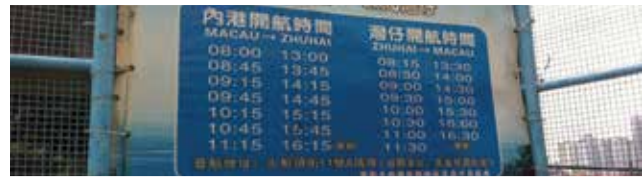




EDIBLE ART SHOWCASED IN TOWN
Edible art is the newest proposal that Parisian artist Dorothée Selz brings to Macau

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WANZAI-INNER HARBOR FERRY CLOSED



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HOME DESIGN WITH STYLE
Along Macau's busy streets and stalls selling traditional dried goods sits a recently opened shop

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WORLD BRIEFS



CHINA As international markets watch anxiously, China is due to release a flood of data today that is likely to show economic growth slowed in the latest quarter but still is among the world's strongest. [More on p8](#)

JORDAN The World Health Organization hopes to eradicate polio in 2016, after containing outbreaks in conflict-ridden Syria, Iraq and Somalia by immunizing millions of children over two years. Christopher Maher, who runs the regional polio eradication program, says there's a chance to "finish polio forever" this year. He says the disease still occurs in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but that the caseload is dropping.

IRAN plans to increase oil production by 500,000 barrels per day now that sanctions have been lifted under a landmark nuclear deal with world powers. Deputy Oil Minister Roknoddin Javadi says Iran is determined to retake its market share, which plunged after the crippling sanctions were imposed in 2012. His comments were posted on the ministry's website yesterday. Iran used to export 2.3 million barrels per day but its crude exports fell to 1 million in 2012. Oil prices have recently plummeted to under USD30 a barrel, a 13-year low.

PAKISTAN A bomb blast targeted paramilitary troops yesterday, killing five soldiers and wounding three in the southwestern city of Quetta, officials said. The bombing occurred on the city's outskirts, said a local police official, Bangul Khan, adding that early indications were that the blast came from a bomb planted near the patrol and detonated by remote control. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

More on backpage

JUDICIARY POLICE

Case closed: no further details on Lai's death

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IN THE WILD

Conservationists to the rescue of Borneo's threatened orangutans

▶ P13

Renato Marques

EDIBLE art is the newest proposal that Parisian artist Dorothée Selz brings to Macau, with the support of Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16 and the Alliance Française of Macau.

Named "Edible Sculpture," this exhibition of art designed to be eaten kicked off last Friday evening, and will be on display until January 24 in the lobby of the hotel.

The 'Edible Sculpture' was built over 56 hours in about one week

"The concept behind this idea is to create a visual thing that you can taste and, above all, that can be shared among all the people," said Dorothée Selz, the creator of this and many other similar artworks around the world.

French artist's edible art showcased in Macau



Dorothée Selz (center) with her "edible work" as background

Measuring 2.3 meters high and 6.8 meters long, the colorful sculpture is covered in sugar – 170 kilos of sweetness shaped into something resembling a "dragon figure," as described by the creator.

Selz said that the structure is meant as a representation of the cultural integration and multiculturalism that she believes is a defining feature of the territory of Macau.

On top of the curvy structure, the word "Poetry" appears written in English, Chinese, Portuguese and French, with the same purpose of promoting the idea of togetherness.

The edible part of the structure is composed of around two thousand bamboo skewers holding fresh fruits from the East and West, as well as dried fruits and gummy candies. Attendees of all ages are invited to taste parts of her edible art, interacting and sharing this "sweet" moment.

This unusual art piece was built over 56 hours in about one week. The exhibition is supported by the Macau Foundation.

Agreement to advance Chinese medicine industry inked

THE Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, was in Beijing last week to witness the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and the Guangdong-Macau Traditional Chinese Medicine Technology Industrial Park Development.

The secretary said that Macau intends to use the ties forged with Lusophone countries to promote the advancement of the region's



A Chinese medicine stall in Macau

traditional Chinese medicine industry.

Leong said that the MOU embodies the advancement toward reinforcing regional cooperation in the TCM field, while offering innovative business opportunities

for firms based in the Chinese medicine park that was established in Hengqin. He added that the MOU would create more favorable conditions for the development of Macau's TCM industry.

The Director of the State Administration of TCM, Mr Wang Guoqiang, hopes that the two entities could play an active role in promoting TCM internationally, leveraging support through the official inclusion of Macau – by the State Council – in the "Belt and Road" initiative.

The movement will facilitate the expansion of TCM in countries and regions involved in "Belt and Road" initiatives.

Meanwhile, Mr Wang said that he expects that the park, which aims to establish a world-class quality control facility, would play an important role in training TCM professionals. It would also serve to advance product and service quality to help diversify Macau's economy. Construction of the park is expected to be completed in the first half of 2017, while works on the building and facilities for quality control and research and development are currently in progress.

GAMING ALERT

Credit Suisse: revenue still down, but growth over Sept

CREDIT Suisse has released a report stating that Macau's gaming revenue for the fourth quarter of 2015 fell by 27 percent year-to-year to MOP54.8 billion.

The data signifies a slight improvement in gaming revenue since the month of September, given that the indicators from that month recorded a 36 percent year-on-year fall.

The research house noted that trends indicate that revenue is shifting more towards the mass-market and further away from the VIP sector. The proportion of gaming revenue that constituted VIP gaming in 2015 fell from 44 percent in the third quarter to 41 percent in the fourth.

Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) is expected to grow faster in the first quarter of 2016 and could reach 1 percent growth quarter-to-quarter – an increase of 3 percent faster than that measured in the last quarter of 2015.

Credit Suisse's report added that the improvement should ease market concern over junket liquidity.

Galaxy Entertainment remains the top pick for Credit Suisse, with a target price of USD35.7 and a rating of "Outperform." Sands China Ltd came in second place with a target price set at USD35.1, which was equally rated as "Outperform."

Social Welfare Bureau revamp

THE new vice-presidents and heads of office of the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) took office yesterday. IAS president Vong Yim Mui said in her speech that she hopes that "under the

slogan 'support citizens in solving their difficulties and building a new life', the IAS staff can continue to cooperate with the institutions of social solidarity in order to raise the professionalism

of Macau's social welfare workers.

The IAS president also said that in order the bureau will strive to promote the development of social services, and provide quality and efficiency for the well-being of the population." The new vice-presidents, Hon Wai and Au Chi Keung, pledged to achieve the goals listed for IAS at the Policy Address presentation.



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PJ: Family refuses to disclose details about Lai Man Wa's death

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) yesterday revealed the content of a document from the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) relating to the death of the former director-general of the Customs Service, Lai Man Wa. "According to the evidence available, Lai Man Wa's death was a suicide case. There is no evidence that her passing is related to criminal activity," the MP statement reads.

PJ received the document on January 5, stating that the "rumors that surrounded the case created some controversy". This in turn prompted the MP prosecutor to agree that more details about Lai Man Wa's death could be publicized with the consent of family members.

The police have contacted the family of the deceased woman to find out if they would agree to the disclosure of information. It has been revealed that the family does not want the details to be made public. The police therefore stated that "it was not authorized to divulge the cause of the suicide."

On the afternoon of October 30, Lai Man Wa was found dead in a public toilet near her home at Ocean Gardens. The police said that they arrived

on the scene after receiving a call from the public toilets. Meanwhile, preparations were made for an impromptu press conference that accounted for Lai's death as a suicide.

The reports from the PJ said that Lai was found with slashes at her neck and wrists, and with her head covered in a plastic bag. A post-mortem found that she had died from asphyxiation, but she was also said to have been carrying drugs and a bloody blade.

Despite an initial report from the Macau Forensic Medicine Department ruling out homicide, many demonstrated their reluctance to accept the findings – instead taking to social media to accuse authorities of a cover-up. Secretary for Se-



Lai Man Wa

curity Wong denied the accusations, arguing that the evidence pointed to suicide.

But the government's response failed to satisfy conspirators and brought about supplementary rumours that the authorities were withholding information from the public – rumours which were in turn made worse by the failure of the initial investigation to produce a motive.

Following criticism of the handling of the case by lawmakers, Wong pledged in November to disclose the suspected motive

behind Lai's death, only if he secured her family's endorsement.

Other critics took a different line and alleged that the expansion of Macau's maritime jurisdiction – a key element in the government's plan for economic diversification – conflicted with gaming interests.

Speculation was aided by the resignation of senior gaming regulator Manuel Neves only days before. This came at a time when the Gaming Inspection Bureau was overseeing a

tightening of junket regulation and audit requirements for the industry.

Others claimed that the former Customs chief had been under investigation by the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC). The timing was, again, unfortunate for the government, as it followed another instance of purported suicide two weeks prior, when CCAC officer Iong Lap Meng allegedly jumped to his death from the Dynasty Plaza building.

Suspicious were heightened when Iong's widow claimed that her husband had been held under investigation by the CCAC around the time of his death, and that she suspected that some individuals in the CCAC were giving false statements. An internal investigation, which some have deemed insufficient, was conducted and completed at the organization on November 7.

The only public reaction to the case by Lai Man Wa's family members happened at the day of her funeral and was witnessed by a Times reporter. Asked if the family felt doubtful about the case, Lai's son shook his head and said: "There isn't much to say." **PB/Staff reporter**

According to the evidence available, Lai Man Wa's death was a suicide case.

MP STATEMENT

THIS year Macau will have two major environmental protection plans – the treatment of waste materials and that of waste cars, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works said in a recent interview with Exmoo News.

"Last year a mountain of waste in Shenzhen collapsed, causing a tragedy. In Macau, we only have one dump site, which is getting higher and higher. I hope that it does not collapse," said Raimundo Arrais do Rosario.

He said that, in 2017, the government hoped to transfer a portion of the good-quality inert waste, already divided into different categories, to dumps in Guangdong province, together with some of the waste cars.

Rosario, who represented Macau in several important posts for 15 years overseas, returned to Macau in December 2014. He is known in the media as the "100 percent secretary" and for his "poker-face" look.

