innovate. **AP**

GERMANY

Police probe sex assault link to known crime gang

Frank Jordans, Cologne

GERMAN police said yesterday that they are investigating whether a string of sexual assaults and thefts over the New Year period is linked to a known criminal network.

The assaults in Cologne last week have prompted outrage in Germany and a fresh debate about immigration, after police said the perpetrators appeared to be of "Arab or North African origin."

A spokesman for police in the nearby city of Duesseldorf said officers there have identified more than 2,000 suspects of North African origin in connection with organized theft offenses since the start of 2014.

Some of the offenses also involved sexual assaults as a means of distracting victims, and Duesseldorf police were cooperating closely with their counterparts in Cologne to examine possible ties to crimes there, spokesman Markus Niescheri told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

The events in Cologne involved a crowd of around a thousand men. Police say at least 90 criminal complaints were filed, and that some men in the crowd formed smaller groups and surrounded women.



People walk past the central railway station in Cologne

Authorities have cautioned that the nationality and residency status of the suspects is still unknown, since nobody has yet been arrested in connection with the offenses.

Germany's top security official stressed that anyone involved must be punished regardless of where they come from. He said that "a general suspicion against refugees is just as out of place as keeping quiet about criminal structures, if they can be verified."

"All of the perpetrators, of whatever origin, must be punished," Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere told Wednesday's edition of the Bild daily. "If refugees were among them, we must address that openly."

Germany registered nearly 1.1 million people as asylum seekers last year, according to Interior Ministry figures released yesterday. **AP**

what's ON



"PRINT" – ART PROJECT

TIME: 12pm-7pm

(Closed on Tuesdays, open on public holidays)

UNTIL: February 21, 2016

VENUE: No Cruzamento da Avenida do Coronel

Mesquita com a Avenida Almirante Lacerda Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2853 0026

MANUEL CARGALEIRO-PINTURA: 1954-2006

TIME: 10am-7pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: March 3, 2016

VENUE: Casa Garden Orient Foundation

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2855 4691

2015 STAMP FESTIVAL

– THE 'FESTIVE STAMPS' SPECIAL EXHIBITION

TIME: 9:30am-5:30pm (closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: January 10, 2016

VENUE: Communications Museum of Macau,

No.7, Estrada de D. Maria II, Macau

ADMISSION: MOP10

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2871 8063 / 2871 8570

MACAU PRINTMAKING TRIENNIAL

TIME: 10am-7pm

(Closed on Mondays, No admission after 6:30 pm)

UNTIL: February 14, 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

CREATIVE & COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION

TIME: 12pm-7pm

(Closed on Tuesdays, open on public holidays)

UNTIL: January 31, 2016

VENUE: No Cruzamento da Avenida do Coronel

Mesquita com a Avenida Almirante Lacerda Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2853 0026

TUTTI COLORI

– ARTS, CRAFTS & SKETCHES EXHIBITION

TIME: 10am-6:30pm

UNTIL: February 18, 2016

ADMISSION: Free

VENUE: Calçada Da Barra, No. 16 R/C LJ A,

Edif. San Chak, Macau

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 2820

Offbeat

TWO-YEAR TWINS: BABIES BORN
DEC. 31 AND JAN. 1 IN SAN DIEGO

Twins in San Diego are getting some attention because, though born just minutes apart, one has a birthday in 2015 and one in 2016.

Jaelyn Valenica was born New Year's Eve at

11:59 p.m. Her twin brother, Luis Valencia Jr., arrived at 12:01 a.m. on New Year's Day.

KGTV-TV reports that the babies were due at the end of January, but doctors at San Diego Kaiser Permanente Zion Medical Center called the mother in because one was in a breech position.

