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"Come and play! We even accept HKD1," invites an employee of the VIP room at the Jimei Casino, one of 20 in Macau owned by SJM

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WORLD BRIEFS

ZIKA The World Health Organization declares a global emergency over the explosive spread of the Zika virus, which has been linked to birth defects in the Americas, calling it an "extraordinary event" that poses a threat to other parts of the world.

CHINA A U.S. meat supplier is disputing a Chinese court's verdict that its local subsidiary sold expired chicken and beef to McDonald's, KFC and other fast food restaurants in China.
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CHINA-N. KOREA Wu Dawei, China's special representative for Korean Peninsula affairs, arrived yesterday in Pyongyang amid a flurry of diplomacy over the North's recent nuclear test. More on p12

MALAYSIA A former law minister has filed a lawsuit challenging a decision by the country's attorney general not to prosecute Prime Minister Najib Razak over a financial scandal that involved more than USD700 million channeled into his private bank accounts.
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GARY NGAI

A 'witness to history' says the world can learn from Macau

P2 MDT REPORT

A new book chronicling the life of a sixth-generation, Indonesian-born, overseas Chinese man was presented last week by the Macau Society of Social Sciences at the Jao Tsung-I Academy.

The book written by Barnabas Koo, titled "A Witness to History: an overseas Chinese in mainland China and Macau," details the life of Gary Ngai, the president of the Macau Association for the Promotion of Exchange between Asia-Pacific and Latin America, against the backdrop of the large number of overseas Chinese living in Southeast Asia.

It addresses one of the biggest challenges of the "Chinese Diaspora": the question of "competing loyalties and complex identities."

The Times spoke with Gary Ngai to discuss the first and only book chronicling his fascinating life, and his unique perspective on what the world can learn from Macau.

Ngai, who regards himself as both Chinese and Indonesian, is just one of some 600,000 Chinese who were estimated to have returned to their ancestral homeland following the victory of the communists and the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949.

Bound for China on a boat departing from the Indonesian island of Java, Ngai made his way to Beijing in 1950 at the age of just 18. There he studied, before working mostly as a translator for government officials. His early knowledge of Dutch and Mandarin prepared him well for a career that saw him learn Russian and Cantonese, among other languages.

After leaving mainland China at the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution, Ngai followed his wife and family to Macau, who had arrived around six months prior.

Gary Ngai told the Times that he has lived and worked through what he describes as "six very diverse and often difficult" periods: the colonial Dutch period; the Japanese occupation of Indonesia; the independence of Indonesia; the founding years of the People's Republic of China; the Cultural Revolution; and both pre- and post-handover Macau.

From these diverse life experiences, Ngai has formulated a unique outlook on Macau, claiming that the territory's cultural harmony can serve as an example to the rest of world –

A 'witness to history' says the world can learn from Macau



Gary Ngai

much of it currently rife with conflict.

"Where is a better place in the world where so many cultures can interact with each other?" Ngai asked. "The world has much to learn about peaceful coexistence from Macau. It's a showcase [model] for the world."

"The keywords here are unity and diversity," he added.

Ngai also praises the cultural preservation efforts of Macau, which he regards as superior to that of neighboring Hong Kong and the mainland. "For example, take Daoism," he told the Times, "these traditions were destroyed by the Cultural Revolution [on the mainland] and by the Japanese occupa-

“The world has much to learn about peaceful coexistence from Macau.”

GARY NGAI

tion in Hong Kong. But this did not happen in Macau."

Even gambling has a long cultural history in Macau and ought to be preserved, the former translator justified. Gambling, in a more traditional Chinese sense, has existed in Macau for nearly 200 years, Ngai says.

"Macau has such a long tradition of gambling. You cannot throw out the tradition of gambling – it has existed for hundreds of years [here]. The Portuguese understood that," he added, commending the cultural preservation efforts of the territory's former administrators.

However, not everything in Macau has stayed the same. Ngai notes that, since his arrival in the MSAR around 40 years ago, the city has modernized both in terms of its infrastructure and in terms of its breadwinner industry: the gaming sector.

"Back when I arrived, there was no infrastructure here," he said, adding that it would sometimes take around 12 hours to travel between Hong Kong and Macau. "You would leave Hong Kong in the morning and arrive in Macau at

night."

"There [also] used to be very few cars, and most people rode a bicycle around town. And there were no bridges at that time," he told the Times. The first bridge to connect Macau with Taipa, the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge, opened in 1974.

The Indonesian-born Chinese accredits the modernization to Stanley Ho. He says that mainland officials have repeatedly written Ho off, when, in fact, they are "jealous" of him. "He is a very clever man," added Ngai.

Asked why the overseas Chinese feel such a strong attachment to their ancestral homeland, even when they are the second or third generation to be born outside of the country, Ngai replied that, in the case of Southeast Asia, it was probably due to the segregation they experienced in the countries in which they lived.

In countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, the ethnic Chinese were regarded as a distinct merchant class enjoying "partial rights." While they were not entitled to the full



rights that ruling imperialists enjoyed, they were seen as a step above the native people, who often possessed either no or few rights.

Therefore, ethnic Chinese people were alienated from the other segments of society in the countries in which they lived and resided. On the one hand, they were not considered home-grown natives; on the other, they were not considered a part of the ruling establishment.