RAIMUNDO DO ROSÁRIO

Transport chief says traffic problem has reached dead end, vows to improve



Raimundo do Rosario

He took on one of the most difficult dossiers in the government. Macau has just some 30 square kilometers of space and 400 km of roads and the number of cars and tourists is increasing every year, he said. Each month more than 600 vehicles and

motorcycles come on the roads, with no restrictions on purchasing, he said.

"I feel the transport problem has reached a dead end," he said. "Even a primary school graduate knows this. There is no way to resolve it." He added that he will do his best

within his five-year term.

This year a new car inspection center in Cotai will open, with higher demands on the quality of vehicles. Those that do not meet standards will be taken off the road, he said.

Rosario runs a department with 3,400 staff but with a workload more than they can cope with, he said. Last year his office received 10,000 letters from the public complaining about delays in processing applications for private development projects and other issues.

He said that the government administrative processes were slow. "This problem is caused by the fact that different departments have their own area of authority. I ask another department for their opi-

nion, it is normally provided within 30 days but some take longer. Each one has its own reasons, such as a heavy workload. To resolve this problem, we all must change the culture and work faster," he said.

He said that the four big problems of his work were "not enough land, not enough time, not enough people and not enough efficiency."

Before his return, he was director of the Macau Economic and Trade Office in Lisbon, the Macau Economic and Trade Office to the European Union in Brussels and the Macau Economic and Trade Office to the World Trade Organisation.

After 15 years living away from the city, he

found many changes – more overcrowding and a higher standard of living. "Everyone is clutching a mobile phone, and all the prettiest model."

During the weekend, he often takes the bus to have a first-hand look of the traffic problems. He likes to take the Number 34 bus from Cotai to the north of the Macau peninsula. Many local people recognize him but – so far – all have been well-mannered. "No-one criticizes me," he said.

Editor's note: MDT will publish from today five interviews with each of the five government secretaries, in partnership with MacauHub and the Chinese newspaper Exmoo. Tomorrow, it will be Lionel Leong's turn, followed by Alexis Tam (Thursday) Sonia Chan (Friday) and Wong Sio Chak (Monday).

CRIME

Man blackmailed repeatedly over naked chat

Renato Marques

A 27-year-old male resident of Macau was revealed as the victim of an extortion scheme that took place over the Internet. According to the information released yesterday during a police press conference, the man met a woman on January 12 over the social network website Facebook and they subsequently started a conversation.

Two days later, the woman suggested that the conversation should move to a Skype video call. The man told the Judiciary Police (PJ) that she fully undressed on the video call and urged him to do the same.

Following a 10-minute "nude" conversation the man received a message with photos of him posing naked during the call. The woman was reportedly demanding the amount of MOP5,000 in return for deleting the

photographs, otherwise she would reveal them to public.

The man promptly paid but that was not enough as a few hours after another message followed demanding an additional MOP3,000, this time, to delete all of the distasteful images captured. Once more the victim complied with the demand.

A third message arrived, this time requesting MOP10,000. Without the financial means to comply with the request, the victim finally filed a complaint and sought help from the authorities. The whereabouts and identity of the woman are not yet known.

In a separate case, two Vietnamese nationals were involved on Sunday in a "knife fight" over a domestic dispute, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) informed reporters at a press conference.

The women, both in their 40s and living in a shared apartment in Macau's nor-

thern district, erupted into an argument after a misunderstanding over some shopping items that one of them had bought minutes before.

The argument became heated leading one of the women to fetch two kitchen knives with blades of around 18 centimeters long. One knife was thrown at the other woman piercing one of her legs, while the second was waved in front of her face, eventually striking her on the forehead.

The victim was able to escape the apartment with the

help of a friend who had witnessed the events. A police officer patrolling the street was alerted and was able to administer help to the injured woman.

The victim was subsequently transported to Macau's public hospital where her injuries, described as non-life-threatening, were treated.

The attacker was taken in custody by the police to be identified. She presented herself to the public prosecutor's office yesterday morning.

SMOKING INSPECTORS ATTACKED

THE HEALTH Bureau has announced that two of their on-duty officers were attacked last Saturday in a restaurant, after asking a smoker to present his ID. The attacker, allegedly the smoker's companion, is currently under arrest

after encouraging the smoker to ignore the officer's instructions. Moreover, he continued to insult and physically assault the inspector. The man who was caught smoking inside the restaurant escaped during the brawl.

AACM holds a seven-day training course



THE Civil Aviation Authority of Macau (AACM) is conducting a seven-day training program targeting those who aspire to become aviation security instructors.

The "ICAO Aviation Security Instructors Course," a small-scale intensive class, has attracted 19 participants from both local and foreign industries, according to AACM.

Participants are required to have a minimum of five years' experience in aviation and operational experience in aviation of no less than two years.

The course is composed of theory lectures that cover topics present in the aviation security instructors' training programs. A series of presentations will also be held during the seven-day training period.

The training course is being conducted from January 12 to 20 at the AACM's office. Trainees have come from aeronautical authorities, airlines and the airports of Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand. Local representatives from the Macau's aviation authorities are also in attendance.

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45 percent of high school students had part-time job

A survey conducted by the General Association of Chinese Students – Macau has revealed that about half of Macau’s high-school students have part-time job experience. Interviewees claim that the main purpose of short-term work is to earn some pocket money quickly.

The study surveyed the students of ten high schools from Macau, yielding 1,055 valid results. Researchers concluded that 45 percent of the students had previous paid working experience, and that this percentage increases accordingly as they progress through school.

Among those who have never taken on part-time jobs, 27 percent said they were afraid of consequent poor school results. Sixteen percent showed no interest in working at all, and another 16 percent claimed that school left them no spare time. Nevertheless, 49 percent of the students who possessed experience admitted to having been introduced to their jobs by their friends or classmates. Notwithstanding, more than 70 percent worked less than ten hours per week.

Interviewees explained that some of the reasons motivating them to seek part-time jobs included: training themselves to be competitive in a career search; enriching their personal life; and having a wider social circle. However, working experience and money always stand atop their list of reasons. **Staff reporter**

Wanzai ferry closed, shipping business becomes harder to run

THE shipping company operating at the Inner Harbor Ferry Terminal has informed its clients that all routes from the ferry to Zhuhai’s Wanzai Port will cease following the closure of the ferry service.

The local ferry terminal, which reportedly served an average of 2,000 people per day, has been closed since Sunday. After being questioned by the Times, the shipping company staff members admitted that they were unsure as to when they will resume operations.

According to official information, there were 14 daily ferries departing to Wanzai between 8 a.m. and 4:15 p.m., with departures to Macau beginning at 8:15 a.m. and ending at 4:30 p.m. The ships departed at almost approximately half-hourly intervals.

A woman from Zhuhai, working as a trade bu-



nesswoman in the area, told the Times that many tourists used to arrive in Macau via the link. “I personally use the Cais De Sampanas Sul because my passport allows me to enter Macau through this one. Local people from Macau seldom pass through here,” she said.

Cais De Sampanas Sul is a ferry station located in the same area, and is usually used by fishermen who travel between Wanzai and Macau.

Several shops and restaurants have expressed little concern about the closure of the ferry.

When questioned whether his business had been affected by the decrease in the number of visitors, Mr Wang joked, “It was never a good business: not in the past, when there were tourists coming out from that building; not now; nor in the future. But I did see more people. That’s it.” Mr Wang added that he always goes to Zhuhai through the border gate

because there is nothing for him to do in Wanzai.

Notwithstanding, a few travelers staying near Praça de Ponte e Horta were surprised by the fact that a pier exists next to them.

Although most interviewees acknowledged they haven’t gone to Wanzai from the ferry terminal, one passerby still recalled: “My relatives sometimes went to that side for seafood restaurants. They have seafood restaurants over there. We would only go there on Sunday, not often though.”

The shipping company is sure that the disruptions will impact the business, and they are currently negotiating with the authorities to mitigate the effects of these plans. A counselor requested that the government come up with further plans to help the traders that will be influenced from the Wanzai Port shutdown.

Staff reporter

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Council accuses immigration authorities

The Council of the Portuguese Communities has accused the immigration department of taking too long to process local ID requests and of being excessively bureaucratic. In a letter sent to the Portuguese Consul, Vitor Sereno, a representative from the advisory body for Lisbon's government policies on immigration and Portuguese communities abroad claimed that some requests for documents violate privacy laws. "[Authorities] have been requesting bank statements in order to verify banking movements and [have been] requesting salaries superior to MOP25,000, a value that we consider extremely high," the letter reads. The council, chaired by lawmaker Pereira Coutinho, says that Vitor Sereno should debate the issues raised in the letter with local authorities.

LIFESTYLE

Commune brings modern design to downtown Macau

ALONG Macau's busy streets and stalls selling traditional dried goods sits a new shop with an extensive showroom of home furniture.

Commune, a Singapore-based furniture design company, opened a Macau branch in September 2015, hoping to inspire locals with pure, natural woods imported from the U.S.

Sunny Chang, the franchise's director of operations, says that Macau's furniture culture is different.

"We have checked similar markets and saw furniture being displayed in factory buildings; shops would stack up furniture for customers' choices. The culture is different," says Chang.

He added that many locals had to purchase



Sunny Chang pictured inside the Macau shop

We want to build a relationship; we're not just about selling furniture. We want people to come and chat over coffee.

SUNNY CHANG

their custom wooden furniture in Hong Kong or mainland China, due to its absence in Macau. Chang says their competitive advantages include the use of solid wood, mainly oak and black walnut, and their work with the Rainforest Alliance to ensure that their use of wood does not affect biodiversity.

Chang told the Times that they were mainly targeting middle-aged affluent executives, but was surprised to find Generation Y's [those born from the early 1980s to the early 2000s] preference for raw materials.

Commune Macau has collaborated with local interior designers to meet consumers' needs. The shop now offers interior design as

part of their sales package.

The director claims that their furniture pieces are exclusive and original creations for Commune.

Commune, composed of five designers from around the world, was founded in 2011 by a Singaporean designer and expanded to China in 2013. It now has over 30 branches, including one in Macau.

Chang, 28, says that they plan to open two more branches in Macau and Hengqin Island.

"In April, we will open another 1,500 square foot store just across the street and in August, we will rent a 2,600 square foot unit in a Hengqin mall," says Chang.

