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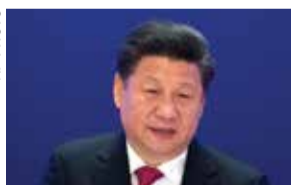
Poker on the rise despite gaming slump

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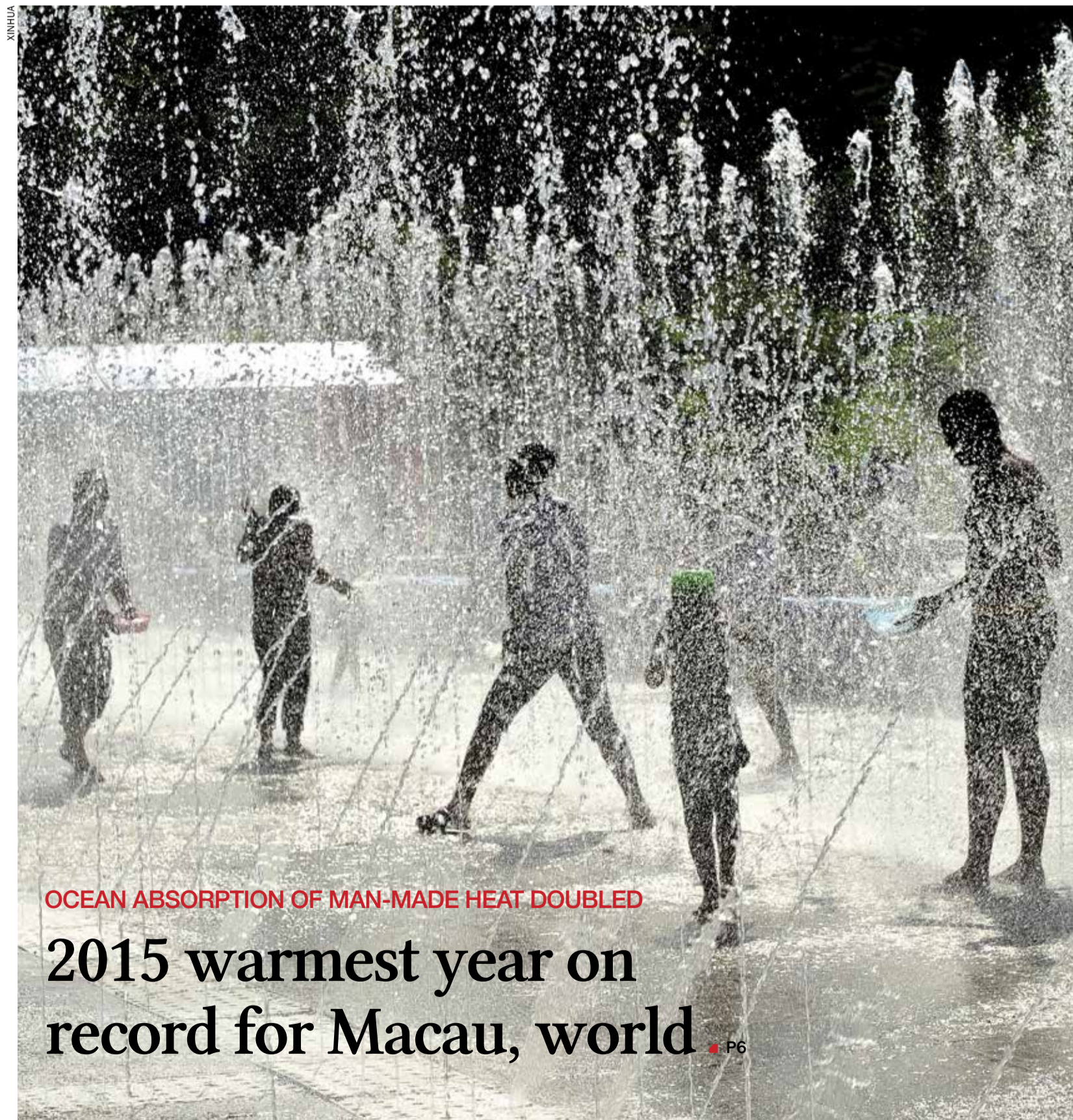
CHINA's central bank yesterday announced it will inject at least 600 billion yuan (USD91.46 billion) to provide liquidity for the impending Spring Festival holiday, the state-run agency Xinhua reported. The liquidity will be added through tools such as the standing lending facility (SLF), the medium-term lending facility (MLF) and pledged supplementary lending (PSL), the People's Bank of China said in a statement on its website. The central bank vowed to ensure liquidity in the banking system is "reasonable and adequate" around the Spring Festival, which will fall on Feb 8.

AP PHOTO



MIDDLE EAST Chinese President Xi Jinping has arrived in Saudi Arabia for a two-day visit as part of a Mideast tour that will include stops in Egypt and Iran. The official Saudi Press Agency reported that Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman greeted the Chinese delegation upon their arrival yesterday. Xi will be meeting with King Salman, as well as the chiefs of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation. [More on p10](#)

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OCEAN ABSORPTION OF MAN-MADE HEAT DOUBLED

2015 warmest year on record for Macau, world

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LIONEL LEONG

Secretary for Economy evokes 'Macau spirit' to overcome setbacks

THE Secretary for Economy and Finance evoked the "Macau spirit" to bring people together, overcome the difficulties they face and use the opportunity to improve the city's economy.

Lionel Leong Vai Tac said in a recent interview with Exmoo News that, in meetings with friends, social groups and people in industry, he felt the "Macau spirit" had not changed. "This year Macau people are facing a year of economic adjustment but most do not complain. On the contrary, they have a positive attitude toward the new economic situation. It makes me feel deeply their spirit of stability, being responsible and going forward."

Leong added that, when the economy was growing fastest, rents for offices and shops rose rapidly and there were no conditions to develop certain sectors. But, now that the economy is slowing, it is an opportunity for them to grow, such as young

To revamp the gambling industry, Macau needs to improve the legal infrastructure and supervision

entrepreneurs and traditional shops developing e-commerce to open new markets.

Since Leong took the post in December 2014, he has lived through a dramatic change in gambling, the city's main business for 168 years. For over a decade, it grew rapidly, overtaking Las Vegas to become the world's top gaming center. But, from the middle of 2014, revenues began to fall; they have

dropped for 18 consecutive months, sending ripples across the whole economy. Worst hit has been the VIP sector, of wealthy people brought to Macau by junkets. They used to account for more than 70 per cent of casino income, rising to 80 per cent at the peak, but have now fallen to 53 per cent.

"On the other hand, the mass market has remained strong," said Leong. "With hindsight, the gambling industry in Macau depended too much on the business brought by junkets. The regulation of it was not strong enough. The healthy improvement of the junkets can promote the healthy development of the six large casinos and will in the end bring benefits to the whole of Macao."

This means improving the law and strengthening the monitoring system, improving the non-gambling elements and the mass market. In this way, the leisure elements in the casinos will improve. Only then can



Macau meet its development target for becoming a world tourism and leisure centre.

Leong said that people in the city had reacted well to the difficulties. Opportunities and challenges exist together. Facing difficulties and challenges, everyone has responded calmly and is working hard to improve the situation.

Leong said that now was the time both to restructure the economy and self-examination. Macau's gaming market is changing; it must overcome two large dependencies – one is on a single industry and the other on a group of people in the industry. To revamp the gambling industry, Macau needs to improve the legal infrastructure and supervision. It has to change from 'doing the biggest' to 'doing the best'.

He said that this restructuring was difficult in every aspect.

Considering all the external economic factors, in the short term, he cannot see many positive factors.

He was asked if, after 18 months of decline, gambling revenue had reached their bottom. "I have no crystal ball. I have no way to predict."

Leong is so busy that his only days off come when the cleaners have to wash the carpets and the air conditioners in the office. His two sons and one daughter are all studying overseas. The two sons have gone to university in the U.S., while his 15-year-old daughter is studying in the UK.

The only time he can see them is during long holidays. "Before, when I was a businessman, I spent a lot of time with them. Now they realize that the role of daddy has changed. They will support me well," he said. **MDT/Macauhub/Exmoo**

AT least RMB207 billion was channeled out of Guangdong Province last year in illegal transfers, with some if it transiting through Hong Kong and Macau.

According to media reports, a total of 83 cases were discovered by security officials from the mainland, involving sums that collectively exceeded RMB207 billion. Many more incidents are believed to have occurred, meaning that the total amount laundered could be much higher than official figures.

Up to 231 suspects have been implicated in current investigations. Some of these people have been implicated for the laundering of illegal funds, while others as those who solicited such services.

According to a recent report from the U.S. Sta-

te Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, responsible for monitoring international money laundering, "China leads the world in illicit capital flows."

Shenzhen and Zhuhai are hotspots for illegal money transfers

Within China, Guangdong has long been regarded as a national hotspot for illegal money transfers out of mainland jurisdiction – especially in the border cities of Shenzhen and Zhuhai.

China laundering hotspot pushes 200bn yuan in transfers

Equally Macau has earned a reputation for being a recipient of illegal transfers. For high rollers, it is one way to bypass China's currency controls and circumvent the watchful eyes of Xi's anti-corruption bureaucrats.

One case last year involved a mainland official who had attempted to siphon around RMB12 million into Macau to use for gambling purposes, the SCMP reports.

In August last year, police in Macau arrested 17 people after a crackdown on pawn shops that were suspected of aiding the illicit flow of



currency into the MSAR.

This kind of illegal activity has persisted for years in China's southern Guangdong Province, but it may have intensified of late due to a weakening yuan, which is creating strong demand for other currencies.

The HKD and MOP are directly and indirectly pe-

gged to the USD respectively, and this has sheltered them somewhat from the recent turbulence of the RMB and the turmoil of the Chinese stock markets in recent weeks.

Chinese efforts to tackle money laundering have increased in recent years, partially in reaction to the mainland economy becoming more globally connected.

In 2013, the central government intensified its enforcement of anti-money laundering operations and promised that incidents of non-compliance would be taken more seriously.

Chinese banks were subsequently required to monitor the transactions of their clients and to rate the risk of such transactions being used for criminal purposes.