The father, Luis Valencia, called it a New Year's blessing to have two healthy children.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
17:10	Cougar Town S.4
18:10	Trail of Lies (Repeated)
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repeat)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:40	Comedy
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Television Film
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:35	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

7 JAN - 13 JAN



THE 33

ROOM 1

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Patricia Riggen

Starring: Antonio Banderas, Rodrigo Santoro,

Juliette Binoche

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 127min

SECRET IN THEIR EYES

ROOM 2

2.30, 4.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Billy Ray

Starring: Chiwetel Ejiofor, Nicole Kidman, Julia

Roberts

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 111min

IP MAN 3

ROOM 2

7.30 pm

Director: Wilson Yip Wai Shun

Starring: Donnie Yen, Lynn Xiong, Max Zhang

Language: Cantonese (English/Cantonese)

Duration: 110min

SHERLOCK: THE ABOMINABLE BRIDE

ROOM 3

2.30, 4.45, 9.30 pm

Director: Douglas Mackinnon

Starring: Benedict Cumberbatch, Martin Freeman,

Una Stubbs

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 89min

THE BOY AND THE BEAST

ROOM 3

7.15 pm

Director: Mamoru Hosoda

Language: Japanese (English/Cantonese)

Duration: 119min

MACAU TOWER

17 DEC - 7 JAN

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: J.J. Abrams

Starring: Teresa Palmer, Luke Bracey, Édgar Ramírez

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 135min

this day in history

1976 ICELAND AND BRITAIN
CLASH AT SEA

A British naval frigate has been involved in another collision with an Icelandic gunboat in the Atlantic.

HMS Andromeda was dented when the gunboat, Thor, sailed close to the bow. Thor sustained a hole in its hull.

British defence officials said the collision represented a "deliberate attack" on the British warship without regard for life.

The Icelandic coastguard insisted Andromeda had rammed Thor by overtaking the boat and then swiftly changing course.

Less than ten days ago Andromeda was involved in a similar incident with another Icelandic boat, Tyr. Icelandic officials claimed the Andromeda had deliberately rammed the Tyr - a claim rejected by the Ministry of Defence.

Since November last year, Iceland has attempted to enforce a 200 mile exclusion zone for foreign trawlers instead of the 50 miles established in the expired 1973 fishing rights agreement.

It is unclear whether today's incident was deliberate but spokesman for UK naval operations Captain John Cox said that it was certainly dangerous.

Captain Cox explained that warships are especially vulnerable to collision damage because they were not armoured along the sides.

The Icelandic Prime Minister, Hr Hallgrímsson, warned of possible confrontation in his New Year message at the end of 1975: "Once (Britain) put an end to their military presence in Icelandic jurisdiction and their trawlers stop illegal fishing, a solution can be found - but the British government will have to show its willingness towards this end."

Captain Cox was equally clear about the purpose of the British Navy's presence: "What we're doing is protecting fishery trawlers on the high seas in international waters and we are told specifically: no aggressive manoeuvres, no provocation at all."

The Icelandic Government says it is applying the 200 mile fishery limit agreed by over 100 nations, including Britain, at the 1974 Law of the Sea Conference.

It is concerned that overfishing could lead to a dramatic decline in the number of cod. Some marine biologists have even suggested there could be no cod left by 1980.

But Britain says Iceland has no right to unilaterally enforce a 200-mile limit until it becomes law. It has deployed its navy to protect the 40 trawlers fishing in the contested waters.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

This was the third of the 'Cod Wars' that took place between Britain and Iceland over their fishing rights in the Atlantic. The first was in 1958 and the second ran from 1972 to 1973. Britain deployed a total of 22 frigates against 16 Icelandic vessels. There were numerous skirmishes and Iceland threatened to close the Nato base at Keflavik. The US offered to mediate but it was Nato that negotiated an agreement on 6th June 1976.

Under this treaty Britain was limited to using 24 trawlers within a 200 mile zone at any one time for an annual catch of up to 50,000 tonnes.

Iceland claimed that it was economically dependent on fishing, but fish from the Atlantic were worth £23.1m to the UK and the new restrictions caused 8000 jobs to be lost.

The number of cod has continued to decline and there have been calls for a total ban on cod fishing in the North Sea.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You're too busy being upset about reality to indulge in your usual inner musing. What a blessing. Sometimes when things are going wrong, they are going exactly right.