The franchisee expressed his concern over the rental price of units in Macau, saying that furniture variety is limited by the lack of floor space. However, with the upcoming opening of the Hengqin unit, Chang believes it will be a great opportunity for Commune Macau to showcase its products. They will also include a coffee shop as they do in Singapore.

The shop, situated in one of Macau's heritage buildings, aims to go beyond selling furniture and build relationships with customers. There are plans to hold wine classes in Commune's first store, in order to reach out to the community.

Commune Macau's director of operations says that Macau's furniture stores lack the "ambience of home", stating Commune urges customers to sit and use their furniture to get a feel for their products.

"We want to build relationships, we're not just about selling furniture. We want people to come and chat over coffee. That's what we're all about, creating relationships," he added. **Staff reporter**

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China expected to report slower but still strong growth



A salesperson wipes winter clothes hanging for sale at a clothing store in a shopping mall in Beijing

Joe McDonald, Beijing

AS international markets watch anxiously, China is due to release a flood of data today that are likely to show economic growth slowed in the latest quarter but still is among the world's strongest.

BY THE NUMBERS

Private sector forecasters say growth in the world's No. 2 economy at best came in slightly above the previous quarter's 6.9 percent and at worst fell as low as 6.4 percent. That would be less than half 2007's peak of 14.2 percent. But it would be the second-strongest among major countries, surpassed only by India. Growth has fallen steadily over the past five years as the ruling Communist Party tries to steer away from

a worn-out model based on investment and trade to self-sustaining growth driven by domestic consumption and services. For the full year, the International Monetary Fund and private sector forecasters expect 2015 growth to have slowed to 6.8 percent. That would be in line with the ruling party's goal of "about 7 percent." Growth is forecast to slow further this year and next before rebounding toward the end of the decade.

POSITIVE SIGNS

Forecasters say retail sales and other industries likely improved in December, suggesting government spending and repeated interest rate cuts have helped to put a floor under the downturn. Lending growth in December exceeded forecasts. Surveys showed manufactu-

ring activity weaker than forecast, but analysts say it still grew. Investment in factories, housing and other fixed assets also is expected to have ticked up, helped by heavier government spending on public works construction. Nomura analyst Brian Tan expects 4Q growth to be slower than 3Q, mainly due to weaker financial services, but says the "timelier December slew of data should hint that growth is stabilizing."

ANXIETY ABROAD

On edge about the possibility of a global slowdown, foreign financial markets have taken every shudder from China as a sign of an impending slump. Slower Chinese economic growth, and especially the end of the country's frenzied construction boom, has dam-

ped demand for iron ore, copper and other industrial raw materials from Australia, Brazil and other suppliers. Weakness in investment or consumer spending could hurt demand for technology and higher-margin manufactured goods from Europe, the United States and Japan.

STOCK MARKET TURMOIL

The collapse of a Chinese stock price bubble in June fueled fears abroad and raised doubts about Beijing's management skills but had little impact on the rest of the economy. Chinese stocks have little connection to what the ruling party calls the "real economy." The biggest companies on China's two stock exchanges are state-owned, so traders make decisions based on changes in government policy and the availability of credit to finance trading. The flood of money into financial industries as millions of novice investors rushed into stock trading briefly inflated the stock market's contribution to economic growth. It collapsed along with the stock boom but the growth trend in other industries was unchanged. Stock prices rallied in late 2015 after a multibillion-dollar government intervention but have fallen back since late December as Beijing unwinds its emergency measures. AP

European shares lifted by rebound in Chinese markets



EUROPEAN shares got off to a strong start to the week yesterday, helped by a rebound in the wobbly Shanghai Composite index, though other markets in Asia were mostly lower.

KEEPING SCORE: U.S. markets were closed for a public holiday yesterday. But Dow futures were up 0.8 percent and S&P futures gained 0.7 percent, suggesting an improvement in sentiment following Friday's rout on Wall Street.

THE QUOTE: "Nerves are still heavily focused on China as we approach a major economic data dump from China," Angus Nicholson of IG said in a commentary. "However, the calmer waters seen in mainland (Chinese) equities seems to have stemmed some of the sell-off in other regional markets from the initial horror open seen in Australia and Japan."

ASIA'S DAY: Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 1.1 percent to 16,955.57 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.5 percent to 19,237.45. The Shanghai Composite rebounded from early losses, gaining 0.4 percent to 2,913.84 and South Korea's Kospi was nearly unchanged at 1,878.45. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.7 percent to 4,858.70. Shares in Taiwan were higher but markets in New Zealand and Southeast Asia declined.

ENERGY: The nuclear deal between Iran, the U.S. and five other world powers took effect over the weekend, ending a European oil embargo on the world's seventh-largest oil producer. That is reinforcing expectations that prices will remain weak as supply overwhelms demand. Benchmark U.S. crude was down 39 cents to \$29.03 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell USD1.78 on Friday to \$29.42 a barrel. Brent crude, a benchmark for international oils, fell 54 cents to \$28.39 per barrel. It fell \$1.94 to \$28.94 in London on Friday.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 117.33 yen from 117.00 yen. The euro fell to \$1.0883 from \$1.0913. AP

corporate bits

VENETIAN'S CNY: "SEASONS OF PROSPERITY"



The Venetian Macau's "Season of Prosperity" will hold a series of festivities and events at its outdoor lagoon

area from February 2 to 22 to welcome the Year of the Monkey.

3D light and sound, spec-

tacular illusion paintings, a CNY-themed mini model exhibition showcasing traditional festive activities, along with hand-decorated monkey sculptures will be shown to usher in the Chinese New Year.

To contribute to the local creative industries, "Creative Creatures - Art and the Chinese Zodiac" will return to 2016 in support of local project "Anno Simius." The project offers visitors the chance to see a total of 25 monkey sculptures, hand-decorated by 25 local artists. Thirteen sculptures will be shown at the outdoor lagoon area of The Venetian while 12 others, which will be shown from February 8 until March 8, will be displayed at Sands Macau and in the city's local attractions.

CEM ANNOUNCES LUCKY DRAW WINNERS



CEM has revealed the winners of its Energizing Tour fourth-quarter lucky draw last week, where a total of ten winners received cash coupons amounting

to MOP2,000, MOP500 and MOP300, as prizes.

The CEM Energizing Tour was first launched in 2009. It aims to provide Macau citizens with a better unders-

tanding of CEM major operations and services, and a better understanding of the local power generation process. The tour has attracted more than 27,000 visitors to the Coloane Power Station.

To urge the visitors to provide feedback on the Tour, CEM has launched a lucky draw with an electrical appliances coupon of MOP2,000 being offered to one lucky winner every quarter. The best comments were selected from all the feedback obtained, and those who wrote these comments can receive a MOP300 supermarket coupon. In addition, five of the new Facebook fans who "liked" the page in 2015 each received MOP500 grocery vouchers.

Guinea-Bissau starts to prepare China-CPLP meeting

THE technical secretariat that will prepare the meeting of businesspeople from China and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), taking place on April 9 and 10 in Bissau, was sworn in over the weekend at a ceremony held in the Guinean capital.

The meeting aims to bring together the business communities of China, the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) and the Portuguese-speaking countries for their representatives to discuss issues of mutual interest and establish business contacts.

The government of Guinea-Bissau hopes that the country will become a platform and a window of opportunity for the countries represented at the Macau Forum to diversify their traditional investment markets, with a focus on the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS).

"This is the first time since the creation of the Macau Forum, that Bissau is hosting a business meeting with Portuguese-speaking countries," said the Secretary of State.

Official delegations and businesspeople from Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), China, Guinea-Bissau, Macau, Mozambique, Portugal and Timor Leste (East Timor) will attend the meeting in Bissau. **MDT/Macauhub**

China considers partnership in Mozambique to manufacture buses

Representatives of China's Ministry of Trade and the Xiamen Golden Dragon Bus Co. were in Maputo last week to analyze the possibility of setting up a partnership in public transport, according to Mozambican daily newspaper Notícias.

On Friday, the members of the delegation visited the Matchedje Motor car assembly plant, in the town of Machava, Maputo province to get acquainted with the unit, whose capacity could be enhanced to produce even more buses in the country.

Noticias also wrote that the Xiamen Golden Dragon Bus Co., a subsidiary of the King Long Group, one of the largest bus ma-



ufacturers in China, will focus the potential partnership in Mozambique

on providing technical support to Matchedje Motor Ltd in the bus segment.

The managing director, Sandra Song, said the company was currently operating at a reduced level as it is building a 590-hectare industrial park in Maluana, in Maputo province. The project involves an increase in production to 100,000 vehicles per year by 2017, following which there will be a new expansion phase to about 500,000 vehicles.

The Matchedje Motor project, established just over four years ago, is the result of an investment by the China Tong Jian Investment Co. Ltd, and at this initial stage is operating with two assembly lines, a painting area and another area for inspections. **MDT/Macauhub**

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2016 Macau 香港中文大學藝術系系友作品展

Exposição de Arte da Associação dos Antigos Alunos do Departamento de Belas Artes da Universidade Chinesa de Hong Kong

二零一六澳門

Opening Ceremony
20 January 2016 (Wednesday) 18:30

Duration of the Exhibition
18 January 2016 until 22 February 2016

Opening Hours
Everyday from 12:00 to 20:00
Monday from 15:00 to 20:00

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Chinese police officers gather near the Beijing No. 2 People's Intermediate Court where human rights lawyer Pu Zhiqiang was sentenced last month

Foreign jurists call for release of detained Chinese lawyers

TWENTY prominent lawyers and jurists from Europe, North America, Australia and Pakistan yesterday urged Chinese President Xi Jinping to release a dozen Chinese lawyers and legal assistants held in detention in an open letter published in the British newspaper *The Guardian*.

In the letter, the legal professionals, predominantly from Western countries, expressed worries that the Chinese lawyers have been denied legal counsel since their July detention.

They also said they feared that without legal representation the Chinese lawyers and legal assistants could be "at high risk of torture or other cruel and inhumane treatments."