The exception, says Ngai, was in the case of Thailand, where Chinese and Thai cultures have "fused well." Thailand was the only country in the region that was not directly ruled by colonizers. **Staff reporter**

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Construction workers' wages slightly up

The average daily wage of construction workers increased by 2.9 percent quarter-to-quarter to MOP793 in the final quarter of 2015, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) revealed. The average daily wage of local construction workers (MOP1,000) rose by 2 percent quarter-to-quarter, while that of non-resident construction workers (MOP668) went up 1.1 percent. In terms of construction materials, the price index of construction materials for residential buildings (131.7) in the fourth quarter of 2015 dropped slightly by 0.4 percent quarter-to-quarter; increasing 2.1 percent year-on-year.

Traditional flower arrangements on display



In celebration of the upcoming Lunar New Year, an exhibition titled "The Charms of Flowers – Exhibition of Traditional Chinese Flower Arrangements" is being held at the Jao Tsung-I Academy from yesterday. Featuring assorted seasonal blossoms, exquisitely arranged in six types of traditional Chinese containers, the exhibition will be open to the public until July 31. Admission is free.

Uruguay grants visa-free stays to MSAR passport holders

Holders of MSAR passports and Travel Permits can now enter Uruguay as tourists for a visa-free stay of up to 90 days. The measure came into force this week after the Honorary Consul of Uruguay in Hong Kong, Anabella Levin-Freris, visited the local Identification Services Bureau on January 25. At present, 119 countries or territories have granted visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to MSAR Passport holders, while 11 countries have agreed to grant MSAR Travel Permit holders visa-free access to their region.

GAMING

Slot machines in VIP rooms show desperation of casinos

Daniela Wei

The desperation at Macau casinos is evident these days: At the recent opening of a VIP gambling room for high rollers, Chinese lions are dipping and arching to the clang of cymbals. There's roast pig, a red carpet - and banks of slot machines adorned with Chinese money gods and dragons.

Wait, slot machines? Usually a VIP room is filled with baccarat tables, with those downscale slots relegated to the entrances. But this first-of-its kind VIP slots room, with only a few high-betting tables at all, shows how much those who run such operations need to drain every dollar from their busiest season, Lunar New Year.

A week after the opening in mid-January, the room was already ready to forgo the HKD100,000 (USD13,000) membership fee required to play.

"Come and play! We even accept HKD1," invites an employee of the VIP room at the Jimei Casino, one of 20 in Macau owned by SJM Holdings Ltd. That's about 13 cents. Zhang Zheng, the operator of the room, was the only one in sight playing.

Back in 2014, before a crackdown on corruption in China and the so-called junket operators such as Zhang who shuttle Chinese big spenders to Macau and finance their bets, casino revenue reached a record \$4.8 billion in a single month. This year won't see nearly those numbers. Revenue has been falling for 20 straight months to less than half its peak, or 18.7 billion Macau patacas (\$2.3 billion) in January.

Slot machines only contributed 5 percent of the city's total gambling revenue last year. Yet they have "die-hard fans," said Zhang, who has been aggressively promoting his business ahead of the Year of Monkey to pull in customers and offering higher-than-average commissions to agents who bring patrons in. If big spenders get credit to play slots, he reckons he can get revenues three to five times higher than the average of the machines on the mass gambling floors.

"Operating a traditional baccarat VIP room can barely make profit these days," said Zhang, who is counting on VIP-room slots' novelty to draw customers even though he doesn't think the peak season can help the overall situation. "I am confident the VIP slots



room can perform well because it faces less competition."

"Junkets are still in economic distress, as they are willing to try anything to increase revenue," said Grant Govertsen, a Macau-based analyst at boutique investment bank Union Gaming Group, which specializes in the industry.

The BI Macau China Gaming Market Competitive Peers Index climbed 2.2 percent yesterday after falling 46 percent in 2015.

Alleged thefts by employees at junket operators in recent months have worried investors who have withdrawn their money and caused some operators, who also found it increasingly difficult to collect debts, to be more wary about

Junkets are still in economic distress, as they are willing to try anything to increase revenue

GRANT GOVERTSEN

lending. A lack of funds also tightened the amount they can lend. The number of junket operators has dropped 23 percent in a year, to 141, government statistics show.

Last year, more than 30 VIP rooms closed in four months alone and more closures might come after the Lunar New Year, depending on their performance and their cash flow, said Kwok Chi-chung, president of Macau's Association of Gaming & Entertainment Promoters.

"Junkets have not enough capital or they dare not take the risk to lend in the weakening economy," said financial controller Derrick Wong of junket operator Iao Kun Group Holding Co., which is listed on Nasdaq.

Vacationing, cash-paying patrons might be some cause for optimism, as they are expected to outnumber high-end players in the April-June period, when revenue during Chinese New Year will maintain at last year's level in February, said Billy Ng, a Hong Kong-based analyst at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. Casino companies, such as Sands China Ltd. and Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd., are building more non-gaming amenities to woo more tourists as mandated by the Macau go-

vernment.

The pace of decline in the mass market has been slowing to 1.9 percent in December from a 21 percent drop in October, narrowing the gap with VIP customers, according to data compiled by Bloomberg Intelligence. DS Kim, a Hong Kong-based gaming analyst at JPMorgan Chase & Co., predicts a year-on-year growth in the mass market in the second quarter.