However, there remain concerns about China's willingness to cooperate in the prevention of cross-border money laundering. For example, in June last year, Chinese authorities refused to assist with an Italian investigation that alleged that Bank of China operations in the Mediterranean country had been complicit in money laundering and had profited from it. **Staff reporter**

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HEALTH

Electronic cigarettes effects seen as less harmful than cigars

ELECTRONIC cigarettes (e-cigs), which use nicotine derived from a tobacco plant and are designed to mimic smoking, are currently facing a global challenge.

Late last year, the Health Bureau and the government proposed a ban on the trading of e-cigs in Macau to ensure public health.

However, a recent survey by the regional consumer advocacy group factasia.org (an organization that, according to its website, "seeks to represent the rights of adults in Asia who choose to enjoy smoking or other related forms of consumption of nicotine") stated that most smokers want to be able to switch to less harmful alternatives to smoking, such as e-cigs.

Recognizing that e-cigs are less damaging to health



A man smokes an electronic cigarette

than tobacco consumption, Public Health England (PHE) has said that they are "95 percent safer than smoking." In Hong Kong, e-cigs have risen in popularity since 2012 and sales have been doubling in the past two years, according to the Asian Vape Association. However, the Hong Kong government

has also proposed a ban on e-cigs, with experts saying that a lot of vapers strongly opposed the move, as it would force them to go back to tobacco cigarettes.

E-cigs are regulated as a tobacco-medicinal product in the Philippines, according to the president of the Philippine E-Cigarette Industry Association, Joey

Dulay. "We're fighting for a new category of legislation specifically for e-cigs – not too lenient and not too strict. What's important is that consumers are protected by a safety standard," he said.

Meanwhile in the U.S., e-cigs were categorized as medicine in 2008.

From May this year, e-cigs and other nicotine vapor products will be regulated in the EU under the Tobacco Products Directive, which Britain's The Guardian newspaper described as an extremely costly route.

Heneage Mitchell, another Factasia.org co-founder, believes that endorsing e-cigs is a primary way for governments to see positive results in national public health policy. He argued that smokers shouldn't be denied access to nicotine. **Staff reporter**

Seoul court fines baseball stars for gambling in Macau

A Seoul court has fined newly-signed St. Louis Cardinals reliever Seung Hwan Oh 10 million won (USD8,300) for breaking South Korean gambling laws by betting heavily at a Macau casino.

Former Chicago Cubs pitcher Lim Chang-yong, Oh's ex-teammate with South Korean club Samsung Lions, was also fined the same amount, according to spokesman Joon Young Maeng at the Seoul Central District Court on Tuesday.

The Korean Baseball Organization earlier hit both players with half-season bans after prosecutors charged them for betting around 40 million won (\$33,000) each at a casino in Macau in 2014.

South Korea has strict gambling laws, and has only one domestic casino for locals while 16 others only admit foreigners. South Koreans are banned from betting large sums of money at venues other than the designated local casino.

Oh, 33, signed with the Cardinals earlier this month on a one-year contract with a club option for a second year. In 498 career games in South Korea and Japan, Oh is 32-20 with a 1.81 ERA with 772 strikeouts in 646 1-3 innings. He also was a member of the Gold medal-winning South Korean Olympics team in 2008 and represented the country in the World Baseball Classic in 2006, 2009 and 2013. **AP**

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THE Macau Millions Poker competition ended this week, awarding a prize pool of HKD3 million to its winners. Twenty-seven-year-old Chinese player Alvan Zheng walked away with the title and HKD911,000, followed by his two compatriots, Quan Zhou and Guancheng Wu.

The poker tournament was the largest ever event of its kind held in Macau, serving as a reminder that the card game is becoming increasingly popular among Chinese gamers.

The Times spoke with Danny McDonagh, the president of the organizing body of the Asia Pacific Poker Tour (APPT), who claims that poker is on the rise in Macau despite the gaming slump.

Macau's most popular game has always been baccarat. According to some estimates, it accounts for more than 90 percent of the MSAR's profits. However, there are indications that an interest in poker has been increasing in recent years.

"Poker continues to gain popularity in countries such as China, Japan and India," said McDonagh, adding that they had just set a new record for the tournament this year, ha-

Poker on the rise in Macau, unaffected by gaming slump



Danny McDonagh, president of the APPT

ving reached 2,343 players. This means that this year's event broke the tournament's previous record of 1,804

players two years ago.

This surge in popularity is being attributed by some to a heightened awareness of poker in the Chinese market, while others claim that Macau serves as a sensible poker destination for players coming from cultures that are already familiar with the game.

McDonagh thinks it is probably a bit of both.

"I feel that [poker] is in some ways a diversification from general gaming as it is a way to attract people from countries where poker is popular [and that have] traditionally only produced very small tourist numbers to Macau," the APPT president told the Times.

But Chinese players are also on the rise, with the organization's major events reporting that over 50 percent of their Asia-based tournament players herald from China. This has "progressively increased from around 10 percent five years ago."

While the top three winners in this year's tournament were from China, a further three in the top nine were from Hong Kong, and a fourth came from Taiwan. In fact, the only two of the champions in the top nine that were not from the Greater China region were Tatiana Barausova of Russia (7th) and Boon Heng Siong of Singapore (9th).

According to Cardschat, a gaming news agency, Macau's gaming slump has threatened to jeopardize poker activity in Macau. Well-known poker players Phil Ivey and Tom Dwan have not made public comments on whether or not they intend to continue playing in Macau, but the agency has alluded to the fact that the continuation of the gaming downturn could prompt high-level players to look to other destinations.

"While the number of poker tables [in Macau] remains very small in total in compa-

■ Over 50 percent of APPT's tournament participants come from China, as opposed to just 10 percent five years ago

risson to total table numbers, it is pleasing to see actual numbers have been on the increase these past 12 months," said McDonagh.

He added that at least two casinos have added poker tables in the last year while gross gaming revenue has been on the decline, indicating that the game has been relatively unaffected by the slump.

After being asked if gaming operators are interested in pursuing poker as an alternative gaming option, McDonagh replied: "With two new poker rooms opening here in the last 12 months, yes."

"It is giving an opportunity that not all casinos provide, something that sets them apart from other venues, and poker is a game that continues to gain interest here in Asia," he added.

While the vast majority of the MSAR's gaming tourists (and indeed other tourists) come from Mainland China, could a new focus on promoting the image of poker help to encourage visitors from further away, potentially tapping into new markets?

It would not do much to help diversify Macau's economy away from gaming activities, but it could help relieve the MSAR's dependence on high rollers from the mainland that are being squeezed by Xi's anti-graft campaign.

"We run the biggest poker tournaments in Asia here in Macau," McDonagh claimed, "however, we are in the early stages of putting on an event which will compete with some of the biggest events in the world and will attract many more players from Europe and the Americas to compete against our large Asia-Pacific following."

"Poker is healthy here in Macau," he added. **Staff reporter**



The origins of poker

THERE is little consensus over where and when poker originated. Variants of the game can be traced back to China from over 1,000 years ago, though the game was not played with cards, but with painted dominoes.

Others accredit poker's origins to an Indian card game called "Ganjifa," which was also a betting game but consisted of 96 painted cards.

Mainstream historians usually source its origins to a French card game called "poque," itself a variant of the German, "pochen," which means "to bluff" in English.

However, they warn that these early



prototypes share little in common with the game as it is known today. Modern versions of poker are thought to have developed sometime between the late 18th and early 19th Century.

There exist accounts of the game being played extensively throughout the Mississippi region in the U.S. from the 1830s onwards, though with just 20 cards and with players betting on which hand was most valuable.

On the other hand, the history of the game in its modern form in Asia is relatively brief with its surge in popularity coming mostly in the last two decades.

Today, despite the game's popularity piling in comparison to traditional Chinese games like baccarat, Macau remains one of the largest poker destinations in the world.

2015 warmest year on record for Macau

ACCORDING to the Macau Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG), 2015 was the warmest year recorded since the official establishment of the organization in 1952.

The average annual temperature in the MSAR throughout last year was 23.2 degrees Celsius, 0.6 degrees higher than the annual average as measured between 1980 and 2010.

According to SMG, the number of days in Macau with a minimum temperature below 12 degrees Celsius numbered only two. By comparison, the average number of days in a year below 12 degrees is eight.

Perhaps most striking were the recorded temperatures for November, for which SMG noted an air temperature 2.0 degrees above the normal for the month.

The meteorological agency told the Times last week that the temperatures in the first two weeks of this year are very similar when compared to those



Coloane's Hac Sa beach

in 2015, the warmest year on record.

The Meteorological Division Chief, Tang Iu Man, said that the El Niño effect – the band of warm water that develops in the Pacific Ocean in some years – is partly behind the explanation

for the incremental rise in temperature.

“The reason for 2015 being the warmest year is due to the unusual atmospheric circulation related to the El Niño event and the global warming condition,” Tang explained.

The El Niño effect generally results in high air pressure in the eastern Pacific. The consequences of the increased air pressure results in higher-than-average temperatures in the summer and autumn months, and a more humid and rainier winter.

“We predict that the intensity of this climatic phenomenon is going to endure during this winter, gradually slowdown in the spring,” a representative of SMG told the Times.

Typhoon activities in the South China Sea were below normal, the agency added. Meanwhile, the Hong Kong Observatory announced that the HKSAR also enjoyed its warmest year on record in 2015, with an average yearly temperature of 24.2 degrees Celsius, slightly higher than in Macau.

According to the World Meteorological Organization’s preliminary assessment, 2015 may have been the warmest year globally since records began in 1850. **Staff reporter**

SARS BRACE FOR COLD SNAP

HONG KONG and the surrounding areas are bracing for a cold snap that is expected to strike on the weekend. The cold weather is the result of what is being described as an “intense” polar vortex that authorities have warned could hit the New Territories. There is speculation that the cold weather, which could last into next week, may bring frost, ice, sleet or even snow to the territory. The SCMP reports that the Hong Kong Observatory predicts urban areas may be spared from the winter weather phenomenon. Meanwhile, internet-based weather forecasts for this weekend show that temperatures in Macau could drop to as low as 5 degrees Celsius on Sunday night, and may not recover to the month’s historical averages until January 27.

Study: Man-made heat put in oceans has doubled since 1997

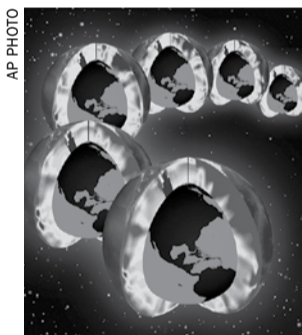
Seth Borenstein, Washington

THE amount of man-made heat energy absorbed by the seas has doubled since 1997, a study released yesterday showed.