Taurus April 20-May 20 If you made every decision based only on emotion, you would eventually burn out over something simple. As it is, base today's decision on something shallow, like whether or not you need the money.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Everything you need to know is just outside your field of vision. But you can figure things out based on something deeper and more calculating than your observations. Start probing.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Indecision is a powerful indicator. It helps you figure out what to get involved with and what to avoid, especially where your money is concerned. You already have all the information you need.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Are plotters really out to get your few remaining pennies or is that fear just a smoke screen for more weighty matters? Don't waste time looking deeply at the issue. You could be out there making money instead.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 If you based all of your financial decisions on emotions rather than facts, then you should be in a good place right about now. Those nagging feelings were your best financial advisors, and didn't even charge a fee.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 What a difference a year makes. You needed a few major changes. When it comes to money and material possessions, it's always healthy to shake things up every now and then.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You're having a rebirth of sorts. In other words, you're in business. Whatever plans you've been sitting on, it's time to get out of the way so they can hatch. Then start the important work of counting your chicks.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 It's disappointing when setbacks just make you moody and slow instead of fired up to face the challenge. Figure out why you're not reacting the way you always imagined you would. Then get a move on.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Stay organized. Your biggest hopes and dreams may be on the back burner, but at least they're not in the deep freeze. You need to keep on top of things while they're happily stewing away.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You can't go full speed ahead forever. If your feelings of ambition have slowed down, it's only because you needed a breather. In that sense, you and the universe are right in synch.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Go ahead, treat me like your doormat. That's your own sneaky way of getting someone over the threshold. Which of you is the chum and which is the shark remains to be seen, but you both deserve to be skewered.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9 2 4 3 8 6 1 3 7 5 7 5 6 3 2 4 8 5 5 3 1

Easy+

9 2 7 3 5 6 5 6 1 9 5 9 6 7 8 1 9 4 9 2 7 6 8 2 1

Medium

7 9 1 6 4 1 8 3 4 5 7 5 9 8 3 4 7 9 8 5 4 8 7 6 2 6 9 4 8

Hard

1 5 8 2 1 7 5 6 4 3 4 8 7 5 3

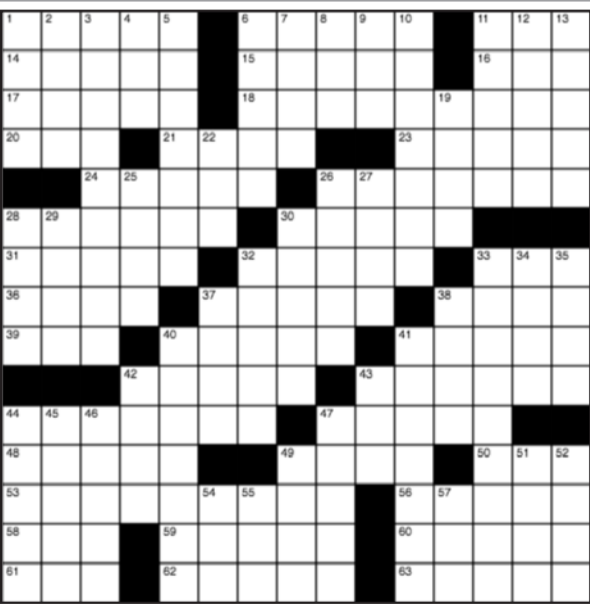
WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Rows for CHINA (Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, etc.).

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Steel girder; 6- Animal trap; 11- Rat-a-___; 14- Actress Shire; 15- Five; Prefix; 16- Consumed; 17- Units; 18- Legal right of possession; 20- Defense advisory grp.; 21- Abrupt; 23- Fur scarf; 24- Raise a glass to; 26- Jock; 28- "Peer Gynt Suite" dancer; 30- Verboten; 31- Flora and fauna; 32- Unit of weight in gemstones; 33- Put down, in slang; 36- Prohibits; 37- Knight wear; 38- Nixon pal Rebozo; 39- Pothook shape; 40- Primp; 41- Street machine; 42- Crews; 43- Take turns; 44- Surprise; 47- Approvals; 48- Apartment sign; 49- Slippery fish; 50- Scot's cap; 53- Given to great feeling; 56- Maternally related; 58- Stimp's pal; 59- Growl angrily; 60- Kama ___; 61- Never, to Nietzsche; 62- Backs of feet; 63- Lieu;