Signs point to the increasing dominance of mass bettors. VIP gamblers once occupied more than 75 percent of Macau hotel rooms and now account for less than 40 percent, Ng said. Still, it takes five mass gamblers to make up the lost revenue from one VIP, according to Aaron Fischer, a gaming analyst at CLSA Ltd. in Hong Kong.

As Macau transitions into a destination that caters to tourists as well as gamblers, seasonal factors such as Lunar New Year will become even more important, Ng said.

"In the past, we relied a lot on VIPs," he said. "Those guys usually don't need to work. They come anytime they want. They take up a lot of weekday traffic. Without them, we have to rely on holiday seasons more." **Bloomberg**

Renato Marques

THE Legislative Assembly (AL) debate yesterday mostly concerned health-related issues, with the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, reiterating that authorities want to set up an "Academy of Medicine." A location for the facility is earmarked and it won't be at the University of Macau's (UM) Hengqin campus.

The project aims to provide medical doctors with continuous and complementary training in order to increase the number of specialists within the region. The proposal has raised some doubts among lawmakers, with Chan Iek Lap stating that the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Macau (UM) was preparing to open what he regarded as a similar "academy" in September 2016. Alexis Tam clarified that there is no direct connection between the UM announcement and the academy proposed by the government.

"This Academy of Medicine will be managed by the Health Bureau and will be under the umbrella of the public hospital. It should be created inside the hospital premises," he said, adding that "what the UM proposes is a different concept."

Lawmaker Angela Leong's spoken enquiry was focused on

AL PLENARY

Gov't proposes post-grad medical training facility



Alexis Tam pictured yesterday at the AL

mental illnesses and most specifically on depression, which she considers an important topic in the community. According to the lawmaker, the illness "stands as the second-largest cause of death after the cardiovascular diseases on the World Health Organization's (WHO) list."

Alexis Tam acknowledged that the government is aware of the issue, revealing that in 2015 the

outpatients' psychiatric services of the public hospital assisted about 31,000 people. The figure represents a growth of 10 percent year-on-year. Additionally, the health care centers assisted another 3,000 people for the same kinds of disorders, constituting a rise of about 20 percent.

The Secretary says that the Health Services are ready to face these problems and that they are already

taking measures in order to be able to do so, namely through "the construction of the Psychiatric Clinic Building in Taipa, [and] the creation of the outpatient psychological counseling in the Health Care Centers of Areia Preta, Fai Chi Kei, Tap Seac, Ocean Gardens and Nossa Senhora do Carmo-Lago. They provide psychological evaluation and treatment for emotional problems," he said.

Other measures set to address these problems relate to strategies for the detection and treatment of psychiatric disorders in the early stages. In order to achieve early diagnosis, the Health Bureau has partnered with associations and institutions, financing them to provide psychological counseling services to residents free of charge.

"In 2015, this psychological counseling service was provided to more than 4,000 people in non-profitable medical institutions," said Alexis Tam.

"Between 2016 and 2017, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) will create a professional rehabilitation center, a community support service and one support program which aims to provide temporary lodging," the secretary said.

Also regarding the community support service, Mr Tam said that a gradual increase in the number of vacancies for the next three years is to be expected, rising from the 220 current vacancies to 490 in 2018.

The Health Bureau director, Lei Chi Ion, added that the services aim to "increase the number of inpatient beds from the current 103," although he failed to disclose a target number or a timeline.

Court bins Pearl Horizon appeal



The Administrative Court has discarded an appeal over the government's decision to prevent the extension of the Pearl Horizon land plot concession. The appeal, which was launched by land developer, Polytec, objected to the government's decision in December not to extend the concession agreement. According to TDM, the judge explained that the Pearl Horizon plot does not meet certain criteria, as per the Land Act, that entitles the developer to a concession renewal. Therefore the appeal was rejected. Meanwhile, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosario, came under fire from Pearl Horizon flat buyers gathered outside of the secretary's headquarters. They criticized Rosario for changing his stance on the issue after he reminded the public that the appeal period had not yet expired. Protesters have also threatened to take further action.

Three new cases of hypothermia

With the cold weather remaining, three new cases of hypothermia appeared between 4 p.m. Monday and 4 p.m. yesterday. According to the Health Bureau, two of the victims received medical attention at the public hospital, while the third was transported to the Kiang Wu Hospital. The ages of the victims range between 66 and 99 years. One of the victims is in a serious condition. The unusually cold weather in Macau has already resulted in a total of six deaths by hypothermia.

Uber partners with Alipay

Uber and Ant Financial announced a partnership early this week, saying that Zhifubao, an alias of the Alipay platform, will be available for all Uber users in Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Under the agreement, mainland China clients will be able to use their Alipay accounts to pay for Uber rides in other regions.

IPIM head: 'We are more rigorous'

MR Jackson Chang, president of the Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) said yesterday that the reason that the proportion of requests that resulted in the approval of residence for foreigners stood at about 20 percent is due to the fact that authorities are being more rigorous.

The comments were made in response to a spoken enquiry posted by lawmaker Song Pek Kei during yesterday's plenary session at the Legislative Assembly (AL), and only applied to foreigners holding professional qualifications.

Song also proposed that the administration create a "points system" similar to that implemented in Hong Kong as a way of attracting

more young "talents" since, in her opinion, many of those that used this method to gain residency in the territory since 1995, when the measure started, should be close to or reaching their retirement age now.

The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, reminded lawmakers that the IPIM has "already established mechanisms to analyze the requests." He assured them that the department is also in close contact with other departments in order to elevate the efficiency of the analysis process.