Scientists have long known that more than 90 percent of the heat energy from man-made global warming goes into the world’s oceans instead of the ground. And they’ve seen ocean heat content rise in recent years. But the new study, using ocean-observing data that goes back to the British research ship Challenger in the 1870s and including high-tech modern underwater monitors and computer models, tracked how much man-made heat has been buried in the oceans in the past 150 years.

The world’s oceans absorbed approximately 150 zettajoules of energy from 1865 to 1997, and then absorbed about another 150 in the next 18 years, according to a study published Monday in the journal Nature Climate Change.

To put that in perspec-



This image provided by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory shows Pacific and Atlantic meridional sections showing upper-ocean warming for the past six decades (1955-2011)

ive, if you exploded one atomic bomb the size of the one that dropped on Hiroshima every second for a year, the total energy released would be 2 zettajoules. So since 1997, Earth’s oceans have absorbed man-made heat energy equivalent to a Hiroshima-style bomb being exploded every second for 75 straight years.

“The changes we’re talking about, they are really, really big numbers,” said study co-author Paul Durack, an oceanographer at the Lawrence Livermore National Lab in California. “They are non-human numbers.”

Because there are

decades when good data wasn’t available and computer simulations are involved, the overall figures are rough but still are reliable, the study’s authors said. Most of the added heat has been trapped in the upper 2,300 feet, but with every year the deeper oceans also are absorbing more energy, they said.

But the study’s authors and outside experts say it’s not the raw numbers that bother them. It’s how fast those numbers are increasing.

“After 2000 in particular the rate of change is really starting to ramp up,” Durack said.

This means the amount of energy being trapped in Earth’s climate system as a whole is accelerating, the study’s lead author Peter Gleckler, a climate scientist at Lawrence Livermore, said.

Because the oceans are so vast and cold, the absorbed heat raises temperatures by only a few tenths of a degree, but the importance is the energy balance, Gleckler and his colleagues said. When oceans absorb all that heat it keeps

the surface from getting even warmer from the heat-trapping gases spewed by the burning of coal, oil and gas, the scientists said.

The warmer the oceans get, the less heat they can absorb and the more heat stays in the air and on land surface, the study’s co-author, Chris Forest at Pennsylvania State University, said.

“These findings have potentially serious consequences for life in the oceans as well as for patterns of ocean circulation, storm tracks and storm intensity,” said Oregon State University marine sciences professor Jane Lubchenco, the former chief of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

One outside scientist, Kevin Trenberth, climate analysis chief at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, also has been looking at ocean heat content and he said his ongoing work shows the Gleckler team “significantly underestimates” how much heat the ocean has absorbed.

Jeff Severinghaus at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography praised the study, saying it “provides real, hard evidence that humans are dramatically heating the planet.” **AP**

Specialists dispute which year warmest

VARIOUS reports produced in the media throughout 2015 suggested that the year might have been the warmest on record – or at least the warmest year since the late-1800s when humankind first began using what are considered to be reliable measures of temperature.

In June, a report from NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies indicated that the average temperature for the first five months of 2015 exceeded those of any other year on record. The NOAA’s National Climatic Data Center in the U.S. noted that the temperature of these five months exceeded those of the same five months as measured in 2010, by 0.09 degrees Celsius.

Reports later in the year seemed to confirm that 2015 was indeed the warmest year on record.

In November, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) claimed that the global average surface temperature in 2015 was likely to be the warmest, while also reaching the symbolic milestone of 1 degree Celsius over the pre-industrial era (pre-1850).

WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud warned that, while feeling the ef-

fects of human-induced global warming, 2015 is also “witnessing a powerful El Niño, which is still gaining in strength.”

“This is influencing weather patterns in many parts of the world,” said Jarraud, “and [has] fueled an exceptionally warm October.”

“The overall warming impact of this El Niño is expected to continue into 2016,” he added.

However, Forbes contributor James Taylor lashed out at weather warning reports this week, stating that 2015 was “not even close to the hottest year on record.”

Taylor points to a chart that shows 1998 to have been the warmest year on record. He further alleges that global warming activists and the media are conspiring to present false data.

The discrepancy between the different reports may have less to do with media conspiracy and more to do with variants in what is actually being measured. The data cited by Taylor measured temperatures of the global lower atmosphere, while reports from the WMO specified that they had recorded global average surface temperatures.



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Polytechnic Institute expects to see new graduates employed in 3 months

Renato Marques

THE Macau Polytechnic Institute (IPM) expects their graduates to be able to find jobs in their areas of study in about three months' time. This is the belief – or at least the hope – expressed by the institution's Academic Affairs Department Head, Vivian Lei.

The scholar was speaking on the sidelines of IPM's Careers Day 2016 that was inaugurated yesterday at the tertiary institution.

"In the past, it took about two months' time for the fresh graduates to get a job but our last survey from 2015 shows that the period extended slightly to an average of about three months after graduation. This is still a very good record when compared to other regions and countries," Lei said.

She added that IPM expects 650 fresh graduates to emerge from the different majors on offer this year, explaining that they will have easy access to the



IPM's department head Vivian Lei



Student Yili Ling

job due to the programs' suitability to the local market and to potential hirers.

"We are very confident that our graduates can find jobs very easily because our programs are fully related to the Macau strategy and development, namely its role as a platform between China and the Portuguese speaking countries," Vivian Lei said.

The department also mentioned that other study programs such as the ones related to the creative industries and nursing are

also currently in high demand. Graduates from these programs should therefore not expect to encounter many obstacles when entering the job market.

"The students are looking for, firstly, something related to their study program, and secondly, jobs that offer a better salary," Lei stated, adding that only some of the fresh graduates may be affected by the downturn in Macau's economy. "It depends on the programs. For example, in Chinese-Portuguese translation

the employment rate is 100 per cent with most students finding a job three or four months before they actually graduate."

For Yili Ling, 21, a student from mainland China who expects to be on the graduates list this year, "to find job opportunities in Macau is the goal." The graduate hopes to find a job in the marketing field. "Casinos are the strongest industry so I might get a job there, or even in another area. As I am not a resident, I might have some quota-related issues," Yili Ling said, adding that although she is "not too optimistic about it, she looks forward to receiving responses from some of the companies she is contacting."

Yili Ling was one of the students visiting the Careers Day, which featured 38 booths comprising of representatives from different companies and institutions. The Times also spoke with Brenda Hoi, the Human Resources Business Partner of a company dedicated to the sale of wristwatches.

She told the Times that she is

looking for candidates that have "a passion for the retail sector and love to work in a customer service-oriented job and have a very good customer service mindset."

Although the company receives a lot of applications, she finds it difficult to hire the right people because the gaming industry is often looking for the same kind of candidate.

Brenda Hoi sees the retail industry as much more competitive than the casino industry because "many people are not interested in working night shifts".

The Careers Day is one of the activities planned by the IPM "in order to put their students in contact with companies that might be interested in recruiting them" according to the deputy head of the institution, Yin Lei, in her opening speech.

Other activities will occur over a period of one month, including talks and seminars from several companies, as well as workshops about employment-related topics.

AD

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Team No.	Team Name	Games Played	Games Won	Points
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A2	JACKASS	3	46	18
A4	TEAM OF BEER	3	40	15
A1	ROCKET	3	22	4

GROUP B				
Team No.	Team Name	Games Played	Games Won	Points
B2	NOYPI	3	55	22
B4	THE HEROES	3	42	15
B1	THE ALL BLANKS	3	46	14
B3	THE POOLISSONS	3	36	9

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SANDS ANNOUNCES FEASTS ON VALENTINES DAY



A sumptuous meal for lovers will be served at Sands Resorts Cotai Strip and Sands Macao for Valentine's Day. The event is set to include a buffet and several specially-created menus at a number of award-winning restaurants.

According to a press release issued by Sands China, Portofino at The Venetian Macao promises a four-course meal that comprises of a seafood platter. The feast is finished with a Portofino-style amaretto crème brûlée served with berry compote and vanilla ice cream, priced at MOP688 per person.

Conrad Macao offers an intimate candle-lit dinner in a cabana overlooking its hotel's pool and an afternoon tea set at the Lounge. The outdoor dinner experience is priced at MOP2,688 per couple, which includes course menus and a bottle of rosé Champagne.

Copa Steakhouse is offering a five-course meal that consists of a fish course, soup, a main course and a dessert platter for two. The Valentine's Day set menu is priced at MOP788 per person.

Asian stocks rise after China growth within expectations

ASIAN stock markets mostly eked out modest gains yesterday after China's quarterly economic growth met expectations, calming some of the investor jitters in the region.

KEEPING SCORE: China's Shanghai Composite was up 1.6 percent at 2,961.58 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.8 percent to 19,386.75. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.7 percent to 4,885. Japan's Nikkei 225 overcame early losses to rise 0.2 percent to 16,989.31. South Korea's Kospi advanced 0.2 percent to



1,881.77. Markets in Southeast Asia were mixed. New Zealand gained.

CHINA ECONOMY: China's economic growth edged down to 6.8 percent in the final

quarter of 2015 as trade and consumer spending weakened. The quarterly growth figure was the weakest in six years and 6.9 percent growth for the full year was the lowest in 25 years. That was in line with market expectations but some analysts had forecast a much sharper slowdown. Chinese leaders are trying to reduce reliance on trade and investment by nurturing slower, more self-sustaining growth based on domestic consumption and services.

THE QUOTE: China's "official data do not point to a hard

landing in the fourth quarter of 2015, but they provide little reason to stop worrying about China's drag on the global economy, either," said Bill Adams, senior international economist at PNC Financial Services Group. "Chinese domestic demand remains weak, held back by three persistent headwinds."

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude was down 2 cents to \$30.36 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, a benchmark for international oils, rose 40 cents to USD28.95 per barrel.

CURRENCIES: The U.S. dollar rose to 117.62 yen from 117.50 yen in the previous trading day. The euro was little changed at \$1.0886 from \$1.0885. AP

GAMING

SkyCity rises most in 15 months on upbeat earnings forecast

SKYCITY Entertainment Group Ltd. rose the most in 15 months after the company said first-half earnings surged as much as 30 percent.