China has arrested six rights lawyers and legal

■ The lawyers have sought to use China's own laws to hold officials accountable ... but Beijing says they are trying to sabotage the judicial system

assistants on suspicion of state subversion, and three more on suspicion of inciting state subversion. One legal assistant was arrested on suspicion of helping destroy evidence. Hong

Kong-based China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group said several more lawyers remain missing.

The lawyers have sought to use China's own laws to hold officials accountable or to protect citizens' rights, but Beijing says they are trying to sabotage the judicial system with improper activism.

Since July, more than 300 lawyers, legal assistants, staff members of law firms, and social activists have been detained and interrogated.

Most have been released, but some of the most prominent rights lawyers have been arrested, including Wang Yu, who defended one of the five women who became known as the "Feminist Five." They were detained last March after they planned to hand out

flyers against sexual harassment in several Chinese cities in a case that drew international scrutiny.

The lawyers are known to have taken up some of the most contentious cases in China, often involving petitioners who have grievances with local governments, practitioners of the banned spiritual group Falun Gong, or political dissidents.

State media say the lawyers have colluded with social activists and used social media to put undue pressures on local courts. The Ministry of Public Security called them a "major criminal gang."

Their arrests have drawn international attention, as shown by the latest open letter signed by heads of bar associations, legal scholars, and lawyers. **AP**

Tata Steel UK announces layoffs amid cheap Chinese imports

MANUFACTURER Tata Steel will cut 1,050 jobs in Britain as part of cost-savings to compete against cheap Chinese imports.

The layoffs, largely in Wales, come just months after an earlier round of cuts, including 1,200 slashed by Tata in October.

Karl Koehler, chief executive of Tata Steel's European operations, says the industry needs the European Commission to accelerate its response to unfairly traded imports "and increase the robustness of its actions."

The British government has been under pressure to raise the issue of China selling steel at a loss on world markets. The oversupply of steel has led to lower prices, and manufacturers want anti-dumping duties to be imposed.

Tata said that in the past two years, imports of steel plate from China have quadrupled. **AP**

Police arrest woman in road rage killing of Chinese student

POLICE have made an arrest in connection with the deadly Arizona road rage shooting of a student visiting from China.

Tempe police Lt. Michael Pooley said yesterday that 32-year-old Holly Davis has been booked on three charges including first-degree murder.

According to police, Davis' vehicle was involved in a collision at a busy intersection around 2:40 p.m. Saturday. Davis allegedly got out of her car and fired several shots into the other vehicle, hitting Yue Jiang several times.

Pooley says Jiang lost control, crashing her vehicle into another car carrying a family of five. The 19-year-old woman was taken to a hospital where she died.

The family did not suffer serious injuries. Davis fled the scene but was later located.

Police say Jiang was a university student. **AP**

Jim Gomez, Manila

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Philippine plane warned by 'Chinese navy' in disputed waters

PHILIPPINE officials said yesterday they received two intimidating radio warnings identified as from the Chinese navy when they flew a Cessna plane close to a Chinese-constructed island in the South China Sea.

Eric Apolonio said the incident happened Jan. 7 when he and other personnel of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines flew to a Philippine-occupied island for an engineering survey for the installation of civil aviation safety equipment on the island.

The island, which the Philippines calls Pag-asa and is home to a small fishing community and Filipino troops, is close to Subi Reef, one of seven reefs in the disputed Spratly archipelago which China has transformed into islands in the last two years using dredged sand.

Chinese officials say they have completed the island building and are now constructing buildings and runways to ensure safe civilian sea travel. They have acknowledged, though, that the islands could also be used militarily, adding that they have the right to build on what they say is Chinese territory.

The United States and governments with rival claims with China in the disputed region, including the Philippines and Vietnam, have expressed alarm over the Chinese construction, saying it raises tensions and threatens regional stability and could violate freedom of navigation and overflight.

As their Cessna approached



A China Southern Airlines jetliner lands at the airfield on Fiery Cross Reef

Pag-asa to land, Apolonio said a message was received over an emergency radio channel warning: "Foreign military aircraft, this is the Chinese navy. You are threatening the security of our station."

The Filipino pilots ignored the warning and continued with the trip since they were flying a civilian plane over what Apolonio said was Philippine territory. After finishing the survey on Pag-asa, known internatio-

nally as Thitu island, they left in the plane and later received the same warning message, he said.

Asked if they felt threatened, Apolonio said they were apprehensive because "you'll never know, we can be fired upon."

Mayor Eugenio Bito-onon, the leader of the community on Pag-asa who flew with Apolonio's team, said the radio warnings were an act of intimidat-

ion and illustrated the threat to freedom of flight in the region. He said other civilian and military planes have also been shoed away by the Chinese in the region.

Despite the incident, Apolonio said the government will proceed with plans to install the aviation equipment, which is required by the International Civil Aviation Organization to help ensure the safety of commercial flights. Called the Au-

■ A message was received over an emergency radio channel warning: 'This is the Chinese navy. You are threatening the security of our station'

tomatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast, the equipment helps aircraft determine their positions via satellite navigation and enables them to be tracked.

British Ambassador to Manila Asif Ahmad said Monday that his government would oppose any move that restricts freedom of navigation and overflight in the disputed waters.

"If a British aircraft, civilian or military, was intercepted and not allowed to fly over a space which we regard as international, we will simply ignore it," he told reporters. AP

SHENZHEN

3 more arrested for fatal landslide

THREE more suspects implicated in the collapse of a construction waste pile that killed 69 people in Shenzhen last month were arrested yesterday, according to the local procuratorate.

The suspects, who were not identified, were accused of failing to ensure safety management, which eventually led to the major accident, according to a statement from Bao'an District Procuratorate.

So far 20 people have been arrested over the incident on Dec. 20.

Meanwhile, 12 other suspects are being investigated by local prosecutors for abuse of power and dereliction of duty, the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) said.

The suspects include Deng Zhixiong, deputy director of Shenzhen Guangming New District Urban Management Bureau; Zeng Keting, deputy director of the Municipal Service Center; and Zheng Cunhui, engineer with Shenzhen Water and Soil Conservation Supervision and Monitoring Station, according to the statement.



A total of 69 bodies have been recovered as of Friday, another eight people are still unaccounted for, the rescue headquarters said.

The incident was the result of work safety mismanagement rather than geological causes, according to a State Council investigation. Xinhua

Offshore yuan gains as Beijing steps up defense of its currency

THE offshore yuan strengthened, building on its biggest weekly gain since October, and the cost of borrowing the currency climbed in Hong Kong after China stepped up efforts to curb bearish bets on the exchange rate.

The central bank said it will impose reserve-requirement ratios on yuan deposited onshore by overseas financial institutions from Jan. 25, without saying what level would be used. The ratios will be the same as are applied to mainland banks, currently 17.5 percent for major lenders, according to people familiar with the matter. The move will lock up at least 220 billion yuan (USD33.4 billion) of funds, according to estimates from Guotai Junan Securities Co. and



Haitong Securities Co.

"What we're seeing is China trying to cut liquidity in the offshore market by making it more expensive for offshore banks to channel their yuan there," said Irene Cheung, a currency strategist at Australia & New Zealand Banking

Group Ltd. in Singapore. "Basically it's a continuation of keeping liquidity in the offshore market tight, which will lead to higher funding costs and prevent speculators from shorting the yuan."

The yuan traded in Hong Kong rose 0.38 percent to 6.5888 a dollar as of 6:59 p.m. local time yesterday, after gaining 1.05 percent last week, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. It strengthened 0.08 percent to 6.5790 in onshore trading in Shanghai as the People's Bank of China raised its daily reference rate by 0.07 percent, the most in four weeks. The one-week Hong Kong interbank offered rate for loans climbed 370 basis points to 11.9 percent yesterday. Bloomberg

AFGHANISTAN

Latest round of four-country talks to end war begin

Lynne O'Donnell, Kabul

REPRESENTATIVES of four countries gathered amid tight security in the Afghan capital Kabul yesterday for a second round of talks aimed at bringing an end to Afghanistan's 15-year war with the Taliban by charting a road map to peace.

Senior officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States would meet for one day, a week after a first round of discussions in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, said Shekib Mostaghni, the Afghan Foreign Ministry's spokesman.

Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani opened the meeting at the Presidential Palace in the center of the capital calling on the Taliban to "accept the government's call for peace through dialogue."

"There isn't a single Afghan family that hasn't been affected by the daily acts of brutal and deadly terrorism carried out across our cities, towns, and villages," Rabbani said in the televised speech.

"I take this opportunity and call on all Taliban groups to accept our call for peace through dialogue, and to come to the table for talks so that we can resolve all differences politically and ensure the rightful and just desire of the Afghan people for lasting peace," he said.



Afghan Foreign Minister, Salahuddin Rabbani, center, starts the meeting to discuss a road map for ending the war with the Taliban at the Presidential Palace in Kabul, Afghanistan

The meeting — which does not include Taliban representatives — is part of a three-step process, said Abdul Hakim Mujahid of Kabul's High Peace Council, set up by former President Hamid Karzai to bring about an end to the war. Mujahid also served in the Taliban's 1996-2001 administration.

"The first step is to formulate a roadmap, the second is to invite the armed opposition to the negotiating table and the last step is the implementation of the peace plan," Mujahid told The Associated Press.

Analysts have said it will be months before even the second stage — bringing the Taliban into direct dialogue with Kabul —

is reached. Meanwhile, the insurgents are stepping up their war against Kabul, as Afghan forces fight largely without the support of international troops after the U.S. and NATO combat mission drawdown at the end of 2014. This is seen as an attempt to boost legitimacy on the battlefield so the Taliban can enter any peace talks from a position of strength.

Independent analyst Haroun Mir said the talks also aimed to build trust between Afghanistan and Pakistan as "President Ghani has said first peace with Pakistan and then the Taliban."

After spending much of the first year of his presidency attempting to mend fences with

Pakistan and cajole Islamabad into ending its alleged support for the Taliban in cities close to the Afghan border, Ghani sent bilateral relations into a chill after a series of deadly attacks in Kabul that he blamed on Pakistani-sponsored insurgent groups. Pakistan has denied accusations that it supports the Taliban on its soil.