"We need to think if Macau needs those people for the future. That's the criteria that we followed," Leong said. **RM**

ECONOMY

UM forecasts 13.6pct contraction in 2016

THE University of Macau's (UM) Department of Economics has forecast that Macau's economy will contract by 13.6 percent this year, led by the continued slump in the gaming industry.

According to the financial media outlet Benzinga, UM economics professor Fung Kwan estimates that gross gaming revenue totals will come in at 15 to 20 percent lower than 2015.

As the Times reported yesterday, gaming revenue fell by 21.4 percent in January, compared with the same period last year. This month is expected to continue the trend of an uninterrupted decline in revenues, despite the arrival of the Chinese New Year – traditionally the busiest period for Macau's gaming operators.

It is not clear how Kwan regards the

speculation over a possible recovery for Macau's gaming industry this year, as the Times did not receive a reply by the time of publication. However, his estimates indicate a gloomy start to the year at best.

On the other hand, Vitaly Umansky, an analyst at A.B. Bernstein, wrote that

long-term Macau investors will eventually be rewarded for their patience.

"While the Macau gaming industry will remain volatile over the near-term, we view the industry as a secular growth story driven by the paradigm shift from VIP to Mass [market]," Umansky explained, according to Yahoo Finance.

NEVADA GAMING GROWTH LED BY VEGAS STRIP

THINGS ARE looking up for casinos in the state of Nevada in contrast to Macau's revenue woes. Gaming "win" (revenues) in the state reached USD982.1 million in December 2015, with the large majority (USD600.8 million) coming from resorts along the Las Vegas Strip,

PokerNews reported. The Nevada Gaming Control Board revealed that December revenues in the state marked a 3.3 percent increase over the same month in 2014, while those on the Las Vegas Strip recorded 8.2 percent year-on-year growth in December.

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Portuguese restaurant opens in Old Taipa

Paulo Barbosa

PORTUGUESE dining establishments currently have good momentum in Macau, according to restaurateur Fernando Marques, who opened a new space in Old Taipa yesterday.

Restaurant "Toca" (translated to English, "den") is the newest addition to an area already filled with Portuguese restaurants. According to Marques, there is room for more, since Portuguese cuisine is becoming increasingly popular. "The 'brand' Portugal is gaining roots all over Asia," he told the Times.

The opening of the cozy space located at Rua dos Negociantes (near Rua do Cunha) was celebrated with a lion dance performance and a special lunch. The restaurant aims to attract a mixed clientele, including locals and tourists.



Fernando Marques and a guest pose for a picture in front of the restaurant

According to the owner, the average prices will range between MOP100 for lunch and over MOP200 for dinner.

Mr Marques pointed out that currently rentals are "more affordable" and "it is easier to hire human resources," both factors that create opportunities for new restaurants to open. "Should more restaurants open in Old Taipa, they will be welcome," he said.

Festive season celebrated with special menus

Renato Marques

FEBRUARY is a month of many celebrations. The first, and probably the most important of the whole year, is the celebration of the lunar New Year. In just a few days' time, the biggest celebration of the year for couples and couples-to-be arrives with Valentine's Day, which assumes its usual position on the calendar.

To celebrate these two big highlights of the current month, the Sands Resorts Cotai Strip Macau has created two brand new menus, tailored to each of the occasions.

To begin the Year of the Monkey with positive vibes, Chef Mak Wai Ming has prepared some seasonal specials for the Canton Restaurant. The menus, in which Canton's "Poon Choi" assumes the centerpiece, were presented to the press this week.

This new year celebratory meal includes braised Australian seven-heads abalone, sea cucumber, fish maw, goose webs, dried scallops, dried oysters, tiger prawns, squid and vegetables, all



perfectly seated inside a pumpkin.

This delicacy is available only on takeaway pre-orders, which you can arrange in advance in order to be picked up between February 4 and 22.

But that is not the only delicacy that Chef Mak has prepared for the season. Some of the other must-tries include: "steamed prawns with egg white in rice wine; crispy fried yellow croaker with rice vinegar and pine nuts; and deep-fried whole spring chicken with spiced salt."

For Valentine's Day, there is nothing better than a menu that appeals to the senses and to the

romantic at heart. That is Portofino's objective, pairing Italian classics with a contemporary setting.

Senior Chef Katia Soujol has prepared a full menu for this special occasion, featuring "open face ravioli with sautéed spinach, pan roasted Turbot, scallops and caviar beurre blanc," or, for the meat lovers, a "veal loin involtini with Parma ham, and goose liver, with mushroom duxelle, forked potatoes and peas." To end the meal, there is an amaretto crème brûlée, served with berry compote and vanilla ice cream, to complete the happy celebrations.

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VENETIAN'S 'SEASONS OF PROSPERITY' KICKS OFF



The Venetian Macao welcomed the Year of the Monkey at an opening ceremony yesterday, which marked the official start of "Seasons of Prosperity."

"Seasons of Prosperity" is The Venetian's annual celebration that welcomes Chinese New Year with an array of entertainment. Among the admission-free events on offer is the "Seasons of Prosperity" 3-D light and sound spectacular, which beams New Year images onto the façade of The Venetian Macao.