Net income jumped to as much as NZ\$71 million (USD46 million) in the six months ended Dec. 31, the Au-

kland-based casino operator said yesterday, citing preliminary figures. The stock advanced 5.9 percent, headed for its best gain since Oct. 20, 2014.

SkyCity said first-half earnings were boosted by growth in turnover in its international business unit, which ca-

ters for high-roller gamblers, to more than NZ\$7 billion. The company was also able to achieve savings at its Adelaide casino and reduce funding costs, it said.

Normalized profit, which adjusts for volatility in the win rate for the international business and one-time items, jumped as much as 29 percent in the first half, SkyCity said. Normalized earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization gained as much as 17 percent to NZ\$180 million. Final first-half results are due Feb. 11. Bloomberg

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Xi asserts China's Middle East role as Iran sanctions lifted

Ting Shi

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping will wade into the feud between Iran and Saudi Arabia as he begins a Middle East tour that shows a new willingness by China to flex its diplomatic clout in one of the world's most volatile regions.

Xi's five-day swing through Riyadh, Cairo and Tehran represents the president's first foray into the Middle East since taking power three years ago and marks 60 years of relations between Beijing and the Arab League. He's also seeking to protect Chinese influence that accumulated in Iran during the country's long isolation, with Xi becoming the first major world leader to visit since the U.S. and European Union lifted sanctions Saturday and cleared the way for its reemergence in the global economy.

The trip may show China playing a more hands-on peace-making role as the Syrian conflict exports violence around the world, regional powers quarrel along sectarian lines and U.S. influence wanes. China doesn't want more strife between Saudi Arabia - its largest source of foreign oil - and Iran, a potential strategic ally sitting at the crossroads of Xi's Silk Road plan to build railways, pipelines and other infrastructure from Asia to Europe. He'll be the first top Chinese leader to visit Iran since 2002.

"China has found itself increasingly enmeshed in the region's conflicts and diplomatic disputes," said Michael Singh, mana-



ging director at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and a former regional adviser to the National Security Council. "Iran represents a strategic opportunity for China. As Beijing seeks to project power globally to secure its interests, Iran will be its most important partner in the Middle East."

Chinese business interests in the region have been expanding for decades and the country is the top trading partner with all three nations on Xi's tour. Saudi Arabia supplied China with 16 percent of its imported oil in 2014, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Xi, in an article published in the Alriyadh newspaper this week, praised robust bilateral economic cooperation, highlighting a light railway in

Mecca built by China in 2015 for providing "convenient service to Muslim pilgrims from around the globe."

In Iran, Chinese interests prospered while sanctions over the country's nuclear program blocked U.S. and European competitors from the market. China buys 40 percent of Iran's oil exports and has become the country's top source of capital and technology. Almost 100 Chinese companies have a presence there. With the sanctions lifted, China is counting on initiatives like the USD40 billion Silk Road fund to counter an influx of competition.

"China will face rivals in a market that heretofore was under sanctions and uncontested," said Ali Vaez, an Istanbul-based senior Iran analyst with the In-

ternational Crisis Group. "The timing of Xi's visit in the wake of lifting the sanctions seems designed to ensure that China's predominant position in the Iranian market is preserved."

In November, China Railway Construction Corp., the national train operator, floated a proposal for a 3,200-kilometer (2,000 mile) high-speed train to Tehran from China's western region of Xinjiang. Officials hope to finalize a deal for the construction of two Chinese-built nuclear power plants during Xi's visit, Iran's Tasnim news agency reported Tuesday.

The Middle East trip is the latest illustration of Xi's desire to build geopolitical influence commensurate with China's status as the world's second-largest economy. Xi's challenge is to promote stability in the region and expand business ties without being dragged into the same bloody quagmires as the U.S. China is now proposing a new role of "constructive engagement" and is urging Western powers to follow its example, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

"This leadership is taking a much more proactive approach, since maintaining stability in the Middle East is crucial for China and any major regional conflict will negatively impact China's energy security," said Li Guofu, who oversees Middle Eastern affairs at the government-run China Institute of International Studies. "China is still rather green in mediating Arab affairs, and the learning process can be

slow and painful."

Concern over stability in the region prompted China to help broker the Iranian nuclear deal in July. China also supported a Security Council resolution condemning the Islamic State in November, after the group launched attacks in Paris and Beirut and announced the execution of a Chinese national. The government in Beijing is particularly concerned that Islamic extremism could spawn more unrest in Xinjiang, which is home to more than 10 million Uighur Muslims.

The Chinese hope their lack of "historical baggage" helps them mediate in the region, Li said. In the run up to Xi's trip, Communist Party leaders have dispatched envoys to Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia. They've hosted both the Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem and the country's opposition leaders in Beijing. Last week, the government issued its first Arab policy paper, in which it vowed to deepen ties between the two sides.

One question is how long China can maintain neutrality in the Middle East as its own growing economic and military clout puts it into increased strategic competition with the U.S. elsewhere in the world.

That rivalry favors closer ties with Iran - Washington's longtime antagonist in the region - than Saudi Arabia, said Timothy Heath, a senior international defense analyst with the RAND Corporation. Besides providing a chance to reduce China's dependence on Saudi oil, Tehran also offers a potential partner in Xi's effort to challenge the Western-dominated international order.

"China may quietly lean towards Iran," Heath said. "Publicly, however, China can be expected to present an even-handed approach to bolster its image as a peacemaker." **Bloomberg**

Economic growth wanes to 25-year low in 2015

Joe McDonald, Beijing

CHINA'S economy cooled further in the latest quarter, dragging 2015's full-year growth to a quarter-century low and deepening a slowdown that has fueled anxiety over its impact on the global economy.

The world's second-largest economy grew 6.9 percent in 2015, the government said yesterday, down from 7.3 percent in the previous year. For the October-December quarter, growth inched down to 6.8 percent, the weakest quarterly expansion in six years.

China's growth has fallen steadily over the past five years as the ruling Com-

munist Party tries to steer away from a worn-out model based on investment and trade toward self-sustaining growth driven by domestic consumption and services.

But the unexpectedly sharp decline over the past two years prompted fears of a politically dangerous spike in job losses. The slowdown has rippled around the world, crimping demand for South Korean electronics and Australian iron ore as well as Middle East oil and Brazilian soy.

The Chinese slowdown and a plunge in Shanghai stock prices have prompted concern about a further loss of support from an economy once seen as

an engine of global growth. That has depressed international financial markets even as the United States and Europe show signs of improvement.

"Official data do not point to a hard landing in the fourth quarter of 2015, but they provide little reason to stop worrying about China's drag on the global economy, either," said economist Bill Adams of PNC Financial Services Group in a report.

Growth was in line with private sector forecasts and the ruling Communist Party's official target of about 7 percent for the year.

China's Shanghai Composite jumped 3.2 percent and other Asian markets

also rose. Investors were relieved that more pessimistic forecasts about fourth quarter growth were wrong and also expect Beijing to continue rolling out stimulus measures to prevent a hard landing.

Beijing responded to ebbing growth by cutting interest rates six times since November, 2014, and launched measures to help exporters and other industries. But economists note China still relies on state-led construction spending and other investment.

Full-year 2015 growth was the lowest since sanctions imposed on Beijing following its crackdown on the Tiananmen Squa-

re pro-democracy movement caused growth to plummet to 3.8 percent in 1990.

The October-December growth figure was the slowest quarterly expansion since the global financial crisis, when growth slumped to 6.1 percent in the first quarter of 2009.

Compared with the previous quarter, the measurement of other major countries use, China's growth slowed to 1.6 percent in the October-December period from the previous quarter's 1.8 percent.

"The international situation remains complex," said Wang Bao'an, commissioner of the National Bureau of Statistics, at a news conference. "Restructuring and upgrading is in an uphill stage. Comprehensively deepening

reform is a daunting task."

Growth in investment in factories, housing and other fixed assets, a key economic driver, weakened to 12 percent in 2015, down 2.9 percentage points from the previous year. Retail sales growth cooled to 10.6 percent from 2014's 12 percent.

December exports shrank 1.4 percent from a year earlier, well below the ruling party's target of 6 percent trade growth. For the full year, exports were down 7.6 percent, a blow to industries that employ millions of Chinese workers.

Forecasters see indications retail sales and other activity accelerated toward the end of 2015, suggesting Beijing's efforts to put a floor under the downturn are gaining traction. **AP**

Kelvin Chan, Hong Kong

Beijing confirms missing HK publisher in mainland

HONG Kong authorities say Chinese officials have confirmed the whereabouts of the chief editor of a publisher specializing in books banned in mainland China three weeks after he went missing and have requested a meeting with him.

The disappearances of Lee Bo, a British citizen, and four other men linked to Hong Kong publishing company Mighty Current and its Causeway Bay Bookshop who went missing last year have intensified fears that Beijing is clamping down on the semi-autonomous Chinese city's freedom of speech.

Hong Kong police said late Monday that they received notice from Guangdong province's public security department that it "understood that Lee Po is in the mainland," using an alternate spelling.

The circumstances of Lee's case led many to suspect Chinese security agents crossed into Hong Kong to abduct him, in breach of the "one country, two systems" principle Beijing promised to uphold after taking control of the city from Britain in 1997. According to local news reports, he was last seen at his company's warehouse and didn't have his mainland travel permit, but days after he went missing he called his wife to say he was in Shenzhen, next to Hong Kong.

Mighty Current specialized in racy but thinly sourced titles on Chinese political intrigue and scandals and other topics Beijing deemed off limits for mainland Chinese publishers, making them popular with mainland visitors to Hong Kong.

Police said in a brief statement that they wrote to Guangdong officials to re-

AP PHOTO



A protester wearing a mask of missing bookseller Lee Bo sits in a cage during a protest against the disappearances of booksellers in Hong Kong

quest a meeting with Lee and to "further understand the situation of the incident." They said Guangdong officials also forwarded to them a letter from Lee to the Hong Kong government, with handwriting that Lee's wife confirmed was his. Police said the letter was similar to one Hong Kong media reported on Monday, which he purportedly wrote to his wife to tell her he "volun-

tarily" went to the mainland to assist authorities with an unspecified investigation.