Mostaghni said the same people were gathered in Kabul as in Islamabad to discuss the roadmap, "focusing on peace negotiations and concluding the agenda on which to move forward."

They are Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Karzai, U.S. envoy to Afghanis-

tan and Pakistan Richard G. Olson, his Chinese counterpart Deng Xijun and Pakistani Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry. Sartaj Aziz, a senior foreign policy adviser to Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Pentagon's senior envoy to Pakistan, Lt. Gen. Anthony Rock, were also present.

The talks revive a process that began in July with the first and so far only official meeting between representatives of Kabul and the Taliban sponsored by the Pakistanis. A second round was cancelled after the Afghan government announced that the Taliban's founder and leader Mullah Mohammad Omar had been dead since early 2013, and the militant group had been secretly run by his deputy, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor. Once the lie was revealed, the Taliban split into factions and it remains unclear who will represent the insurgency if and when a dialogue does begin.

An official in Kabul from one of the countries involved in the talks said that another two rounds of these "preparatory meetings" were likely to take place as they worked out the details of a future dialogue.

"There are different opinions about the methodologies and approaches in resuming these talks," he said. The roadmap would include "who do they want to talk to, on what timetable, what incentives are to be offered, and what kind of action will be taken with those people who want to talk and those who do not want to talk," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak with the media on the issue. **AP**

KOREAS

Seoul: North has sent one million propaganda leaflets

NORTH Korea has launched an estimated one million propaganda leaflets by balloon into South Korea amid increased tension between the rivals following the North's recent nuclear test, Seoul officials said yesterday.

A Cold War-style standoff has flared since North Korea's claim on Jan. 6 that it tested a hydrogen bomb. South Korea resumed blasting anti-North propaganda broadcasts and K-pop songs from border loudspeakers. North Korea quickly responded by restarting its own border broadcasts and floating the balloons over the border carrying anti-South leaflets, according to Seoul officials.



Members of South Korean conservative group look at the image of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and North Korean flags during a rally denouncing North Korea, in Paju

Seoul's Defense Ministry said the North's military has been sending the balloons on a near-daily basis. Spokesman Kim Min-seok said the leaflets have reached Seoul in ad-

dition to areas close to the border.

Such leafleting by the North is rare, as the two Koreas officially stopped psychological warfare as part of tension-reduction

measures in 2004. South Korean activists have still occasionally sent propaganda balloons toward North Korea, triggering angry responses from the North.

South Korean officials believe their broadcasts will sting in the rigidly controlled, authoritarian country by demoralizing frontline troops and residents. There are doubts in Seoul that the North Korean leaflets will have any impact on the public in more affluent South Korea.

Leaflets discovered at a South Korean border town contained cartoon images showing South Korean President Park Geun-hye wearing a bikini and falling headfirst

into a slop bucket. The leaflets referred to her as "human filth." It is not the first time North Korea has lashed out at Park, the South's first female president, in a sexist or derogatory manner. It has previously referred to her as a prostitute.

Many foreign governments and analysts remain highly skeptical about the H-bomb claim, but whatever the North detonated underground will likely push the country closer toward a fully functional nuclear arsenal, which it is still not thought to have. The North previously conducted atomic bomb tests in 2006, 2009 and 2013.

South Korea, the U.S. and other countries are

pushing hard to get North Korea punished over the bomb test. Soon after the test, diplomats at a U.N. Security Council pledged to swiftly pursue new sanctions on the North. But it's unclear whether China, the North's last major ally and a veto-wielding permanent member of the Security Council, would cooperate on any tough sanctions that could force a change in the North.

The two Koreas share the world's most heavily fortified border since their war in the early 1950s ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty. About 28,500 American troops are deployed in South Korea as deterrence against North Korea. **AP**

Dita Alangkara, Sungai Mangkutub

INDONESIA

Rescuing Borneo's threatened orangutans

IN a dense strip of peat swamp jungle along the banks of Mangkutub River in the heart of Borneo, a conservationist aims his tranquilizer rifle at an orangutan high in a tree and fires two darts.

The giant, red-haired primate slides down the tree on its own and soon loses consciousness on the jungle floor.

A team of ten rescuers from the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation huddle around the adult male and perform a brief medical examination — checking temperature, teeth to determine rough age, taking a blood sample and inserting a chip under its skin — before preparing to transport the orangutan to a release site about 80 kilometers away, where they believe it will have more space to roam and be less threatened by forest fires.

Forest fires, often set illegally to clear land, have been an annual problem in Indonesia since the mid-1990s, but last year's was the worst in nearly 20 years, when blazes spread across 2.1 million hectares. They killed 21 people, damaged crops and caused respiratory problems for more than half a million.

The fires also encroached on the habitat of orangutans in central Borneo, forcing them to move closer to river banks, in some places along a strip of

AP PHOTO



Conservationists of the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation release a rescued orangutan at a forest in Sungai Mantangai, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

forest as narrow as 30 meters near the Mangkutub River. The population of the big apes got so crowded that experts worried they would starve and get

into conflicts with people living nearby.

"Recent forest fires have made it difficult for orangutans to find food and this is very dangerous

for them," said Ahmad Sayoko, coordinator of rescue and release mission.

Most rescued orangutans were found in bad condition, appa-

rently starving and some with cataracts. One had multiple air rifle pellets in its head and leg, a sign of conflict with humans.

Southeast Asia's Sumatra and Borneo islands are the orangutans' last homes on Earth, and environmentalists warn that the estimated 60,000 animals remaining could disappear from the wild within the next decade if steps aren't taken to protect them. Wild orangutans are also threatened by poaching and illegal logging.

"We have to rescue and relocate them as soon as possible or they could lose their lives," said Kissar Odom, who works for the foundation. During the team's first operation in November, they rescued and relocated 39 orangutans, he said.

On this, the team's second operation, rescuers have spotted an orangutan nearly every ten minutes as they ride along in the boat, a sign that the area along the river has a higher population density than is healthy.

Team members carried the large tranquilized orangutan through a dense swamp and put it in a cage, which was then loaded on a waiting boat to be taken to the release site.

They hope to rescue two or three of the great apes each day, said Sayoko.

"We are determined to continue this operation until the last orangutan along Mangkutub River is safely relocated," he said. **AP**

NEW ZEALAND

All 60 aboard tourist boat rescued from fire

Nick Perry, Wellington

ALL 60 people forced overboard after their tourist boat caught fire yesterday off the coast of New Zealand have been rescued, according to authorities.

Police spokeswoman Kim Perks said the fire aboard the vessel "Pee-Jay" broke out as it was returning from White Island to the town of Whakatane.

She said all 53 passengers and seven crew members were forced overboard to escape the fire and smoke.

She said one passenger and one crew member were taken to a local hospital after suffering from minor injuries and smoke inhalation.

Perks said the boat was about 1 kilometer from shore when authorities were first notified of the

AP PHOTO



People stand on the shoreline as a tourist boat carrying 60 people burns out at sea off the coast of Whakatane, New Zealand

incident, and they called on nearby boats to assist.

She said the PeeJay crew then sent a mayday to say they were abandoning ship.

Perks said four other private vessels and the

New Zealand Coastguard were able to get to the scene quickly and rescue everybody. She said the PeeJay later sank.

White Island, 50 kilometers off the North

Island coast, is volcanically active and popular with tourists.

White Island Tours, which operated the tourist boat, was not immediately available for comment.

Whakatane resident Roger White told The Associated Press it was raining at the time of the incident but he could see some of what unfolded from his home.

He said he saw some light smoke coming from the front of the vessel which then got heavier. After about 10 minutes, he said, the cabin burst into flames and fire quickly engulfed the ship.

He said it appeared some evacuated onto two small dinghies while he could see the figures of others still on board as the flames grew larger. He said it was hard to make out but believes those people must have then leaped into the water.

White said plenty of boats arrived quickly to help out, including a fishing boat and some charter boats, which assisted the Coastguard in the rescue. **AP**

BANGLADESH

Five radical Islamists jailed in Bangladesh over 2005 blasts

A court in Bangladesh sentenced five alleged radical Islamists to 10 years in jail yesterday after finding them guilty of carrying out a series of explosions in 2005 to demand Shariah law in the Muslim-majority nation.

Police Inspector Mominul Islam said the court in Rangamati district in southeastern Bangladesh delivered the sentences to the members of the banned Jumatul Mujahedeen Bangladesh group. One defendant was acquitted because the charges against were not proven, he said.

The group is accused of exploding hundreds of homemade bombs across the country almost simultaneously in August 2005 to

press their campaign for Shariah law in a country where the legal system is based on British common law.

Later in 2005, the group launched attacks on police, courts and individuals that left more than two dozen people dead. Six leaders of the group accused of involvement in the attacks were hanged in 2007.

Authorities say the group has regrouped in recent months after a number of attacks left several people, including two foreigners, dead in 2015.

The group has also been accused of attacking minority Shiite and Ahmadiya groups.

Dozens of alleged members have been arrested in recent months in connection with the 2015 attacks. **AP**

Uneasy times: What to look out for at Davos this year

Carlo Piovano, London

EXTREMIST attacks, plunging markets, and the break-neck pace of technological innovation. The world is beset by uncertainties as 2,500 business executives, political leaders and activists gather in the Swiss Alpine town of Davos this week.

The meetings can lead to corporate deals and diplomatic dialogue. Last year, Ukraine struck an international bailout deal in Davos.

The annual gathering organized by the World Economic Forum is mainly a business event but it has grown over the years to attract world leaders, celebrities, Nobel prize winners and star academics.

This year's meeting is officially about how to harness technological change. In practice, it will be abuzz with discussion about the multitude of risks facing government and business leaders.

Here's a look at what's likely to dominate the meetings.

CHINA. The future of China



Swiss Federal President Johann Schneider-Amman (3rd left) welcomes US Vice-President Joe Biden (3rd right) at the airport in Zurich-Kloten, Switzerland

has become synonymous with the fate of the global economy and financial markets. Concerns about Beijing's ability to handle a slowdown in the world's second-largest economy have caused stocks to plunge this year. The big risk is that China's decline might become disorderly and hammer business activity or trigger a financial crisis. The country is a huge consumer of raw materials and energy from states like Brazil, Australia, and Russia. Its outside industrial sector buys machi-

nery from the West and makes and exports consumer goods at a low cost. And the growing middle class has become a key market for car makers and luxury goods companies.