DOWN: 1- Pack ___ (quit); 2- Cave dwellers; 3- Processes for choosing a government; 4- Intent; 5- Eyelash cosmetic; 6- Recreation; 7- Salamander; 8- First name in advice; 9- Numbered rd.; 10- Hearing distance; 11- California-Nevada lake; 12- Leaning; 13- Native American tent; 19- WWII battle site; 22- Mex. neighbor; 25- Ed and Mel of baseball; 26- Brother of Moses; 27- Ski lift; 28- French clergyman; 29- Long and Peeples; 30- Domesticates; 32- ___ de menche; 33- Lay waste; 34- Yeah, sure; 35- Shrivelled, without moisture; 37- Asian inland sea; 38- De-intensify; 40- Peevish; 41- Own; 42- Waste allowance; 43- Fam. member; 44- Severe; 45- Marisa of "My Cousin Vinny"; 46- Home ___; Culkin movie; 47- Shouts; 49- Viscount's superior; 51- Gillette product; 52- Anthropologist Margaret; 54- We're number ___; 55- Dundee denial; 57- Crackpot



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

Azarenka advances to quarterfinals at Brisbane International

John Pye, Brisbane

AFTER two injury-interrupted seasons, Victoria Azarenka is emerging from the shadows of some highly-ranked rivals who have either withdrawn from Australian Open warmup events or lost in the early rounds.

The two-time Australian Open champion reached the quarterfinals of the Brisbane International — a tournament she won in 2009 — with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Ysaline Bonaventure.

Bonaventure, a lucky loser from qualifying, was cast into the second round yesterday as a replacement for top-seeded Simona Halep, who had a bye before withdrawing from a scheduled second-round match with Azarenka because of an Achilles tendon problem.

The No. 2-ranked Halep withdrew within an hour of defending champion Maria Sharapova pulling out of the tournament with a left forearm injury. Top-ranked Serena Williams withdrew from the Hopman Cup in Perth after skipping her first match and retiring in the second set of the U.S. team's second against Australia Gold because of inflammation in her left knee.

Venus Williams and Ana Ivanovic — the top two seeded players at the ASB Classic in Auckland, New Zealand — were beaten in the first round.

Azarenka conceded an early service break against Bonaventure and had seven double-faults in the first set, but otherwise dominated after converting her fifth break-point chance in a fourth game that lasted more than 17 minutes and went to deuce 11 times.

Azarenka who dropped to a year-end No. 22 ranking in December after being restricted to just 23 events across



Victoria Azarenka of Belarus plays a shot in her match against Ysaline Bonaventure of Belgium during the Brisbane International tennis tournament

2014 and '15, is working her way back into form.

"I definitely missed playing since I haven't in a while," she said. As for the broader issue of injuries, she said: "I'm just going to try to take care of myself right now, and hopefully everybody will be ready for the Australian Open."

Fourth-seeded Angelique Kerber beat Madison Brengle 6-3, 6-0 to set up a meeting with Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, while Andrea Petkovic had

a 7-5, 6-4 win over Ekaterina Makarova to move into a quarterfinal against U.S. qualifier Samantha Crawford, who had an upset 7-5, 7-5 win over seventh-seeded Belinda Bencic.

Petkovic, who has struggled in the past with serious injuries, attributed the high attrition rate in January to the extra work players are putting into the conditioning over the off-season.

"If I know them well, the top players, they still will be in

good shape when it comes to the Australian Open," Petkovic said.

In the men's draw, second-seeded Kei Nishikori opened with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Mikhail Kukushkin to move into the quarterfinals against seventh-seeded Bernard Tomic, a 7-6 (6), 4-6, 7-6 (4) winner over Radek Stepanek.

Third-seeded Marin Cilic beat Chung Hyeon 7-5, 7-6 (3), and No. 8 Dominic Thiem had a 6-3, 6-2 win against De-

nis Kudla to advance.