The news came a day after another of the five missing men, Swedish national Gui Minhai, was shown on state TV tearfully confessing that he turned himself in to mainland authorities over a hit and run accident that he was involved in more than a decade ago. The official Xinhua news agency said Gui struck

and killed a female college student in 2003, was convicted of drunk driving and given probation but fled the country. Gui, one of Mighty Current's owners, was last seen in Thailand in mid-October.

However, similarities between the statements led some to believe they were coerced.

"We can't rule out that it was made under duress, especially since both Lee Bo and Gui Mi-

nhai used very similar language in their communications," said William Nee, Amnesty International's China researcher. He noted that both men asked for privacy, said they didn't want their cases hyped up and stressed they were voluntarily cooperating with investigations.

"This seems to be a way for the government to relieve itself of its obligations to follow due process," Nee said. **AP**

China accuses detained Swede of endangering state security

CHINESE state media say a Swedish co-founder of a human rights group in China was detained because he is suspected of funding activities that endanger state security.

The official Xinhua News Agency said yesterday that Peter Dahlin also collected negative information and trained unlicensed lawyers to stir up hostility toward the government.

Dahlin's group, the China Urgent Action Working Group, says he

was detained on Jan. 3 on his way to Beijing's main airport, where he was to fly to Thailand.

His detention came amid a crackdown on rights lawyers who have sought to hold the government accountable and protect civic rights.

Endangering state security includes a number of offenses. The maximum sentence for some is the death penalty, although it also allows for foreigners to be deported. **AP**

Dalai Lama travels to US for medical checkup

THE Dalai Lama left his home in India yesterday to travel to the United States for a medical checkup, although the Tibetan spiritual leader said he has no specific health complaints.

He told reporters before leaving the Himalayan hill town of Dharamsala that he has been going to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for regular health checkups for the past nine years.

The 80-year-old Buddhist leader said he had a minor swelling in his right eye. He then removed his glasses and laughed, pointing at his slightly swollen eye.

He said he would have

AP PHOTO



Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama points to his swollen right eye as he talks to journalists before boarding his chartered flight in Dharamsala

a "thorough medical checkup" at the Mayo Clinic.

"Then if they find any

problems, they can carry out treatment," he said.

In September, the Da-

lai Lama canceled a series of appearances in the United States on the advice of his U.S. doctors. He was told to rest for several weeks after a medical checkup.

The Dalai Lama says he is likely to return to Dharamsala in March.

The Tibetan spiritual leader fled across the Himalayas to India after a failed uprising in Tibet in 1959. He settled in Dharamsala and set up a Tibetan government-in-exile there.

Beijing accuses him of seeking to separate Tibet from China. But Tibetans and the Dalai Lama say they simply want a higher degree of autonomy under Chinese rule. **AP**



Indian students shout slogans and burn effigies of Hyderabad University's vice chancellor and a federal minister while protesting the death of an Indian student who, along with four others, was barred from using some facilities at his university in the southern tech-hub of Hyderabad, in New Delhi

INDIA

Suicide of student triggers protests in Hyderabad

Omer Farooq, Hyderabad

SHOOUTING slogans and holding placards, hundreds of students yesterday angrily protested the death of an Indian student who, along with four others, was barred from using some facilities at his university in the southern tech-hub of Hyderabad.

The protesters accused Hyderabad University's vice chancellor and a federal minister of unfairly demanding punishment for the five lower-caste students after they clashed last year with a group of students supporting the governing Hindu nationalist party.

Police are investigating whether actions by the officials contributed to the 26-year-old doctoral student's death, which they say was a suicide. He had been a member of a group representing Dalits, the lowest caste in India's Hindu

caste hierarchy.

The demonstrations in Hyderabad drew nationwide attention, with TV channels running updates throughout the morning. The students have boycotted their classes and were holding a sit-in in the university. "We want justice," they shouted as scores of police stood by.

Police detained eight students overnight yesterday following day-long protests on Monday.

Students in Mumbai university also held protests yesterday and demanded the removal of the Hyderabad University vice chancellor.

Rohith Vemula's body was found hanging in a hostel room, weeks after university authorities barred the five students from staying in the students' hostel or using the library or other facilities. The five had been living in a tent

outside the gate of the university since their suspension on Dec. 21.

University officials had cleared the five Dalit students in a preliminary inquiry into the clash, but reversed that decision in December and ordered that they be suspended.

The protesting students say the university's decision to punish the five was due to pressure from federal minister Bandaru Dattatreya, who sent a letter to the Human Resource Development Ministry demanding action against the Dalits.

Although caste discrimination was outlawed soon after India's independence from Britain in 1947, it remains an influential force in Indian society. The government has worked to reverse the discrimination by setting quotas for jobs and university spots for different castes. **AP**

AFGHANISTAN

Afghan woman has nose cut off by husband

Humayoon Babur, Kabul

A young woman in a remote northern region of Afghanistan had her nose cut off by her husband, officials in the region said yesterday.

Fawzia Salimi, a hospital director in Maymana, capital of Faryab province, said 22-year-old Reza Gul was brought in early Monday having lost a great deal of blood.

Gul's husband, 25-year-old Mohammad Khan, has since fled their village. Salimi said the Afghan-Turk Hospital in Maymana was trying to arrange transport for Gul to Turkey for further treatment.

Domestic violence is widespread in Afghanistan, where women are often denied constitutional rights designed to protect them.

Violence has also become somewhat entrenched in Afghan society after 40 years of war, with nearly non-existent mental health care and few options or outlets for a traumatized population.

Hafizullah Fetrat, the head of Fayrab's provincial human rights commission, said violence in the area had risen by at least 30 percent in the past year.

"It's not just in Faryab, it is across the entire north of the country — poverty, high unemployment, ignorance about marriage," he said.

Faryab borders Turkmenistan and is among the poorest regions of Afghanistan, with many people relying on government food handouts. Corruption is also rife, and many residents complain that officials pilfer the aid.

Over the past year, the Taliban's presence in the region has grown. The militant group has intensified its campaign following the drawdown of the international combat mission in 2014.

The district where Gul's family lives is under Taliban control, said Rahmatullah Turkistani, a member of Fayab's provincial council.

Salimi said Khan had returned from Iran three months ago, and since then had repeatedly beaten and tortured his wife. He had also taken another wife who is just seven years old, she said.

Community elders and Taliban representatives in their village had tried mediating with the family to help sort out their problems, a traditional method of dealing with marital issues, Salimi said.

Khan had disappeared from the village, and local security forces including the intelligence agency and police were searching for him, said the provincial governor's spokesman Ahmad Jawed Dedar. **AP**

PAKISTAN

Suicide bomber targeting police kills 11

A suicide bomber riding a motorcycle struck a crowded police checkpoint on the outskirts of the Pakistani city of Peshawar yesterday, killing 11 people in an attack claimed by the Taliban.

Another 21 people were wounded in the blast, which took place on a road leading to neighboring Afghanistan, police official Iqbal Khan said. Peshawar is on the edge of Pakistan's volatile tribal regions, a stronghold of the Taliban and other Islamic militants.

Khan said the dead include four police and seven ci-



A police officer stands guard close to the site of a suicide attack, in Peshawar, Pakistan

vilians, including two children and a local journalist, Mahboob Shah Afridi, who was president of Tribal Union of Journalists in the neighboring Khyber region.

A local Pakistani Taliban commander, Maqbool Dawar, claimed the attack, which took place as a local police chief arrived at the checkpoint. Dawar said it was in response to the killing of his comrades by security forces.

Nisar Khan, who was waiting to cross the road, said the checkpoint was choked with traffic at the time of the

attack. He said the huge blast left vehicles in flames and that he saw wounded people in pools of blood crying out for help.

Militant violence has declined since Pakistan launched a wide-ranging military offensive in North Waziristan, a tribal region along the border with Afghanistan, in the summer of 2014.

But the Taliban have still managed to carry out major attacks, including an assault on an army-run school in Peshawar in December 2014 that killed over 150 people, mostly children. **AP**

Police shoot man dead at Sydney police station

POLICE shot dead a man armed with a knife in a Sydney police station yesterday, an official said.

The man was shot once by a police sergeant with 24 years of experience during a brief confrontation in the foyer of the Quakers Hill police station in northwest Sydney, Assistant Police Commissioner Denis Clifford said.

Police had yet to identify the man, who appeared to be aged in his 40s, or establish a motive for the confrontation.

"There is no indication that this is terrorist-related, but why the man came there and why the confrontation occurred, at this stage we just don't know," Clifford told reporters.

Police officers have been identified as targets of terror attacks inspired by the Islamic State group.

A 15-year-old boy was shot dead by police soon after he fatally shot a civilian police employee outside the state police headquarters in Parramatta in western Sydney in October.

An 18-year-old man was shot dead after he stabbed two policemen outside a police station in the city of Melbourne in September 2014. Both attacks have been blamed on Islamic State followers.

A police statement said no police officer was injured in the latest incident. **AP**

AUSTRALIA

Children of Australians abducted in Africa plea to captors

THE family of an Australian doctor and his wife abducted in Burkina Faso urged the kidnappers yesterday to release the couple so that they can continue their life-saving charity work in the West African country.

Surgeon Ken Elliott and his wife Jocelyn, aged in their 80s, disappeared from their home on Friday near the northern town of Djibo where they have run a medical center for four decades.

A statement on behalf of their daughter and two sons issued by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said the children had been heartened by an outpouring of support from the Burkinabe people "who clearly consider Ken and Jocelyn to be one of their own after all these years of providing surgical services to the region."

It said the couple's chil-



Burkina Faso: Authorities do not know if the abductions are linked to the attack on the country's capital Ouagadougou by al-Qaida-linked fighters on Friday

dren "are understandably deeply dismayed by this incident and sincerely hope that their parents are being treated kindly wherever they are."

The statement called on the couple to be released "so that they may continue to assist those who are in

need of their services."

The couple are thought to have been abducted by jihadis who may have taken them across the border to Mali. Authorities do not know if the abductions are linked to the attack on the country's capital Ouagadougou by al-Qaida-linked fig-

ters on Friday night that left up to 32 people dead.

Following news of the abduction at the weekend, Australia warned travelers of "the serious threat of kidnapping in Burkina Faso, particularly in the north."

The Australian government, which has a policy of refusing to pay ransoms to kidnappers, was dealing with Burkina Faso authorities through Australian diplomats in Ghana.