Key people to watch: Jack Ma, the head of Chinese retail giant Alibaba, International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde, and Fang Xinghai, representative of China's financial market regulator.

SECURITY. The threat of extremist attacks of the kind that have hit Paris, Jakarta and

Istanbul will be among the top issues, particularly for the political leaders, who will have the opportunity to hold multiple closed-door meetings with their counterparts. The international campaign to fight the Islamic State group has seen several Western countries and Russia bomb Syria and Iraq. The conflict has triggered a mass migration of people into Europe and inflamed tensions between Middle Eastern powers Saudi Arabia and Iran. This month's nuclear test by North Korea will also be a topic of discussion — particularly after the World Economic Forum canceled its invitation to the country's delegation over the incident.

Key people: U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

OIL. The dramatic slide in energy prices is shaking up companies and economies. While making fuel cheaper for consumers and businesses, the drop in

oil prices is also leading to thousands of job cuts in the energy sector and financial instability and poverty in oil-exporting countries like Russia and Venezuela. And world powers' agreement this weekend to lift sanctions on Iran will see the country start pumping millions of barrels of oil into the already oversupplied market, as well as a rush to sign business deals with the country.

Key people: Iran Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, Saudi Finance Minister Ibrahim Abdul Aziz Al Assaf, Shell CEO Ben van Beurden, Iraq Prime Minister Haidar Al Abadi.

TECHNOLOGY. This year's meeting is officially focused on how "the fourth industrial revolution" will change every aspect of society, from health to business and travel. Among the most immediate concerns is how to protect companies and governments from cyberattacks as business increasingly goes digital. But participants will also be keen to discuss opportunities created by growing trends such as 3D printing, driverless cars, robotics and new biotechnologies.

Key people: Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Google parent company Alphabet, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, and Airbnb co-founder Nathan Blecharczyk. **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

Strict No-Show/Late Cancellation policy applies for this event
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VATICAN

Princess charms pope at Monaco visit



Princess Charlene of Monaco walks past Swiss guards as she arrives with Prince Albert II of Monaco to attend a private audience with Pope Francis

PRINCESS Charlene has seemingly charmed Pope Francis during a private call on the pontiff at the Vatican along with her husband, Prince Albert II of Monaco.

Francis was smiling as Charlene knelt before him, grasped the pope's right hand and kissed it Monday.

Both the princess and the pope wore white. Charlene wore a simple, elegantly tailored off-white coat, white gloves and beige high-heeled pumps while Francis wore his usual gown.

The couple didn't bring their 13-month old twins, Gabriella and Jacques, but Francis said: "I will pray especially for your children."

Francis chatted for 20 minutes with the couple on a busy morning that included meetings with a Lutheran delegation from Finland and with the head of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde.

FRANCE

President Hollande declares economic emergency

FRENCH President Francois Hollande pledged yesterday to redefine France's business model and declared what he called "a state of economic and social emergency," unveiling a 2-billion-euro (USD2.2 billion) plan to revive hiring and catch up with a fast-moving world economy.

The measures he proposed, however, are relatively modest, and he said they would not "put into question" the 35-hour workweek. With his country under a state of emergency since extremist attacks in November, Hollande did not seek to assume any new emergency powers over the economy.

In an annual speech to business leaders, Hollande laid out plans for training half a million jobless workers, greater use of



French President Francois Hollande delivers his speech as he presents his New Year greetings to Employment and Unions forces at the Economic, Social and Environmental Council in Paris

apprenticeships, and aid for companies that hire young workers.

Hollande's Socialist government has struggled to boost long-stagnant French growth or reduce chronic

unemployment, which has been around 10 percent for years. His chances of winning a potential second term may hinge on whether jobs pick up before next year's presidential vote.

Hollande stressed the urgency of updating France's labor-friendly business model in an increasingly border-free, online economy. The measures included a loosening of France's rigid working time rules, and a bonus of 2,000 euros to small businesses that hire young people.

He stressed the need to integrate youth from France's troubled suburbs, including minorities who face job discrimination, into the global economy. High unemployment in France's North African and African communities is seen as one of the factors driving some youths to violent extremism or the drug trade.

Some measures will be included in draft economic reform laws the government is presenting to parliament in the coming weeks. AP

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what's ON


THE SKY OF THE INSIDE
 – XIAO YAWEN ARTWORK EXHIBITION

TIME: 10:30am-6:30pm

(Closed on Mondays and public holidays)

UNTIL: January 31, 2016

VENUE: Calçada da Igreja de S.Lázaro, 10, Macau

ADMISSION: free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 4582

THE MASTERY OF SHIPBUILDING
 – FISHING JUNK MODELS BY WAN CHUN

TIME: 10am-6pm

(Closed on Sundays and public holidays)

UNTIL: April 9, 2016

VENUE: Gallery of the Historical Archives of Macau,

Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida

Nº 91 - 93, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2859 2919

ONE CENTURY OF AUSTRIAN ART 1860-1960

TIME: 10am-7pm

(no admittance after 6:30 pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: April 3, 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

INWARD GAZES

– FOUR ARTISTS IN PERFORMANCE

TIME: 10am-8pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: February 14, 2016

VENUE: Old Court Building,

Avenida da Praia Grande, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

SHINING CLEAN – EXHIBITION OF YONGLE
PORCELAIN EXCAVATED FROM ZHUSHAN OF THE
JINGDEZHEN OFFICIAL KILN AND MUSEUM

TIME: 9am-9pm

UNTIL: March 13, 2016

VENUE: Temporary Exhibitions Gallery of the Civic

and Municipal Affairs Bureau ORGANIZER: Civic and

Municipal Affairs Bureau, Cultural Affairs Bureau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4100 / 2882 7103

“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

Offbeat

UK POLICE SEEK BURGLAR WHO STOLE
USD21,500 IN 1-POUND COINS

British police are seeking a burglar who may have a heavy conscience – or pockets – after stealing 15,000 pounds (USD21,500) in 1-pound (\$1.43) coins.

Greater Manchester Police said last week that three houses in a street in Ashton-Under-Lyne, northwest England were robbed on Jan. 1. The culprits stole designer handbags, jewelry, a Range Rover and the trove of coins.

It wasn't clear why the coins were kept in the house. Constable Dinesh Mistry said the haul weighed “the same as two average-sized women, or almost 10 cases of wine.”

He said police have asked local businesses to keep an eye out for a large number of pound coins. He said “it is hard to miss 15,000 pounds in pound coins so we believe someone must know something about this crime.”

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
16:10	Criminal Minds S.7
17:40	Trail of Lies (Repeated)
18:30	TDM Sport (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:40	Non-Daily Port. News
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:00	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

14 JAN - 20 JAN



THE 5H WAVE

ROOM 1

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: J Blakeson

Starring: Chloë Grace Moretz, Nick Robinson,

Maika Monroe

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 112min



STEVE JOBS

ROOM 2

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Danny Boyle

Starring: Michael Fassbender, Kate Winslet,

Seth Rogene

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 127min

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

IP MAN 3

ROOM 3

7.30 pm

Director: Wilson Yip Wai Shun

Starring: Donnie Yen, Lynn Xiong, Max Zhang

Language: Cantonese (English/Cantonese)

Duration: 110min

MACAU TOWER

14 JAN - 10 FEB

THE 5H WAVE

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: J Blakeson

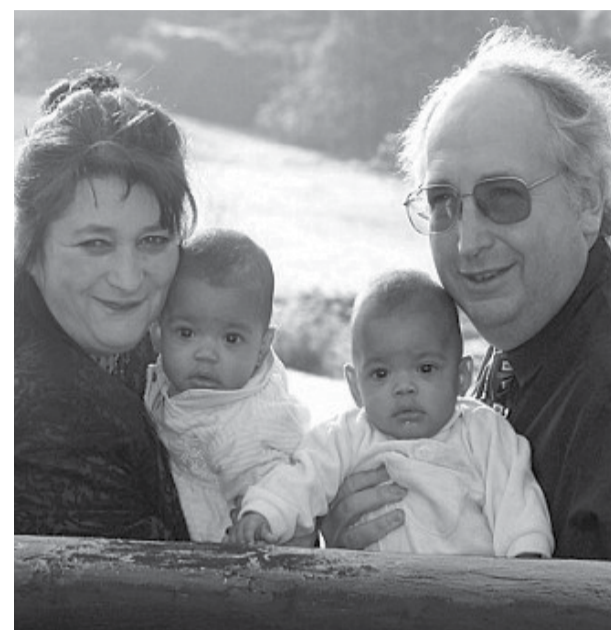
Starring: Chloë Grace Moretz, Nick Robinson,

Maika Monroe

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 112min

this day in history


2001 ‘INTERNET TWINS’
TAKEN INTO CARE

The American twin girls at the centre of an internet adoption scandal have been seized from a hotel in north Wales and taken into care.

The girls were staying with British couple Alan and Judith Kilshaw who say they paid £8,000 to adopt the girls over the internet. The Kilshaws now plan to fight for custody of the babies through the courts.

Belinda and Kymberley, who are six-months-old, have been the subject of a tug of love between two would-be sets of adoptive parents, on both sides of the Atlantic.

The scandal first erupted when American couple Vickie and Richard Allen complained the twins were taken from them as they were finalising an internet deal to adopt the girls for £4,000.

After two months caring for the twins at their home in California, the Allens say the girls' natural mother asked to say one last goodbye and snatched them back.

Social services were alerted once the babies arrived in Britain.

They applied for an emergency protection order and last night, social services workers and police officers went to the Beaufort Park Hotel in Mold where the girls have been staying with the Kilshaws.

Flintshire social services say the girls have been taken into care for their own safety.

Judith Kilshaw said: “I thought if there was a problem it would be dealt with sensitively.

“They would come at a reasonable time, talk to me and Alan and say this is what we are thinking of doing.”

Gloria Allred, legal adviser for the girls' natural mother, Tranda Wecker, says she just wants what is best for the twins.