At the Hopman Cup mixed teams event in Perth, Western Australia, Germany leveled its record at 1-1 with a 2-1 win over France, which lost for the second time.

Alexander Zverev gave Germany a 1-0 lead with a 6-2, 6-2 win over Kenny De Schepper, but Caroline Garcia beat Sabine Lisicki 6-2, 7-6 (5) to send the match to a mixed doubles decider, which the German pair won 6-4, 6-7 (6), 10-6.

In a night match, Andy Murray lost to Australia Green's Nick Kyrgios. Heather Watson was playing Daria Gavrilova in a bid to keep Britain alive.

In New Zealand, third-seeded Caroline Wozniacki resisted the fate of other seeded players at the tournament with a 6-0, 6-2 win against Christina McHale and No. 5 Sloane Stephens beat Carina Witthoef 3-6, 6-1, 6-3.

Austrian qualifier Tamira Paszek beat two-time Grand Slam champion Svetlana Kuznetsova and British qualifier Naomi Broady reached the quarterfinals with a 4-6, 7-6 (4), 7-5 win over Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia. **AP**

Serena Williams withdraws from Hopman Cup with knee problem

SERENA Williams withdrew from the Hopman Cup yesterday because of inflammation in her left knee, a setback in her preparations for the Australian Open.

Williams has been replaced by Vicky Duval in the U.S. team for the last Group A match against the Czech Republic today. Williams withdrew ahead of her season-opening match against Ukraine on Monday, with Duval filling in for her, and retired in the second set against Australia's Jarmila Wolfe on Tuesday.

Hopman Cup organizers confirmed Williams' withdrawal. The U.S. team is



0-2 and cannot reach the final of the international mixed team competition at Perth Arena.

Williams, who won the Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon and got within two victories of a season Grand Slam in 2015 before losing in the U.S. Open semifinals, had initially been confident of returning to action in Perth.

"It's not even a bump - just a really minor thing in the road and I'll fly over it," Williams said after retiring against Wolfe. "I just have some inflammation that's been going away very slowly — it's going away but it needs a little more time."

"Mainly I was afraid to move and I need to get in the space where I'm not afraid to move. Maybe a day off or two will really make the world of difference."

Williams is expected to travel to Melbourne to continue preparations for the Australian Open, which begins on Jan. 18. **AP**

CRICKET

England's Stuart Broad fined for comments to umpire

ENGLAND bowler Stuart Broad has been fined 30 percent of his match fee for twice telling umpire Aleem Dar to "just get on with the game" when Dar issued a warning for him kicking the pitch in the

second test against South Africa.

The ICC says the incident happened during the fourth day at Newlands.

Broad had forced South Africa's Temba Bavuma to edge behind

but the catch was dropped by wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow. Broad showed his frustration by kicking the ground and England captain Alastair Cook was warned by the umpires over Broad damaging the pit-

ch. Broad then made the comments to Dar.

Broad was called to appear at a disciplinary hearing after play. He pleaded not guilty but was found guilty of showing dissent to an umpire. **AP**



Stuart Broad

Doug Ferguson, Kapalua, Hawaii

GOLF

A new year on the PGA Tour raises 5 questions

JORDAN Spieth spent the first official practice day of the new year in good company.

As he rolled putts at Kapalua, his teenage sister Ellie sat next to him on the practice green and watched until she reclined on her back and took in the warmth of the Hawaii sun. Few tournaments are more relaxing than the Hyundai Tournament of Champions, and that's just what golf needs.

This is going to be a hectic year.

At stake is a gold medal in Rio and a gold Ryder Cup at Hazeltine.

Another prize is the No. 1 world ranking, and that could take all year to sort out.

Most of the attention, at least for now, is on Spieth. He is coming off a year that was beyond his expectations by winning the Masters and U.S. Open, three other PGA Tour titles and the FedEx Cup. His final tweet of 2015: "Would rather this year not end."

It starts all over today with the most star power at Kapalua in 10 years. Where will it lead? Here are five topics to ponder for 2016:

THE ENCORE: In the last 25 years, only four players have won majors in consecutive seasons — Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Pádraig Harrington and Rory McIlroy. In the last 50 years, only four players have followed a multiple-major season by winning another major — Woods, Tom Watson, Jack Nicklaus and Lee Trevino.