The festival also includes a cultural exhibition of monkey sculptures under the title of "Creative Creatures – Art and the Chinese Zodiac." The project returns in 2016 in support of local art project, "Anno Simius." A total of 25 local artists have each hand-decorated a fiberglass monkey in their own inimitable style. Of the 25 monkey sculptures that will be on display to the public, 13 will be at Sands Resorts Cotai Strip Macao, including the outdoor lagoon area at The Venetian Macao and the Bridge of Stars, from February 3–22. The other 12 will be on display at other local attractions from February 3 to March 8. From February 23, the 13 sculptures previously displayed at Sands Resorts Cotai Strip Macao will be moved to locations around the city to be exhibited until March 8.

The "Seasons of Prosperity" opening ceremony was officiated by Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, Director of the Macao Government Tourism Office, and Dr Wilfred Wong, President and COO of Sands China.

RETAIL

Hong Kong sales slump as mainland shoppers stay home

HONG Kong retail sales posted a second straight annual decline despite sharp discounting, the Census and Statistics Department said, reflecting a sustained decrease in visitors from mainland China and the diminished buying power of a weaker yuan.

Retail sales fell 3.7 percent to HKD475 billion (USD61 billion) last year, while volume dropped 0.3 percent. In December, when the tourism board counted nearly 11 percent fewer visitors, retail sales value fell 8.5 percent from a year earlier, worse than the 4.3 percent drop projected by analysts. The slump widened from 7.8 percent in November and was the largest since last January.

Sales of jewelry, watches, clocks and valuable gifts were among the hardest hit, slumping 17 percent in December and 16 percent for the full year. Clothing and department store sales also



Children's clothing store at the Wangfujing shopping district in Beijing

declined.

Erwan Rambourg, a retail analyst at HSBC Holdings Plc in Hong Kong, said high-end watch and jewelry sellers suffered as shoppers from mainland China avoided lavish purchases and falling currencies in other Asian nations reduced prices for goods bought elsewhere.

Hong Kong Tourism Board Executive Director Anthony Lau said late last month that same-day visi-

tors to Hong Kong were "a bit weaker" than the same time last year, portending an inauspicious start to the Chinese New Year holiday next week.

The Lunar New Year celebration is a peak season for tourism in Hong Kong, bringing in more than 5 million monthly visitors compared with about 4.5 million in an average month. Day trips before the holiday usually account for more than half

those visits.

Visits from the mainland fell 16 percent in December from a year earlier, the tourism board said last week. Total visits to Hong Kong fell 2.5 percent last year to 59.3 million.

Hong Kong retail sales are down on an annualized basis every month from March through December, according to data compiled by Bloomberg Intelligence. The Hong Kong dollar has strengthened against the yuan, making it more expensive for mainlanders to shop.

Chow Tai Fook Jewellery Group, the world's largest listed jewelry chain, said last month that sales during Chinese New Year would be challenging. Emperor Watch & Jewellery Ltd blamed a preliminary 2015 loss on a drop in foot traffic caused by the strong Hong Kong dollar, high rental pressure in the city and austerity initiatives in mainland China. **Bloomberg**

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Cristina Vinhas



autora/author: Joana Carvalho

fotografia/photography: Nuno Cortez-Pinto

horário/schedule:

Terças e Quintas

Tuesdays and Thursdays

18h30 - 21h30

início/starts: 18/02/2016

fim/finishes: 22/03/2016

total: 30 horas/hours

10 sessões/sessions

propina/fee:

MOP 1110*

língua/language: Português e Inglês/Portuguese and English

patrocínio/sponsor: Fundação Macau

número máximo de participantes/maximum number of participants:

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Hong Kong property sentiment turns as sales slump to 25-year low

Frederik Balfour

IN a city that saw demand propel property prices to a record last year, the estimate that transactions reached a 25 year-low in Hong Kong shows how quickly sentiment has turned.

Home prices have slumped almost 10 percent since September and monthly sales in January fell to the lowest since at least 1991, according to Centaline Property Agency Ltd. Amid a spike in flexible mortgage rates this month and anemic demand for new developments, the low transactions volume for January is the latest evidence that prices have further to fall.

"The danger is that when sentiment turns negative, it's very hard to turn things around," Michael Spencer, Deutsche Bank AG's Hong Kong-based Asian chief economist, said in a telephone interview. "Developers realize they missed the best opportunity to sell."

Hong Kong's property market



Commercial and residential buildings stand in Hong Kong

has been showing signs of weakening amid a rising supply of homes, higher short-term interest rates and slowing growth in China. Developers have been slow to make outright price cuts to move real estate while would-be buyers are delaying purchases in anticipation of further price declines, creating a standoff that could put more pressure on prices and drag down the city's economy.

Falling property prices may create a negative wealth effect on consumption by prompting buyers to cut back on their pur-

chases, Deutsche Bank's Spencer said. That could deal a huge blow to an already vulnerable economy where half the population owns homes and consumption accounts for nearly two-thirds of gross domestic product.

Based on housing and economic growth data going back to 2000, Spencer said that consumption growth declined on average by one percentage point for every 10 percent decline in housing prices. That suggests economic growth in Hong Kong could be halved to 1.1 per-

cent this year assuming a 20 percent drop this year, he said.

Developers are showing caution too, which could further weaken the outlook for the property market. According to Bloomberg Intelligence, two out of three government attempts to sell residential land sites through tenders since November failed after bids failed to match the minimum price.

Housing prices are down 9.5 percent since their September peak, according to the Centaline Property Centa-City Leading Index and may fall another 20 percent in 2016, according to some estimates. Centaline estimates that transactions reached 3,000 units last month. The previous low was 3,786 units in November 2008, according to a Jan. 31 release.