Richard and Vickie Allen say they are praying for the twins' return - and they have set up a shrine to them in their home.

Mr Allen has appealed to the girls' natural mother not to go through the courts.

He said: “I am asking as a human being to please send me my babies back.”

The case will go to the High Court next week.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The case of the internet adoption twins caused huge controversy and led to the tightening of the adoption law in the United Kingdom.

An American judge ruled in March 2001 the girls should be returned to the United States for their future to be decided there.

The court ruled neither set of would-be parents met the legal requirements for adoption.

The Allens later withdrew their claim after Mr Allen was accused of molesting two teenage babysitters - charges he denied.

The Kilshaws ran up legal bills of more than £60,000 in the custody battle.

They were declared bankrupt in March 2002, and four months later Mr Kilshaw was struck off as a solicitor for financial malpractice.

The twins' estranged natural parents failed to win custody.

A judge ruled in May 2002 that the best interests of twins Kiara and Keyara would be served by keeping them under the care of the Missouri Division of Family Services.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You need to do something positive for your health — and you are probably the best judge of what that is. Still, it may be a good idea to solicit advice from your healthier friends and coworkers.

Taurus
April 20-May 20
You need to spend more time with people — and your good energy makes you great to have around! It's easier than ever to meet new friends or to find new activities, so get out there and explore!

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
Try to check in with your people today — you need to deal with folks who have been quiet for a while. It's always good to maintain your relationships, but today offers a special kind of social conscience.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You need to reach out and get your people on board with your latest big plan. Things may get a little out of hand if you don't say something soon, but your social energy is just right for the task.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Today is all about review. Your mind is amazingly powerful as long as it's looking backward, so go over everything that happened recently and figure out what you could have done better.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
You find that things are looking up for sure — and that your success is more public than you had realized! Expect praise from an unusual source, and see if you can build on it.

Libra
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You are dealing with way too many details right now — try to wrap your head around them! It may be best for you to focus on just one subset. Once you've got them down, move on to the next.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
You learn a secret this afternoon or evening that makes you smile more than cringe — though it may be a little bit of both! It's up to you whether to keep it to yourself or pass it on.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Someone in charge is causing problems for you — maybe as early as this morning. There's really no way around it, so you may just have to smile and pretend that it's all fine with you — for now.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You are in the middle of a great wave of mental energy — so make the most of it by getting some plans together! You should be able to get your friends or coworkers to abide by your decisions easily, too.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You have got to be more skeptical today — otherwise, things could easily go sideways. Try to make sure that you're asking the right people the right questions, and don't give up until you get the truth.

Pisces
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You should find that life is extra-confusing today — but also that it doesn't really matter! Relax in the knowledge that you are sure to figure it all out later. Things are just fine, really.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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	3		9		8			
		5	3		2			
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4			8		9			
9		3			2			
5		1			4			

Hard

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

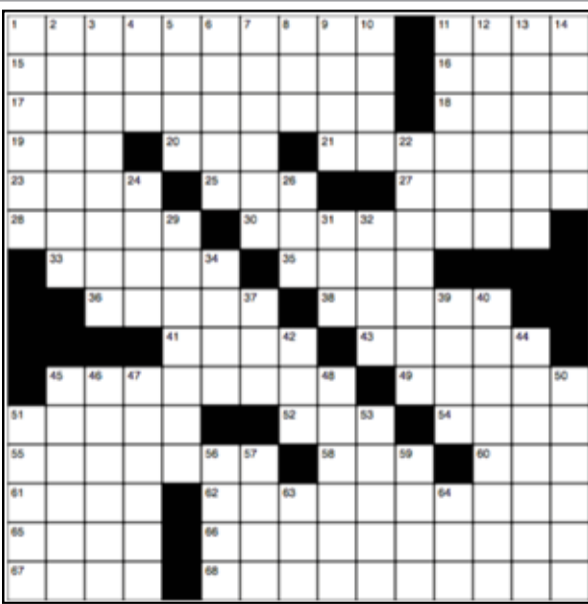
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-13	-2	clear
Harbin	-22	-14	flurry/snow
Tianjin	-10	-2	clear
Urumqi	-12	-8	flurry
Xi'an	-5	3	clear/overcast
Lhasa	-8	6	clear/cloudy
Chengdu	6	9	drizzle
Chongqing	8	12	overcast
Kunming	1	17	clear
Nanjing	-4	3	clear
Shanghai	-1	4	clear
Wuhan	-3	7	cloudy/clear
Hangzhou	-1	6	cloudy/clear
Taipei	11	15	overcast
Guangzhou	10	17	cloudy
Hong Kong	13	17	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-11	-9	flurry
Frankfurt	-7	3	overcast/clear
Paris	-3	0	flurry
London	-2	3	overcast/clear
New York	-7	-3	flurry

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Authorization to sell; 11- PDQ; 15- Tactless; 16- Think (over); 17- Pertaining to radiology; 18- Ms. Fitzgerald; 19- Big bird; 20- Suffix with cloth; 21- Frying pan; 23- Caesar's partner; 25- Racket; 27- Vassal; 28- Long lock of hair; 30- Air craft; 33- Long-billed sandpiper; 35- Hammer part; 36- Autocratic Russian rulers; 38- ___ say more?; 41- Hayworth or Moreno; 43- Atty.-to-be exams; 45- Absence of light; 49- Paces; 51- Kind of metabolism; 52- 'Ball --'; 54- Stuck in ___; 55- Beg; 58- Suffix with fail; 60- Doc bloc; 61- Italian bread?; 62- Precursor; 65- Sharon of "Boston Public"; 66- Pique; 67- ___ May Clampett of "The Beverly Hillbillies"; 68- Stereoscopic vision;

DOWN: 1- Administer; 2- Charms; 3- Drawing toward; 4- Wreath of flowers; 5- "The Time Machine" people; 6- Irritated; 7- Smelting residue; 8- Crone; 9- How sweet ___!; 10- Quarter bushel; 11- Aviator Earhart; 12- Morose; 13- Claim; 14- Shallow circular dish; 22- Ailment; 24- Warts and all; 26- Pinch; 29- Glitter; 31- Cartoon Chihuahua; 32- Rind; 34- ___ Brockovich; 37- ___ Foy, Quebec; 39- Facts and figures; 40- Repeats; 42- Shade of blond; 44- Ice cream type; 45- Hebrew prophet; 46- Star-related; 47- Seldom; 48- Jackfish; 50- Begins; 51- Ball girl; 53- Goodnight girl of song; 56- Auto loan figs.; 57- Waste allowance; 59- Within (prefix); 63- Sugary suffix; 64- Little devil;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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<p>Wai son Macau 1,000 sq ft / HKD 4.5M HKD 4,500sq ft Balcony with Church View Ref: 15105458</p>	<p>Jou Fai Kuok, St Pauls Ruin's H Unit in Gladiolus Court Coloane 627sq ft / HKD 3.98M HKD 6,347sq ft Renovated Apartment Ref: 15075447</p>	<p>Nova City TAIPA 2,530 sq ft / HKD 18.7M HKD 7,471sq ft Stunning Apartment Ref: 15115463</p>
<p>Houston Court, Coloane Village Coloane 1 Bedroom Apartment Upgraded in Sept 2015 HKD 13,500 / 800 sq ft Ref: 15090532</p>	<p>Lakeview Macau 3 Bedroom Apartment Fully Furnished HKD 25,000 / 3,430 sq ft Ref: 15080524</p>	<p>Car Park Space in The Manhattan Taipa Car Parking Manhattan Car Park HKD 2,000 / 00 sq ft Ref: 1505507</p>
<p>Manhattan F Unit, Taipa 3 Bedroom Apartment Large Master Bedroom HKD 21,500 / 1,720 sq ft Ref: 15090534</p>		



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Honda Macau



Jocelyn Gecker, Melbourne

TENNIS

'Super Serena' returns with first round win at Australian Open

AT the time, she called herself "Super Serena" and posted a picture of herself dressed like Superwoman.

In hindsight, tennis star Serena Williams thinks it wasn't the best idea to chase after a man who appeared to be stealing her cell phone.

"Sometimes, athletes just react," the No. 1-ranked player said yesterday as she started her bid for a seventh Australian Open title with a 6-4, 7-5 win over Italy's Camila Giorgi.

Williams hadn't completed a competitive match since losing in the U.S. Open semifinals, a defeat that ended her bid to win all four Grand Slams in the same season. The last player to do it was Steffi Graf in 1988.

The extended break raised questions about Williams' form and meant she hadn't elaborated much publicly on the cell phone incident, which happened in November while she dined with a friend at a San Francisco restaurant. She wrote about it in a Facebook post at the time, saying she had noticed a man lurking near her table before he grabbed the cell phone and left.

Surveillance footage showed Williams quickly leaving the restaurant and appearing to confront the man on the sidewalk. Williams wrote that she asked the man if he had accidentally taken the wrong phone, and he gave it back. She signed the post, "Super Serena" and the tale quickly made headlines.

"I didn't think it would be such a big story," Williams said. "I didn't know it would be everywhere, every blog, every TV channel and every radio sta-



Serena Williams of the United States hits a forehand return to Camila Giorgi of Italy during their first round match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne

tion. People were calling me. My dad was worried. I just had no idea it would blow up like that."

Asked if she would do it again, Williams said, "Oh, God, no. I reacted and I didn't think."

Now, her focus has returned to tennis and the 21-time Grand Slam winner says she's fit despite her time off and a recent

injury.

"I haven't played in a long time, but I have been playing for 30 years so — I try to focus on that," said Williams, who withdrew from the Hopman Cup earlier this month after playing just one set because of inflammation in her left knee.

Williams said she didn't feel the knee problem at all during

yesterday's match, dropping just one service game against No. 34-ranked Giorgi.

No. 5 Maria Sharapova, who lost to Williams in last year's final, breezed through her first-round match 6-1, 6-3 against Nao Hibino of Japan.

Sharapova showed no lingering effects from her own recent ailment, a left forearm injury

that forced her to pull out of the Brisbane International earlier this month.