Good luck, Jordan.

Odds are against the 22-year-old Texan matching what he did last year. Remember, he won two of those tournaments in playoffs and won the second leg of the Grand Slam when Dustin Johnson three-putted from 12 feet. And for all he did last year, Spieth could lose the

AP PHOTO



Broadcast analyst Mark Roling talking about the wind from the 10th green before the first round at the Tournament of Champions PGA golf tournament

No. 1 ranking this week.

The competition is as strong as ever. More than just McIlroy and Jason Day, the biggest competition for Spieth might be his 2015 season.

THE BIG THREE: For the first time since the world ranking began in 1986, the top three players are all in their 20s. The No. 1 spot changed six times in six weeks last year, and more movement is likely. Spieth, Day and McIlroy are so close that any one of them could be No. 1 before the PGA Tour reaches the Florida swing.

Ten years ago, Vijay Singh, Tiger Woods and Ernie Els were battling for No. 1. That prompted Retief Goosen to say, "There will probably be a No. 1 player a few times this year." Woods took over in June and stayed at the top for the next five years.

So it's possible that one player pulls away from the other two.

Or considering the deepening pool of talent, the "Big Three" could become a lot bigger.

OLYMPICS: Golf returns to the Olympic program for the first time since 1904, and there is sure to be plenty of discus-

sion about whether a gold medal is more valuable than a silver claret jug, much less a green jacket.

In one respect, this might be one of the easier tournaments to win. Because if qualifying ended today, the 60-man field would have only 25 from the top 50 in the world.

Until the players get to Rio, the biggest impact of the Olympics has been on scheduling. The PGA Championship has been moved to late July ahead of the games. That means Spieth and McIlroy could play eight times

in 12 weeks — two majors, four FedEx Cup playoff events, the Olympics and the Ryder Cup.

RYDER CUP: The only player who faces a tougher encore than Spieth might be Darren Clarke, captain of a European team going after an unprecedented fourth straight victory. Clarke follows the masterful leadership of Paul McGinley at Gleneagles in 2014.

As for the Americans? They really pulled out all the stops by creating — wait for it — a task force. Davis Love III returns as captain, a chance at redemption from when the Americans lost a 10-6 lead at Medinah four years ago.

TIGER WOODS: The biggest star in golf sent a mixed message in The Bahamas last month. He spent more time talking about his past than the future, saying at one point that anything he accomplishes the rest of his career will be "gravy." He also tried to cool speculation about retirement by saying he wants to play.

Three back surgeries in just over 18 months kept him from doing little more than walking.

Woods missed eight months recovering from reconstructive knee surgery after the 2008 U.S. Open. He missed four months after the scandal in his personal life led to divorce after 2009. He missed three months because of injuries in 2011 and 2014. He already has been out of competition for five months.

Interest might be higher than ever when he returns. If he returns. **AP**

OLYMPICS

Rio stadium fires 75 percent of workers ahead of games

ADMINISTRATORS of Rio de Janeiro's iconic Maracana stadium have fired 75 percent of the arena's staff eight months before the 2016 Olympics.

The consortium formed by construction company Odebrecht and entertainment group AEG said in a statement this week that 40 people were laid off. The stadium, which hosted the 2014 World Cup final, is to be used for up to nine months by Games organizers, who are bringing in their own workers for that period.

Maracana administrators said the layoffs aim to cut costs while the facility is under Olympic control. Arena tours and maintenance will be done by contractors.

Administrators also said discussions with the Rio state government on a new operating contract are ongoing.

Brazilian media have reported that stadium operations could be returned to the state government in 2017.

The Maracana, Brazil's flagship stadium with nearly 79,000 seats, is

scheduled to host Olympic soccer matches as well as opening and closing ceremonies.

Another Rio Olympic venue has also been the subject of unflattering headlines this week.

Electricity was cut off at the stadium where track and field events are to be held, as Rio's city government and soccer club Botafogo blamed each other for unpaid utility bills.