The family said the couple began their hospital work in Djibo in 1972. They operate a surgical clinic with 120 beds, where Ken Elliott is the sole surgeon and is supported by local staff.

A Facebook page supporting the couple since their abduction has attracted numerous comments of support from around the world.

"I am hopeful that they will come back to us healthy," said one post. **AP**

AD



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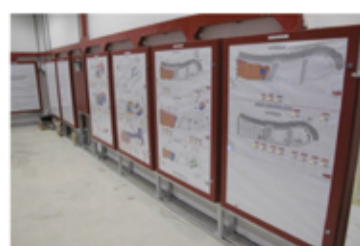
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Jake Coyle, New York

HOLLYWOOD

Calls for boycott of Oscars grow over diversity of nominees

AMID calls for a boycott of the Academy Awards over its all-white acting nominees and Spike Lee and Jada Pinkett Smith both announcing they would sit out this year's ceremony, the academy's president said it was time for major changes — and soon.

Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences President Cheryl Boone Isaacs issued a statement promising more diversity, and quickly, after both Lee and Pinkett spoke out yesterday (Macau time).

In a lengthy Instagram post, Lee said he “cannot support” the “lily white” Oscars. Noting that he was writing on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Lee — who in November was given an honorary Oscar at the Governors Awards — said he was fed up: “Forty white actors in two years and no flava at all,” he wrote. “We can’t act?!”

In a video message on Facebook, Pinkett Smith also said she wouldn't attend or watch the Oscars in February. Pinkett Smith, whose husband Will Smith wasn't nominated for his performance in the NFL head trauma drama “Concussion,” said it was time for people of color to disregard the Academy Awards.

“Begging for acknowledgement, or even asking, diminishes dignity and diminishes power,” she said. “And we are a dignified people and we are powerful.”

She added: “Let's let the academy do them, with all grace and love. And let's do us differently.” The video had amassed 4.5 million by mid-Monday afternoon.

Last year's all-white acting nominees also drew calls for a boycott, though not from such prominent individuals as Lee



Spike Lee

and Pinkett Smith. Whether it had any impact or not, the audience for the broadcast, hosted by Neil Patrick Harris, was down 16 percent from the year prior, a six-year low.

Isaacs has made a point of presenting a more inclusive show this year. The Feb. 28 broadcast will be hosted by Chris Rock and produced by “Django Unchained” producer Reginald Hudlin and David Hill. On Sa-

turday, Rock, unveiling a new promotion for the broadcast, called the ceremony “The White BET Awards.”

The academy didn't respond to messages left yesterday.

When Oscar nominations were announced Thursday, Isaacs acknowledged she was “disappointed” that all 20 acting nominees were again white and promised to “continue the conversation” on diversity.

■ In a lengthy Instagram post, Lee said he ‘cannot support’ the ‘lily white’ Oscars

Isaacs has worked to diversify membership for the academy, which a 2012 study by the Los Angeles Times found is overwhelming white and male.

But on Monday, Isaacs was more explicit and promised an examination of the academy and a more intense drive to diversify.

“This is a difficult but important conversation, and it's time for big changes,” she said in a statement released Monday night. “The Academy is taking dramatic steps to alter the makeup of our membership. In the coming days and weeks we will conduct a review of our membership recruitment in order to bring about much-needed diversity in our 2016 class and beyond.”

Many awards handicappers expected nominations for Idris Elba of “Beasts of No Nation” and Benicio Del Toro for “Sicario.” The N.W.A. biopic “Straight Outta Compton” also failed to earn a best picture nomination, despite some predictions

it would. Ryan Coogler's acclaimed Rocky sequel “Creed” scored only a nomination for Sylvester Stallone. (Lee's own movie, the Chicago gang violence hip-hop musical “Chi-Raq” — celebrated by some and scorned by others — also went unnoticed.)

The hashtag “OscarsSoWhite,” created last year, was quickly resurrected online following the nominations. Rev. Al Sharpton — who last year met with former Sony head Amy Pascal following leaked emails that some viewed as racist — on Friday lambasted the academy.

“Hollywood is like the Rocky Mountains, the higher up you get the whiter it gets and this year's Academy Awards will be yet another Rocky Mountain Oscar,” said Sharpton.

In his post, Lee made it clear the Academy Awards is only part of the problem in an industry with deep-rooted diversity issues. In his Governors Awards speech, Lee said “It's easier to be the president of the United States as a black person than be the head of a studio.”

“The Academy Awards is not where the ‘real’ battle is,” wrote Lee on Tuesday. “It's in the executive office of the Hollywood studios and TV and cable networks. This is where the gate keepers decide what gets made and what gets jettisoned to ‘turnaround’ or scrap heap. This is what's important. The gate keepers. Those with ‘the green light’ vote.” AP

USA-AUSTRALIA

Obama, Turnbull to meet today at White House



Prime Minister of Australia Malcolm Turnbull

PRESIDENT Barack Obama is welcoming his first foreign leader of the new year, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, for talks that will cover the Islamic State militant group and a 12-nation Pacific Rim trade agreement that includes their countries.

Other global, regional and bilateral issues are also on the agenda for meetings the White House says will cover the “extraordinary breadth” of the U.S.-Australian alliance.

Turnbull is on his first visit to the U.S. since

taking office last September. Obama will welcome him to the Oval Office before continuing their talks over a working lunch.

Last week, as Turnbull prepared for the trip, Australia said it was among 40 countries being pressed by the U.S. to boost their military contributions in Iraq and Syria against the Islamic State after the deadly terrorist attacks in Paris in November. But Australia told the U.S. that its commitment would remain largely unchanged.

Australia has six jet fighters based in Dubai flying

missions against Islamic State targets in Iraq and Syria. It also has soldiers in non-combat roles in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

Obama and Turnbull held their first formal meeting since Turnbull's election on the sidelines of an economic summit in Manila in November. Obama said after that meeting that they had discussed the fight against extremism, as well as the need to increase international pressure on the Islamic State group.

Obama also praised the U.S. alliance with Aus-

tralia. “One of the things when we speak to our Australian partners is there are very few things we disagree on,” he said in November.

Turnbull said in Manila that Australia will continue “shoulder to shoulder” with the U.S. in the mission against the Islamic State group.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter and Turnbull met yesterday at the Pentagon. They reviewed recent developments in Iraq and Syria, and security issues in the Asia-Pacific region, according to Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook. AP

what's ON

"PRINT" - ART PROJECT

TIME: 12pm-7pm

(Closed on Tuesdays, open on public holidays)

UNTIL: February 21, 2016

VENUE: No Cruzamento da Avenida do Coronel Mesquita com a Avenida Almirante Lacerda Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2853 0026

GEGEGE MEMORIES: COMIC EXHIBITION

TIME: 10:30 am to 6:30 pm

(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

INK WASH OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY

- PAINTINGS BY CHARLES CHAUDERLOT

TIME: 10am-7pm

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

UNTIL: June 19, 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

THE COLLECTION EXHIBITION

OF TAI FUNG TONG ART HOUSE

TIME: 2pm-6pm daily (Except Mondays)

VENUE: Tai Fung Tong Art House,

Calçada da Igreja de S. Lázaro 7

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 3537 / 2834 6626

THE MAGNIFICENT PALACE - IMPERIAL ARCHITECTURE OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY

TIME: 10am-7pm

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

UNTIL: March 13, 2016

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,

Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE

ADMISSION: MOP5

(Free on Sundays and public holidays)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 7588

MACAU ARTS WINDOW - MEMORIES AND SYMBOLS - MULTIMEDIA BY KITTY LEUNG

TIME: 10am-7pm

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

UNTIL: February 14, 2016

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,

Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE

ADMISSION: MOP5

(Free on Sundays and public holidays)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

Offbeat

STAR OF DOLPHIN-KILLING FILM
DETAINED AT JAPAN AIRPORT

The star of an Oscar-winning documentary about dolphin killings in Japan has been detained by immigration authorities at an airport near Tokyo.

Ric O'Barry is the former dolphin trainer for the "Flipper" TV series and star of "The Cove." The film shows the slaughter of dolphins herded into a cove in the coastal fishing village of Taiji. He was barred entry early yesterday.

Immigration officials say it is their policy not to comment on individual cases. O'Barry's lawyer Takashi Takano says he has appealed the decision.

He said immigration officials at Narita airport say O'Barry is not a tourist, the visa he was using to enter Japan.

O'Barry told Takano that the officials accused him of having close relations with anti-whaling group Sea Shepherd, which O'Barry denies.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
16:50	Criminal Minds S.7
18:10	Trail of Lies (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Entrevista (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Os Resistentes - Retratos de Macau
21:05	Montra do Lilau
21:40	Documentary Serie
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	The Resistents - Macau Portraits
23:35	Documentary series

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

2002 CAMP X-RAY
PICTURES SPARK OUTRAGE

The publication of photographs of prisoners being held at a US military camp in Cuba has led to concern that their human rights are being abused.

The Pentagon has released the pictures showing the detainees kneeling and subjected to sensory deprivation on their arrival at Camp X-Ray, which is housed in a military base at Guantanamo Bay.

They are seen handcuffed, wearing goggles, ear muffs, surgical masks and heavy gloves.

A new group of 34 prisoners have arrived at Camp X-Ray, taking the total number being held there to 144.

US forces captured the men during military operations in Afghanistan on suspicion of links to the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

Human rights activists have objected to the prisoners being shackled and kept in temporary eight-by-eight feet cells made of wire mesh and corrugated metal roofs, leaving them subject to adverse weather.

Amnesty International, the human rights group, says conditions there fall below US standards for ordinary prisoners and the men are being degraded.

The director of the British-based Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, Helen Bamber, said: "They will probably have panic attacks, mood changes and terrible nightmares."

But Washington says the pictures show the men arriving at the camp and were not representative of daily life there.

It says they have been treated humanely and been given adequate provisions.

The US military has stressed the prisoners are extremely dangerous and said it will press ahead with plans to expand Camp X-Ray so it can hold 320 prisoners.

Hundreds of detainees remain in custody in Afghanistan awaiting transfer to the camp.

A permanent prison which will hold up to 1,000 detainees is currently under construction at Guantanamo Bay.

Last week, a team from the International Committee of the Red Cross started evaluating conditions at the US military camp and interviewing detainees.

Officials will report on whether the captives are being treated humanely in accordance with the Geneva Conventions on prisoners of war.