"I haven't played many matches in many weeks, it was great to come out here and start my season," said Sharapova, a five-time Grand Slam winner who could face a rematch against Williams this year but in the quarterfinals.

In her off-court time, Sharapova said she's been working on a biography.

"I'm not going to talk about it much just because I want the book to do the talking. But I'm really excited about it," said Sharapova, who said she has been interviewing her mother, father and grandparents and plans to include some journals she kept as a young girl. Digging up her past, she said, has been "really interesting and scary at the same time."

Williams, who has an 11-year dominance over Sharapova, is the favorite in Melbourne but faces a strong crop of resurgent and determined players.

Among them is 2014 Wimbledon finalist Eugenie Bouchard, who continued an injury comeback beating Aleksandra Krunic of Serbia 6-3, 6-4. Bouchard faces No. 4 Agnieszka Radwanska in the second round.

Bouchard is playing in only her fourth tournament since sustaining a concussion when she fell in the dressing room at last year's U.S. Open. The 21-year-old Canadian made it to the quarterfinals at an event in China and followed that up by reaching the final at the Hobart International.

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova also advanced, beating Thai qualifier Luk-sika Kumkhum to avenge her upset three-set loss in the first round here in 2014. **AP**

FOOTBALL

Barca and Madrid win big, Man United edges Liverpool 1-0

BARCELONA'S and Real Madrid's respective trios of star forwards all scored goals on Sunday to lead routs for the Spanish powerhouses, while Manchester United turned to Wayne Rooney to get a 1-0 at Liverpool in England.

Luis Suarez struck three times while Lionel Messi and Neymar also scored as Barcelona eased to a 6-0 win over 10-man Athletic Bilbao.

Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema scored two goals apiece after Gareth Bale began a 5-1 demolition of Sporting Gijon.

Both victories for Barcelona and Madrid saw their top players substituted due to injury concerns.

A second straight five-goal performance under Zinedine Zidane came at the price of losing Bale and Benzema to right-leg injuries.

Despite the injuries, the vibe at the Santiago Bernabeu was upbeat and all about Zidane's impact on the team. Ronaldo made a rare appearance to say that the team has immediately clicked with Zidane in a way it never did under predecessor Rafa Benitez.

"The players are more motivated with Zizou," Ronaldo said. "(He) has given the team a boost."

Messi presented his fifth Ballon d'Or award before kickoff at Camp Nou, and he soon converted a penalty to set Barcelona on its way. He was then substituted at halftime for precaution after he noted "slight pain," according to coach Luis Enrique.

As the two powerhouses reveled in their one-sided results, Atletico Madrid quietly churned out a 3-0 win at Las Palmas to retain its provisional lead.

Atletico stayed two points clear of Barcelona,

which has a game to play. Madrid remained four points back in third.

Diego Simeone's Atletico applied the same formula that has put the 2014 champions at the front of the title hunt.

Goalkeeper Jan Oblak kept a fourth straight clean sheet while Antoine Griezmann scored a second-half double after Filipe Luis put Atletico ahead.

Elsewhere, Valencia coach Gary Neville remained winless in six league games since taking over after a 2-2 draw with Rayo Vallecano, while Getafe beat Espanyol 3-1.



Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo

In England, Manchester United relied on brilliant goalkeeping by David de Gea and a late, opportunistic finish by Wayne Rooney to snatch a win its great rival, sparking talk of an unlikely run at the Premier League title.

With Arsenal only drawing 0-0 at Stoke a few hours later to return to first place on goal difference above Leicester,

United trimmed the gap to the leaders to seven points — with 16 matches still to play in one of the most erratic title races in years.

Rooney took his tally for 2016 to five goals in four games by smashing home a volley from close range in the 78th minute after Marouane Fellaini's header rebounded off the bar. **AP**

opinion

Our Desk
Renato Marques



THE 'PURGATORY' OF THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

A couple of years ago, a discussion began on a popular web forum for photographers.

As, what I am guessing was meant as a joke, someone asked, "Where do the photos we take with no memory card on the cameras go?"

The answer seemed to be simple, as many of the first respondents thought that they never existed. But as the discussion evolved, the supposed fact of the photographs' "non-existence" was rapidly refuted, as any person would know nowadays that you are able to see the photograph taken (or at least a preview image) the moment after you click the "magical" button. That you can see a preview of the photograph is proof that it existed, and so the question remained unanswered.

That was until someone said something that rapidly gathered a lot of support from the forum users: "The photos go to the purgatory of photographs."

But why am I bringing up this topic, you may ask. Well, the fact is that it seems like there is a similar situation involving a "purgatory" of unanswered questions, which I have named with no religious intent whatsoever. The purgatory of unanswered questions responds to the following: "Where do the unanswered questions that journalists (and others) directed namely at government officials go?"

The fact is that this happens almost daily, in meetings, press conferences, interviews and/or events. It is too often that a journalist comes up with a question he or she wants to see answered, but leaves without an answer—or at least without an answer that has anything to do with the original question. And I am not talking about those questions that the person being interviewed decided (formally) not to answer, or that he/she declared they were not in position of enough expertise/knowledge about the topic to answer. I am simply talking about the "ignored" ones, or in other words, the questions that did not raise any reaction from the interviewee.

The Legislative Assembly is another example of where these "strange" events often happen. Although in this particular case, there is supposedly a mechanism that allows answers to those questions that were "lost" into the air to be answered afterwards, in writing.

The fact is, I haven't seen one of these "written answers" yet, so I feel somewhat entitled to exercise doubt as to whether this mechanism really works. Either way, even if that happens, the answer will be outside of the discussion thread, and will not have the same effect as a straight and immediate answer to the question would. This "phenomenon" does not occur only in direct communication, but is also frequent in written communications. You ask A, B and C, and in the end you get the answer to Z.

My point here is: has this happened so often and for such a prolonged period of time that it has become a tradition?

I sure hope not, as I also hope that some of those interviewees become more aware of the number of questions that they are sending to that "purgatory of unanswered questions" to stay there, for who knows for how long—even forever.

On my side, I will try my best not to contribute by sending more files to "purgatory," especially when it concerns the "purgatory of photographs," over which I hold discretionary power.

THE MOROCCO ARRESTS BELGIAN MAN LINKED TO PARIS ATTACKERS

Moroccan police have arrested a Belgian man of Moroccan descent linked to the Islamic State group and who had a "direct relationship" to attackers who carried out the Paris attacks just over two months ago, the Interior Ministry said yesterday.

The man had spent time in Syria getting military training and building relationships with IS field commanders, "including the mastermind" of the Paris attacks, and others who threatened attacks in France and Bel-

gium, the ministry said in a statement.

The statement identified the suspect only by the initials J.A., and didn't explain his suspected relationship to the Paris attackers. Several of the Islamic extremists who targeted a Paris rock concert, stadium and cafes had Moroccan origins and links to Belgium. The attacks on Nov. 13 killed 130 people. The ministry said in a statement that the man was arrested Friday in the town of Mohammedia near Casablanca.



Taxi cab drivers line up their vehicles at Erzsebet Square during an unannounced demonstration against the use of Uber rideshare application in the early morning hours in downtown Budapest

Taxis in Budapest block traffic, demand ban on Uber

MORE than 100 taxis blocked traffic in downtown Budapest yesterday, demanding a ban on Uber and other ride-hailing apps.

The yellow vehicles from several taxi companies blocked most lanes of a key intersection near St. Stephen's Basilica in the Hungarian capital, causing traffic delays.

Taxi drivers also went to the nearby offices of Budapest's mayor to present a petition with their demands, but their meeting with Mayor Istvan Tarlos did not result in any im-

mediate solutions.

Tarlos expressed his support for the "tax-paying Hungarian taxi drivers," saying Uber did not comply with regulations.

"The capital city, however, has no official means ... to ban or switch off Uber or exclude the 'wild taxi drivers' who do not respect the rules," Tarlos said in a statement.

Driver Zsolt Gelencser said Uber and similar apps were avoiding regulations and licensing issues that taxis had to comply with.

"We demand that Uber,

as an app or as an activity, cease to exist," Gelencser said, standing amid the taxis occupying most of the road. "They are applying a double standard. Nothing applies to them, while everything applies to us."

Laszlo Pusztai, another taxi driver at the protest, estimated that Uber was taking away 50-60 percent of the rides of traditional taxis. "Unfortunately, it is working very well for them," Pusztai said.

Uber says it has 1,200 drivers and 80,000 users in Budapest. **AP**

Station	Air quality
Roadside	35-55 Good
High Density Residential Area	25-45 Good
Ambient	30-50 Good

SOURCE: D5M6

WORLD BRIEFS



GERMANY Police say they have arrested 40 men in raids in the city of Duesseldorf linked to a long-running investigation of suspected organized theft involving people of North African origin. Yesterday they added that the raids on 18 cafes, gambling houses and bars near the main railway station were planned last year and not triggered by the New Year's Eve assaults and thefts in nearby Cologne.



TURKEY State-run news agency says four people have been injured in an explosion at a school in the city of Kilis, near the border with Syria. The Anadolu Agency says ambulances took the injured from the Eyup Gokceimam middle school to the public hospital in Kilis. The mayor of Kilis, Hasan Kara, says the cause of the explosion may have been "two or more mortars" fired from Syria.

USA Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra announces world tour Wynton Marsalis is taking the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra on its longest tour in nearly 15 years, covering 15 cities in 10 countries over 40 days. Jazz at Lincoln Center announced yesterday its Blue Engine International Tour, named after its new record label, will begin Feb. 4 at The Olympia in Paris and end March 12 at the Michael Fowler Centre in Wellington, New Zealand.

JAPAN Members of the decades-old but still hugely popular Japanese pop group SMAP said yesterday they will remain together, ending rumors of a breakup that shocked fans in Japan and elsewhere in Asia. The five members of the group, wearing dark business suits and appearing serious, apologized at the start of their weekly variety TV show for causing concern and sought their fans' continuing support. In brief comments, some acknowledged that the group was in fact going through a crisis.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Anjum Naveed



Islamabad chill. A mother covers her son with a shawl to protect him from the evening cold in Islamabad, Pakistan yesterday. The twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have been in the grips of unusual cold and foggy weather.