Brazilian website Globo Esporte said the bills totaled 1 million reais (USD250,000) and re-

AP PHOTO



Maracana Stadium

presented two months of missed payments. It reported that electricity has been out at the arena since last week, and water

was cut more than a month ago.

A deep recession in Brazil has forced cutbacks to Olympic preparations as

organizers try to slash about \$500 million in expenditures to keep the operating budget at \$1.9 billion. **AP**

opinion

HK Observer
Robert Carroll



FAIRY TALES ABOUT MISSING BOOKSELLERS

It'd be hard to find anyone in Hong Kong who honestly believes that the five missing booksellers were not blackmailed, kidnapped or perhaps 'honey trapped'; set up in sex-related situations. A Beijing mouthpiece Global Times editorial said recently that there were ways to get people to cooperate in investigations without abducting them. So was it enforced removal, seduction and blackmail or is it all innocent legal behaviour? I am sure a bookmaker would give very long odds on a bet on the latter. Perhaps it's a combination of all of these.

The latest "disappearee," Lee Bo, told the South China Morning Post recently, in an interview, that he felt safe in Hong Kong but not over the border. He then went missing without telling his wife; highly suspicious. "I am not worried. I have avoided going to the mainland for many years"; That he then phoned his wife from Shenzhen in Putonghua - not the language he uses with her - is also suspicious. Despite these circumstances Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying has said the investigation into the disappearance would continue and urged "especially Mr Lee Bo" to "contact the police and provide information". As if he could.

Highly suspect too that a pro-Beijing lawmaker claimed that all five from Mighty Current publishers were arrested for sex with prostitutes - after secretly taking a boat to China. The sex recorded by mainland police. More, it's ridiculous; considering that the other four went missing in October. Mighty Current publishes books critical of, or embarrassing to President Xi Jinping and other current or former party leaders, and runs a bookshop which sells other books banned in China.

So according to the legislator, or most likely the fabricator of this story, this is what happened. Let's walk this through. The four decide to lie low in October, one during a holiday in Thailand. Next all of them, who knew they would be detained if they set foot in China, simultaneously, a few days ago, took the risk of long jail terms to see prostitutes in Shenzhen.

In the words of Alice from "Alice in Wonderland" in another absurd fairy tale: "curiouser and curiouser."

The legislator, Ng Leung-sing, said, in a Legislative Council meeting, that he was relaying a message from a friend. Later Ng apologized, saying that he was only trying to add another theory to explain Lee's disappearance. His many critics say he was re-circulating an online rumor - but on orders, or of his own volition?

Another suspicious event is Lee's wife withdrawing her request for police help after receiving a handwritten fax, which, she said, was in her husband's handwriting.

There are two very serious concerns here. Firstly Hong Kong residents, who may have antagonized individuals over the border, may worry about disappearing and reappearing over the border. Then, charged with some vague, catch-all-law - meaningless here - be tried in a court whose decision has been made in advance by Party officials; as is the regular process in cases deemed to be political. Problem is, with well connected mainlanders many disagreements can be made to be political.

Secondly if, as widely suspected, mainland security forces were involved in Hong Kong, it was in violation of the Basic Law and "one country two systems." This would not be the first time. In one widely publicized case two mainland police officers were arrested for loitering outside a residential building in Pokfulam with handcuffs. They were released with no action taken.

All in all this episode does not bode well for journalists, or publishers and freedom of the press and expression, as guaranteed in the Basic Law.

On balance we also have to question the judgement of the publishers. On the one hand they made available reliable books of public interest, such as "The Tiananmen Diaries" and the autobiography of the late liberal leader, Zhao Zhiyang. However on the other hand, they sold some hasty - and what appear to be gossip and rumoured-tinged books - embarrassing to senior Chinese figures. Nevertheless respecting our legal system, libel actions here would be the appropriate course of action rather than what seems to have happened.

THE BUZZ NETFLIX EXTENDS ONLINE VIDEO LICENSING DEAL WITH DREAMWORKS

Netflix's online video service will feature more series and movies from DreamWorks Animation as part of a contract extension with the studio.