The tepid demand was pronounced in January as buyers traditionally delay making purchases in the lead-up to the Chinese Lunar New Year holiday which begins on Feb. 8. In turn, many developers have

delayed the launch of new projects until then. Sales in December were 5,294 units. The drop was particularly sharp in the primary market, with an estimated 420 new units sold last month, down 80 percent from December's 2,127 units, Centaline said.

In order to encourage buyers, developers have been offering discounts and stamp duty rebates as well as second mortgages allowing borrowers to finance up to 90 percent of a home's value. Still, they've resisted slashing prices.

Henderson Land Development Co.'s Harbour Park mass-market development in the Sham Shui Po district of Kowloon sold 15 units during January with discounts and rebates of up to 11 percent, out of a 60 units released so far, according to the company website. Prices before discounts ranged from HKD3.47 million (about USD446,000) for a 202 square-foot flat to HK\$4.86 million for 276 square feet. **Bloomberg**

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AP PHOTO



A Taiwanese county has built an enormous glass shoe as a tribute to local women who suffered from a debilitating foot disease.

Completed last month, the transparent 17-meter tall structure in Chiayi county in the southwest of the island has already attracted large numbers of visitors even before it officially opens in two weeks.

Intended for use as a wedding hall and tourist attraction, the shoe honors women who suffered in the past from arsenic poisoning from well

TAIWAN

County builds huge glass shoe as tribute to women

water that caused gangrene, a condition sometimes known as "black feet disease."

Because feet often had to be amputated, many women faced discrimination and were unable to marry or

start families, let alone wear high-heeled shoes.

"Basically, this is built not only to remind us of the time when people suffered from the disease, but also to represent our hope that women

can now realize their dreams of walking toward their blissful future in their high-heels," said the county government head Helen Chang.

Visitor Lin Yi-ling, 56, said the glass shoe was a fitting

tribute to the women who'd suffered from the disease. "So when I learned the history behind the high-heel wedding hall, I thought I should come to visit," Lin said. **AP**

COURTS

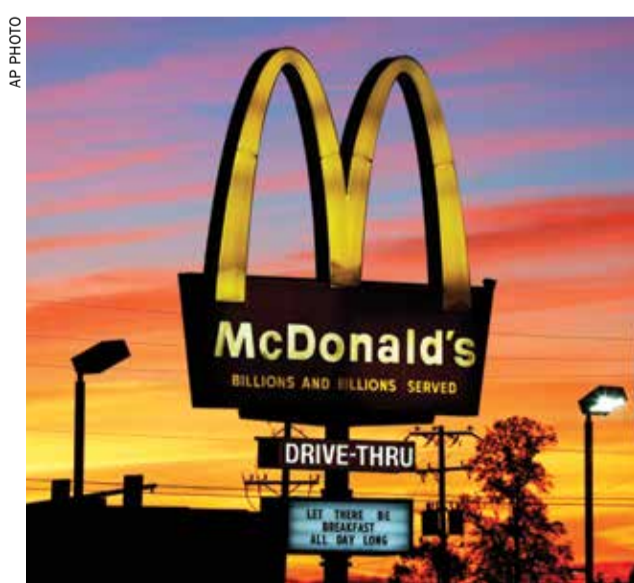
US firm in China meat scandal disputes court's verdict

A U.S. meat supplier is disputing a Chinese court's verdict that its local subsidiary sold expired chicken and beef to McDonald's, KFC and other fast food restaurants in China.

OSI Group of Aurora, Illinois also said that it's considering appealing what it called an "unjust verdict" by a Shanghai court this week to fine two of its Chinese units and sentence 10 employees to prison in the case.

The scandal was exposed in 2014 by Shanghai's Dragon TV station, which reported that OSI's subsidiary repackaged and sold old meat.

The case disrupted operations at chains including Burger King and



Starbucks. It also added to the long list of Chinese product safety scandals over the past decade, including phony or adulterated goods such as milk powder and drugs that have sickened or

killed infants, hospital patients and others.

Shanghai's Jiading District People's Court said it fined OSI subsidiaries Shanghai Husi Foods Ltd. and Hebei Husi Foods

Ltd. 1.2 million yuan (USD182,000) each. OSI China general manager, Yang Liqun, was sentenced to three years in prison and a 100,000 yuan fine. Yang, who is an Australian citizen, was also ordered to be deported.

"After an actual investigation was completed, all authorities involved have recognized that this case has never been about food safety," OSI said in a statement. "The verdict is inconsistent with the facts and evidence that were presented in the court proceedings."

The company added that it is "forced to consider an appeal through all legal channels" and is also weighing legal action against Dragon TV. **AP**

BANKING

Regulator said to warn bank chiefs' jobs at risk if targets missed

CHINA has warned the nation's top banking executives that they could lose their jobs if they fail to keep risks under control, according to people familiar with the situation.

Shang Fulin, chairman of the China Banking Regulatory Commission, told an internal meeting last month that banks would be forced to restructure, inject new capital or change their senior management if key risk indicators fall outside "reasonable ranges," the people said, requesting anonymity because the contents of the speech weren't made public.

The indicators include bad loan coverage and capital adequacy ratios, Shang told the meeting, the people said. The CBRC had no immediate

comment.