But the US insists the men are not PoWs but illegal combatants, which means they can be interrogated without legal representation.

Under the Geneva Conventions, prisoners would be tried for war crimes through courts martial or civilian courts, not by secretive military tribunals which could impose the death penalty.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In 2001, following the 11 September terrorist attacks which killed nearly 3,000 people, the US launched a military campaign in Afghanistan.

The objective was to remove the Taliban regime, which harboured al-Qaeda and its leader Osama Bin Laden who later admitted carrying out the attacks.

In April 2003, Camp Delta replaced Camp X-Ray and became the permanent facility to hold detainees, who were given cells with solid walls and proper facilities.

At its peak in 2003, Guantanamo Bay held 680 prisoners from around 40 countries - nine of them from Britain - and more than 100 have been released.

The majority have been held without charge.

In 2004, hearings began so detainees could challenge the rules under which they are being held and determine if their detention is legal.

Also, military tribunals, similar to criminal trials, began for some detainees who have been charged with war crimes and conspiring to commit terrorism.

Allegations of abuse of prisoners have continued to surface from previous detainees and human rights groups, which the White House has said will be "fully investigated".

United Nations investigators have called for the closure of the prison which Amnesty International campaigners have compared to a Soviet labour camp.

Even the UK, a strong American ally, has asked for the camp to close, saying it fuels Islamic radicalism.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Seek wisdom from your inner self! Get a Free Spiritual Reading today. Call 1-800-648-9165 right now! Powered by Match.comLet Astrology.com reveal your perfect match...

Taurus April 20-May 20 You are feeling protective of someone - maybe to the point of madness! Just let it go as much as you can and learn from your feelings. Sometimes you don't have to act to get what you want.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Your desires make you stand out today - but that's okay. Just make sure that you're not too pushy, or someone with more intense energy may push right back! Express yourself clearly.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Are you feeling nervous about something? Say no! You should only agree to things that seem absolutely right at the gut level, even if people are pushing you and it's hard to refuse.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Your family needs you - and that goes both ways! Give someone what they need (instead of what they want, maybe), and you should find that things start to get better and better for all of you.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Pay attention! If you're not really listening to what others have to say, then you are sure to miss out on some important clues. Life could be really easy for you, but only if you're open to the truth.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 It may be time for an inventory - or a house-clearing! If you can handle the stress of a yard sale, you may find that you can get ready for that move that may be coming up, and defray its costs.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Inner strength is vitally important right now - and you have more than you need! You can resist others' attempts to sway you and ensure that your voice gets heard by the right people.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Keep up the inward pressure - you know that your energy is slightly out of whack, but if you don't keep up the thinking and introspection, you never know what you might miss out on later.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Your friends are rock-solid today - you can count on them for almost anything, even the flaky ones! It's a good day for you to check into some new activity that can draw you all even closer together!

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You can't quite put your finger on it, but you know that you need to deal with your ambitions today. It may be time for you to step up and ask for that promotion - or change careers entirely!

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You can't quite figure out what's going on with your interior life today - at one point, you know just what you need, then you seem to change your mind almost immediately! Wait 'til tomorrow to choose.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Controversial orchard spray; 5- Bottom line; 10- Ray of light; 14- "Star Wars" princess; 15- Hopping mad; 16- Woody's boy; 17- Authorization; 19- Nicholas II was the last Russian one; 20- Echo, for one; 21- Alternative to pjs; 23- Vegas roller; 25- Spanish Mister; 26- Movie-rating org.; 29- Elderly, matured; 31- Brag; 35- Apr. addressee; 36- Hey, you!; 37- Deficient in pigmentation; 38- Salty Mideastern body; 40- One bent in reverence; 41- Trojan War hero; 42- Manner of walking; 43- Auction ending?; 44- Growl angrily; 45- Damon of "Good Will Hunting"; 46- Fictional Jane; 47- Drive forward; 49- Abby's twin; 51- Locks; 54- Art supporter; 58- Indian wrap; 59- Variety; 63- ___ account (never); 64- Pave over; 65- Cornerstone abbr.; 66- Type of gun; 67- Atty.-to-be exams; 68- Tolstoy and Gorcey;

DOWN: 1- Iams alternative; 2- Lecherous look; 3- Suffix with concession; 4- Open shelter; 5- ___ the season...; 6- Surgery sites, briefly; 7- Mai ___; 8- Did penance; 9- Bolshevik leader; 10- Casual coatlike garment; 11- Prefix for while; 12- Jai ___; 13- Oliver Twist's request; 18- A mean Amin; 22- Drinking glass; 24- Relaxes; 25- Collector's goal; 26- King with a golden touch; 27- Primp; 28- Yoga posture; 30- Govt. property overseer; 32- Alvin of dance; 33- Look of disdain; 34- Yankee manager Joe; 36- Old Testament book; 37- Singer Baker; 39- Fiducle; 40- Crazy ___; 42- Guy's partner; 45- Untidy states; 46- Tooth covering; 48- Bit of wisdom; 50- Butterfly catcher; 51- General ___ chicken; 52- ___ and rave; 53- Fish-eating eagle; 55- Zaire's Mobutu ___ Seko; 56- Within (prefix); 57- Old Fords; 60- RR stop; 61- Cereal grass; 62- Monopoly quartet; Abbr.;



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PJ (Open line) 993
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PSP 28 573 333
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Pacha Macau Opens at Studio City



DJ Erick Morillo's electrifying act officially opens the doors of the legendary night club in Macau to party goers and music fans in Asia



DJ Sebastian Gamboa welcomes guests to Macau for Pacha Macau's welcome party on the evening prior to the Grand Opening Special event on Friday 15 January



(From left to right) Eddie Dean and Marta Planells Lucendo, celebrate the Grand Opening Special event with a giant Pacha cherry cake



Guests enjoying celebrations throughout the night at Pacha Macau's Grand Opening event



Pacha Cherry dancers performing to guests



(From left to right) Kim Dean, JD Clayton and Eddie Dean



DJ Erick Morillo commands the dance floor



Eddie Dean, Pacha NYC President & CEO and Managing Director for Pacha Macau (Right), and Liam Dwyer, Director Pacha Macau, welcome guests to the Grand Opening Special event on Saturday 16 January



(From left to right) Eddie Dean, Marta Planells Lucendo, Pacha Franchises Director, JD Clayton, Property President Studio City, Liam Dwyer, Tony Prats, Technical Director Pacha Ibiza and Francisco Ferrer, Managing Director Pacha Ibiza celebrate the opening with a champagne toast



(From left to right) Francisco Ferrer, DJ Erick Morillo and Tony Prats enjoying the party vibe

MACAU'S FIRST cinema-themed integrated entertainment facility, retail outlet and gaming resort has welcomed over 2,000 guests to the opening party of Pacha Macau.

The Ibiza-styled club kick-started the weekend's celebrations with a "Welcome to Macau" party, featuring a special performance by Ibiza veteran and Pacha resident, DJ Sebastian Gamboa.

The club hosted an exclusive grand opening event which included a performance by the famous Colombian-American producer and record label owner DJ Erick Morillo.

Pacha received a number of prominent guests from Hong Kong and Macau including JD Clayton, Property President of Studio City, along with special guests who flew from New York especially to welcome the opening of Pacha.

Pacha's first club in Greater China intends to make its mark as the first mega-club in the region, confirming its growing status as among the world's largest global nightclub brand. With a capacity that can reach 3,000 partygoers, Pacha aims to raise the competitive stakes even higher in the dynamic Asian entertainment industry.

Guests can expect state-of-the-art audio/visual facilities including digital mapping and specialized lighting systems to boost the customer experience on the 1,000 sq. ft. dance floor, and in four private luxury KTV VIP suites and a spacious outdoor patio.

Pacha's NYC President & CEO and the Managing Director for Pacha Macau, Eddie Dean, says that they are thrilled by the response and feedback from the grand opening attendees. "[We aim] to offer the best nightlife experiences to party-goers in Asia with that unique Pacha flair and spirit. This is just the beginning of many more incredible parties to come!" he noted.

John Pye, Melbourne

TENNIS

Verdasco sends Nadal out in 1st round of Australian Open

RAFAEL Nadal lost to Fernando Verdasco in the first round of the Australian Open, an unprecedented early exit at Melbourne Park for the 14-time Grand Slam winner and a reversal of their epic, 5-hour, 14-minute semifinal here six years ago.

Fernando Verdasco rallied from a 2-1 deficit to win the last two sets, recovering a break in the fifth as well, claiming a 7-6 (6), 4-6, 3-6, 7-6 (4), 6-2, only his third victory in 17 matches against his fellow Spanish left-hander.

Nadal won his only Australian title in 2009 after beating Verdasco in the semifinals. His only other first-round exit in a major was at Wimbledon in 2013 when he lost in straight sets to No. 135-ranked Steve Darcis of Belgium.

"It's a hard and painful loss," the fifth-seeded Nadal said.

Verdasco went for everything on his ground strokes, ripping 90 winners against only 37 for Nadal as he worked to the extremes to unsettle his former No. 1-ranked rival.

"To win against Rafa here coming from two sets down is unbelievable," the 32-year-old, No. 45-ranked Verdasco said. "I think I played unbelievable — the fifth set from the break that he made me, I just started hitting winners. I don't know how, just, you know I was closing the eyes and everything was coming in and I keep doing it and I was doing well."

A winning service return from Verdasco ended the match in 4 hours, 41 minutes.

"Well I think 2009 was maybe the only day in my life that I hit 4, 5 hours," Verdasco said, looking at the clock beside the court to compare it with their semifinal meeting. "It was 35 minutes shorter today — I didn't want to make it longer."

There were two upsets on the women's side, with No. 2 Simona Halep and seven-time Grand

AP PHOTO



Rafael Nadal (left) of Spain congratulates compatriot Fernando Verdasco

Slam winner Venus Williams losing in the first round.

Halep, the 2014 French Open finalist, lost 6-4, 6-3 to Zhang Shuai for her third first-round loss at Melbourne Park in the past five years, but giving the No. 133-ranked Chinese qualifier her first win at a Grand Slam after 14 losses.

After the match, Zhang broke into tears when asked about breaking the drought.

"I think in my life, it's the best tennis," she said. "To win against a top-two player, I'm so happy, so excited."

Williams lost 6-4, 6-2 to Johanna Konta, her eighth first-round loss at a major.