The expanded licensing agreement announced will allow Netflix to showcase several new DreamWorks series, including "Trollhunters," a fantasy created by acclaimed movie director Guillermo del Toro.

Netflix secured the rights to DreamWorks programming everywhere in the world but China. Financial terms weren't disclosed.

The deal will give Netflix Inc. more video likely to appeal to children, an audience segment that has played an important role in its service more than doubling in size to 69 million subscribers during the past three years.

Volkswagen exec sees US fixes soon in emissions test cheating



Herbert Diess, chairman of the board of Volkswagen Brand, unveils the BUDD-e electric and connected car during a keynote address at CES International in Las Vegas

Tom Krisher, Las Vegas

THE top executive of the Volkswagen brand worldwide says he's optimistic that U.S. environmental regulators will approve fixes within the coming weeks or months for diesel engines that cheat on emissions tests.

Brand CEO Herbert Diess said yesterday at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas that the company is having constructive discussions with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board.

Diess says VW already has received approval to fix 8.5 million cheating cars in Eu-

rope. Repairs will start this month and most will be fixed this year.

But the U.S. cars are more problematic because they emit up to 40 times more toxic nitrogen oxide than allowed. About 500,000 cars are affected in the U.S., with a total of 11 million worldwide. Diess spoke as the company unveiled a concept of an electric-powered Microbus that could go into production in 2019.

U.S. fixes could be complicated and take several years. VW has admitted cheating on about 500,000 diesel cars nationwide by installing software that turns emissions controls on

during government tests and turns them off on real roads.

Diess apologized for the scandal. "I'm optimistic that we will find a solution, we will bring a package together which satisfies our customers first and foremost and then also the regulators," he said.

The U.S. Justice Department sued Volkswagen this week over emissions-cheating software, potentially exposing the company to billions of dollars in penalties for clean air violations.

The company is in the midst of negotiating a massive mandatory recall with U.S. regulators and potentially faces more than USD18 billion in fines for violations of the federal Clean Air Act.

The company and its executives could also still face separate criminal charges, while a raft of private class-action lawsuits filed by angry VW owners are pending.

The company first acknowledged in September that the cheating software was included in its diesel cars and SUVs sold since the 2009 model year, as well as some recent diesel models sold by the VW-owned Audi and Porsche brands. **AP**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT



Gold ride. Danish Queen Margrethe in her Gold Coach on her way from Amalienborg Palace to Christiansborg Palace for the New Year's gathering in Copenhagen yesterday. The Gold Coach, also called "King Christian VIII's coach", is covered with 24-carat gold leaf and was built by coach maker Henry Fife in 1840.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	65-95 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	70-100 Moderate
Ambient	65-95 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

SYRIAN activists and an official with an ultraconservative rebel group say gunmen have shot and killed the group's commander in the main central province. Labib al-Nahhas of Syria's Ahrar al-Sham Islamic rebel group mourned on his Twitter account yesterday the death of Abu Rateb al-Homsy, the group's leader in Homs province. It was not clear when al-Homsy was killed.



UK The Labour Party has begun the new year at war with itself as veteran left-winger leader Jeremy Corbyn struggles to assert his authority over restive lawmakers. Yesterday, Corbyn moved defense spokeswoman Maria Eagle, who opposed him on nuclear weapons, to another post, and fired two other members of his team who had criticized him. Legislator Jonathan Reynolds later resigned as Labour's railway spokesman, saying he wanted more freedom to speak out.



GERMANY Former New York Philharmonic principal conductor Pierre Boulez, who moved between conducting, composition and teaching over a long career that made him one of the leading figures in modern classical music, has died at age 90 in Baden-Baden. Born in Montbrison, France, Boulez initially studied mathematics as a youth before switching to music and studying at the Paris Conservatory.



HOLLYWOOD 'Spotlight' (pictured), 'Straight Outta Compton' and 'The Martian' were among the 10 feature film nominees announced for the 27th Producers Guild Awards, usually a prelude to the Oscars' nominations. Conspicuously missing were critics favorite 'Carol' and 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens', a wild card thus far in award races.