The warning by China's top banking regulator follows concerns about rising bad loan levels among the nation's lenders, and recent fraud cases which have shaken investor confidence.

An alleged fraud of almost 1 billion yuan (USD152 million) was discovered late last year at China Citic Bank Corp., where an employee colluded to fake documentation that companies typically use to get quick funds, other people familiar with the matter said last week. Agricultural Bank of China Ltd. last month announced a 3.9 billion yuan "risk incident" that local media reported was tied to a bills-financing fraud by employees. **Bloomberg**

PROPERTY

Central bank eases mortgage down payment to 20 pct for first homes

CHINA'S central bank said it will allow banks to cut the minimum required mortgage down payment to 20 percent from 25 percent for first-home purchases to the lowest level ever as it steps up support for the property market.

The eased requirements will be for buyers in areas without the purchase restrictions that are applied in some of the biggest metropolitan areas such as Beijing and Shanghai, the People's Bank of China said yesterday in a statement on its website. The minimum down payment for second-home purchases was cut to 30 percent from 40 percent, the central bank said.

A rising stockpile of unsold new homes is hampering government efforts to spur investment expanding at the slowest



Buildings in downtown Shanghai, east China

We believe that relaxation of mortgage policy will help accelerate the destocking process in the lower-tier cities.

ZHOU HAO
COMMERZBANK
SINGAPORE

pace in more than five years. China's politburo, the top decision-making body of the Communist Party, in early December vowed to reduce home inventory as one of its key tasks in 2016, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

"This is clearly in line with the 'destocking' theme in the property market," Zhou Hao, an analyst with Commerzbank AG in Singapore, wrote in a note to clients. "We believe that the

relaxation of mortgage policy will somewhat help accelerate the destocking process in the lower-tier cities."

Reviving investment in real estate is crucial for the government, which has stepped up monetary easing with its sixth interest-rate cut since late 2014 and scrapped a ceiling on deposit rates. This is the central bank's second move to slash down payments since September, when it cut the minimum

ratio for first-time buyers to 25 percent from 30 percent, a requirement that had been in place since 2010.

The move extends loosening in the property market since September 2014, as Premier Li Keqiang seeks to boost demand in China's growth expanding last year at the slowest pace in a quarter century. The down payment requirement for first homes was cut to the lowest in history. From 2003 to 2010, down

payments were as low as 20 percent for first-home buyers, before it was raised to 30 percent as the market heated up.

The country's unsold homes continue to grow by area, surging 11.2 percent to 452 million square meters at the end of 2015, the latest statistics bureau data show. The inventory is even bigger including homes which haven't been built, and are estimated to take three-and-a-half years to be cleared, said Zhu Jin, a Shanghai-based analyst at Orient Securities Co.

"Most of the home glut, which the government aims to clear, is in small cities. But buyers in small cities don't typically use high mortgage leverage," said Du Jinsong, a Hong Kong-based analyst at Credit Suisse Group AG, adding China's effort to spur buyers to borrow more may not have big impact imminently.

China's property market has gotten increasingly bifurcated, with prices in second and third-tier trailing those in larger hubs including Shanghai and Beijing. While the home market is recovering, price increases are still very concentrated in a small segment of the market nationwide, Nicole Wong, Hong Kong-based head of property research at CLSA Ltd., said ahead of yesterday's announcement. New-home prices climbed in 39 cities in December, six more than a month earlier, among the largest 70 cities tracked by the government, statistics bureau said Jan. 18. **Bloomberg**

MAGIC LEAP FORWARD

Startup raises USD793.5M in new funding led by Alibaba

MAGIC Leap Inc., the mysterious startup working on a device that simulates reality, has raised USD793.5 million in a new round of funding led by Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.

Other new investors include Warner Bros., Fidelity Management and Research Co., JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Morgan Stanley Investment Management, Magic Leap said yesterday in a statement. Existing investors Google, which led a pre-

vious funding round, and Qualcomm Ventures also participated.

The Google-led investment of \$542 million in 2014 was the biggest virtual or augmented reality funding deal at the time, according to data from research firm Pitchbook. Facebook Inc. that same year spent about \$2 billion to buy Oculus VR, which had raised about \$93 million before being bought, according to Pitchbook data. The latest round pushes Dania Bea-

ch, Florida-based Magic Leap's total funding to almost \$1.4 billion.

Magic Leap is promising to create a headset that would use a type of light-field technology to simulate 3-D images superimposed on the real world. The technology likely would project patterns of light to the eye, allowing it to perceive virtual objects similar to the way people naturally see existing things. Though Magic Leap hasn't revealed its headset, the

company intends to work with Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba to bring its eventual product to the more than 400 million users on Alibaba's sites, Rony Abovitz, the startup's chief executive officer, said in the statement.

Alibaba has invested in about five U.S. startups a year since 2013, according to CB Insights data. Alibaba Chairman Jack Ma said last year that the company would help fund technology startups in the U.S. with plans to help

AP PHOTO



Jack Ma

them expand to China. Over the past five years, the three biggest Chinese Internet companies - Alibaba, Baidu and Tencent - have invested in 52 star-

tups, according to CB Insights.

Allen & Co. served as financial adviser to Magic Leap for the round. **Bloomberg**

Eric Talmadge, Tokyo

H-BOMB

North Korea getting better at hiding nuke, rocket tests

LESS than a month after its purported H-bomb test, attention is now focused on whether North Korea is readying a rocket launch. With underground railways, giant tarps and a movable launch pad structure in place, experts say, the North is getting a lot better at concealing its preparations.