The upset results took some focus off the match-fixing allegations that have overshadowed the first two days of the season's first major.

No. 2-ranked Andy Murray began his bid for a drought-breaking title at the Australian Open with a 6-1, 6-2, 6-3 win over Alexander Zverev, checked to see there were no urgent calls from home, and had to answer questions immediately about the reports.

"I just think that it should be tennis that does a better job of explaining ... (players) shouldn't have to read it in the press," Murray said. "You have to be proactive I think with things like this and go and speak to the players rather than them reading about it in the newspapers or listening to it on the TV or the radio."

The BBC and BuzzFeed News published reports Monday alleging match-fixing had gone unchecked in tennis. The reports alleged 16 players, all ranked in the top 50 at some stage

and half of them playing at the Australian Open, had repeatedly raised suspicion because of their results and had been flagged with tennis authorities, but had not been sanctioned. No players were identified.

The governing bodies for tennis rejected the claims, and highlighted the fact five players and an official had received life bans after investigations from the Tennis Integrity Unit which was set up in 2008.

Murray, like Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic, thought authorities could be doing more to combat the potential for corruption. Murray also said it was "a little bit hypocritical" for tournaments — including the Australian Open — to be sponsored by betting firms.

Murray has the reached the final four times in Australia but lost every time, including last year to Djokovic. Murray had Amelie Mauresmo, a new mother, back in his coaching corner this week and was happy not to get any mid-match news from home. He has said he'll leave immediately if his wife, Kim, goes into labor in London with their first child.

No. 13 Milos Raonic followed up his win over Roger Federer in the final of the Brisbane International tune-up event with a 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 win over Lucas Pouille.

Joining him the second round will be No. 8 David Ferrer, No. 10 John Isner and No. 18 Feliciano Lopez.

On the women's side, No. 3 Garbine Muguruza beat Anett Kontaveit 6-0, 6-4 and No. 7 Angelique Kerber had a 6-7 (4), 7-6 (6), 6-3 win over Misaki Doi. **AP**

FOOTBALL

Cristiano Ronaldo says Zidane has raised Real Madrid spirits

REAL Madrid has trained hard under new coach Zinedine Zidane and recovered its enthusiasm following the departure of Rafa Benitez according to star forward Cristiano Ronaldo

Speaking after Sunday's 5-1 win over Sporting Gijon, Ronaldo said the results of "a week of hard work" are visible on the pitch, with the squad "in

good spirits with Zidane." Ronaldo, who scored twice, says Zidane has "a different concept" of football and "sees the game differently" to previous coach, Benitez.

Part of the change comes from Zidane's insistence on "keeping possession of the ball in the opponents' half," Ronaldo says.

With half of the season still to go, Ronaldo says

the team hopes to reach the end of the Spanish and Champions leagues feeling as positive, adding "we are happy about how things are going."

Under Zidane, Madrid has had two five-goal league wins, with consecutive victories over Deportivo La Coruna and Sporting Gijon.

"I honestly notice an improvement in the team's

attitude with Zidane's arrival," said Ronaldo. "The players feel a little more empathy for Zidane, do not ask me why because I couldn't tell you, that's football."

Ronaldo said it wasn't that Benitez "was not doing his job well, it's just things weren't working out."

Luka Modric said part of the problem was that Ma-

AP PHOTO



Real Madrid's newly appointed coach Zinedine Zidane (3rd right) stands next to Cristiano Ronaldo (2nd left)

drid's squad was not fully physically fit during the early part of the season.

"We had a hectic pre-

season," said Modric. "Flying from Australia and China, we traveled more than we trained." **AP**

opinion

Macau Matters

Richard Whitfield



AQUAPONICS

Aquaponics is the combination of aquaculture for growing fish and hydroponics for growing plants that is often used in old factory buildings in cities. It is something to consider for Macau to use up old factory spaces and help to diversify the economy.

When I was a postgraduate student in the 1980s I spent many hours in the library poring through printed indices of journal articles, then completing inter-library loan forms to get copies of the articles I was interested in, and waiting weeks for the copies to arrive. It was a very long winded process that is now totally obsolete. Just do a simple google.com or youtube.com search for aquaponics and you can find out more than you ever want to know about this interesting technology in just a few hours. The growth and evolution of the Internet in the last 40 years has totally changed learning.

I really like highly efficient sophisticated systems where the waste output from one process is transformed into the input for another, and aquaculture is a very good example of this in practice. It is a cycle which can start anywhere, but let us start with the fish for convenience.

They are fed with meal made from ground up vegetable and protein and once grown can be harvested for human consumption. The waste from the fish tanks consists of particulates and ammonia (in the water). The particulates (uneaten fish meal and faeces) is eliminated from the system, to be used as a good traditional garden fertiliser. By contrast, the ammoniated water is pumped to a bio-filter where common bacteria and algae convert the ammonia to nitrites and nitrates, which are excellent plant foods. This nitrogen rich water is then used to grow plants without soil - most plants can be grown in inert pebble beds filled with flowing nitrogen rich water. After being used by the plants, the water can be returned to the fish tank for re-use. The fully grown plants can be harvested for human consumption. Finally, leftover vegetables can be composted with worms to be made into fish meal, thus starting the cycle again.

If this kind of system is well designed and tuned very few (if any) additional chemicals are needed so that aquaculture can be considered a form of organic farming. Even the water is used in a closed loop!

In Macau we have a lot of leftover food that can be readily processed to make fish food (or conventional garden fertilizer). When used with an aquaponics "factory", the fish meal can be utilized to grow high quality fish and plants for human consumption. These aquaponics factories can be set up in obsolete factory buildings in Macau.

Natural sunlight is also not an issue because artificial lighting is often used in this kind of system. In this way the plants can be exposed to 20+ hours of "daylight" each day to speed up their growing cycle. Moreover, photovoltaic panels combined with batteries can be used to renewably generate the electrical power needed for the artificial lighting (and to run the water pumping subsystems).

Thus, the main inputs to the system are low quality disused factory space, low value leftover waste food and free sunlight and the outputs are high quality "organic" fish and plants ready for eating and traditional garden fertilizer. Don't you love this kind of efficiency?

And I am sure it would work in Macau, like it does in many cities in the developed world and in developing countries like Thailand, the Philippines and China.

THE BUZZ THE WORLD'S OLDEST MAN, A JAPANESE, DIES AT AGE 112

The world's oldest man, a Japanese, died yesterday at the age of 112 after suffering chronic heart problems, officials said.

Yasutaro Koide had said his secret to a long life was not to smoke, drink or overdo it.

Koide, who was born on March 13, 1903, died two months short of his 113th birthday. Koide worked as a tailor when he was younger. He was recognized by Guinness World Records as the world's oldest man last August.



Station	Air quality
Roadside	50-70 Good
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Good
Ambient	50-70 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

Tennis stars ask why is courtside gambling OK?



Andy Murray of Britain

Jocelyn Gecker, Melbourne

ANDY Murray finds it "hypocritical" that tennis authorities are trying to stamp out match-fixing run by gambling syndicates but have partnered with a major gambling company that is now advertising on the Australian Open's show courts.

The two issues are separate but have collided at this year's Australian Open, where tennis was overshadowed for a second day yesterday by allegations that match-fixing has gone unchecked in tennis.

The controversy ignited this week when the BBC and BuzzFeed News published reports alleging that the sport's highest authorities had ignored evidence of match-fixing involving 16 players who had been ranked in the top 50 over

the past decade. The report said that half of those players were at this year's Australian Open but did not name names.

The governing bodies for tennis have presented a unified front in rejecting the claims, and highlighted the fact that five players and an official had received life bans after investigations from the Tennis Integrity Unit which was set up in 2008.

No. 2-ranked Murray and other top players, including Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic, say authorities could be doing more to combat the problem. The players said they have known the issue existed but they doubt any top players have been involved.

Murray said the sport was sending mixed messages by allowing betting company William Hill to become one

of the Australian Open's sponsor's this year and advertise on the tournament's three main show courts.

For the first time at Melbourne Park, electronic advertising boards at Rod Laver Arena, Margaret Court Arena and Hisense Arena display the name "William Hill" during breaks in play.

"I'm not really pro that," Murray, a four-time finalist in Melbourne said yesterday, after advancing to the second round.

"I think it's a little bit hypocritical," Murray added. "You know, because I don't believe the players are allowed to be sponsored by betting companies, but the tournaments are. I don't really understand how it all works. I think it's a bit strange."

A day earlier, No. 1-ranked Djokovic called it "borderline."

"It's a fine line. Honestly, it's on a borderline, I would say," Djokovic said. "Whether you want to have betting companies involved in our sport or not, it's hard to say what's right and what's wrong."

Tennis officials defended the partnership with gambling sponsors and provided an explanation that one Australian paper, The Age, called "positive top-pin." **AP**

WORLD BRIEFS



IRAN has successfully transferred some of its formerly frozen assets in order to ensure that financial sanctions have been fully lifted in accordance with a historic nuclear deal, the head of the central bank said yesterday.

SOUTH KOREA toughened its aviation security law in the aftermath of the notorious nut rage incident involving a top airline executive. The transport ministry said the revised law went into effect yesterday, more than a year after a Korean Airlines vice president's tantrum over macadamia nuts delayed a flight.



MYANMAR Members of the Kachin ethnic group have called for justice for two young volunteer teachers who were raped and murdered in a case they believe highlights sexual violence by government soldiers. A report on the assault was released yesterday as a memorial service was held in Yangon for Tangbau Hkawn Nan Tsin and Maran Lu Ra, who were attacked a year ago.

INDIA Shouting slogans and holding placards, hundreds of students yesterday angrily protested the death of an Indian student who, along with four others, was barred from using some facilities at his university in the southern tech-hub of Hyderabad. **More on p12**



INTERNET Some Twitter users had to do without early yesterday after sporadic outages knocked the social media site offline in Europe. Reports of malfunctions began to appear in the US as well, but it was unclear how widespread the outages were. Twitter Inc. which has 320 million active users, tweeted that it is aware of the issue and is trying to fix it. Users said the service was not accessible on desktop computers.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Visar Kryeziu



Cold mountain. Migrants are reflected in a puddle of water as they walk from the Macedonian border into Serbia, yesterday, bracing cold temperatures on their journey further north towards Western Europe.