American and Japanese officials say they are seeing heightened activity at North Korea's main rocket facility, though they stress it's still unclear if a launch really is in the works or how soon it might come. Intelligence officials in Seoul, stung by their failure to predict the North's Jan. 6 nuclear test, are also cautiously warning another provocation could happen abruptly.

What North Korea might launch is a big question mark.

There are indications — including the construction of a new and taller gantry, visible in commercial satellite imagery — that it could be a bigger and better version of the Unha 3 space launch vehicle that lifted off from the Sohae facility in 2012, on the west coast of North Korea.

That would be in line with the North's own previous announcements.

The Unha 3 successfully delivered North Korea's first satellite into Earth orbit. A January 2013 report by the Rodong Sinmun, the ruling party newspaper, which has since been deleted from its online edition, quoted a scientist saying there would be a series of launches of observation and communication satellites culminating with Unha 9, which would carry a lunar orbiter. A North Korean space agency official told an AP television crew last year that more satellite launches are planned in the years ahead, but didn't elaborate.

Models of the larger and much



In this July 26, 2013, photo, North Korean soldiers are silhouetted against model versions of the Unha 3 space launch vehicle which successfully delivered North Korea's first satellite into Earth orbit, and the Unha 9, right, which would carry a lunar orbiter, on display at an annual flower show held in honor of national founder Kim Il Sung and his son Kim Jong Il

more formidable-looking Unha 9 rocket have since been displayed at various events in North Korea, including annual flower shows held in honor of national founder Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il.

Although there are important differences, the United States and others have strongly criticized such rocket launches because similar technologies can be used in the development of ICBMs, which North Korea is banned from doing under U.N. restrictions. North Korea says that it has the right to maintain a peaceful space program and

announces launches ahead of time to maritime authorities, in keeping with international standards.

Tightening its punitive squeeze on the North, the U.S. Treasury on Jan. 17 announced sanctions on 11 individuals and entities involved in Iran's ballistic missile program, including Iranian officials it said had direct links to North Korea and work being done by Pyongyang on "an 80-ton rocket booster."

It said two of the sanctioned Iranians "have been critical to the development of the 80-ton rocket booster, and both traveled

to Pyongyang during contract negotiations." Iran has, coincidentally, suggested it might also conduct a rocket launch this month.

Whether the booster would be a new first stage for the Unha rockets or something different is not known.

Making firm predictions has become more difficult because of the increasingly sophisticated concealing measures the North has been developing over the past several years.

Though the kind of intelligence available to agencies in the U.S. and its allies is presumably far better than what they are willing to let on publicly, it is clear from unclassified commercial satellite monitoring that a lot has been going on at the North's main launching facility since the 2012 Unha 3 launch.

Concealment upgrades include the construction of an underground railway right up to the launch pad that allows rocket stages to be transported stealthily to the site, possibly from Pyongyang. Upon arrival, the stages could be lifted directly from the train by elevator into a structure above for assembly then moved in another newly built mobile structure by rail to the gantry, which recently has been covered by a huge tarp.

"In effect, you're not going to see any of that happening, whereas before they would be moving stuff around on trucks that you might be able to spot. So

that really makes things much more difficult," said Joel Wit, a former State Department official and editor of the respected 38 North website, which focuses on North Korea issues.

Wit said some activity still cannot be concealed, but with the upgrades "it becomes more like reading tea leaves."

"They may be ready to test," he said. "Right now, we can't tell."

North Korea's efforts at concealment appear to be paying off on the nuclear front as well.

The paucity of detailed intelligence due to a deeper blast at the end of a longer tunnel, better sealing of tunnels and vents and improved camouflage at its nuclear site has muddied analysts' ability to assess the North's claim that the latest test was the successful detonation of its first hydrogen bomb — which if true would mark a significant advance in the North's nuclear technology.

In the case of rocket preparations, North Korea knows when commercial satellites are over their area because most are synchronized with the sun and pass over the same point of the Earth at about the same time. For North Korea, that's between 10 am and 1 or 2 pm so they tend to stop activity during that window, or move trucks under cover or keep activity in buildings to prevent detection.

Such moves would not be as effective against the best government-operated spy satellites, which can provide almost constant surveillance of high-interest sites and can also see through clouds and the cover of darkness.

But Joe Bermudez, an expert on North Korea's military and chief analytics officer of All-Source Analysis, Inc. said the country's effort to improve its "camouflage, concealment and deception" has been quite elaborate.

"The North Koreans are not stupid people," said Bermudez, who has been studying North Korea defense and intelligence affairs for 35 years, and since the 90s has been using satellite imagery analysis. "Particularly those in the intelligence community and those involved in the programs to produce WMD watch and read the foreign press. As we use commercial satellite imagery to identify activities in North Korea, they are watching and looking at what we are seeing and they are making adjustments." AP

Senior Chinese official arrives in Pyongyang

CHINA'S point man on North Korea arrived in Pyongyang yesterday amid a flurry of diplomacy over the North's recent nuclear test.

The visit by Wu Dawei, China's special representative for Korean Peninsula affairs, comes after North Korea said it successfully tested its first H-bomb on Jan. 6.

China has said it firmly opposes the nuclear test and supports a new U.N. resolution and sanctions. But nearly one month after the test, there is no sign of an agreement among the U.S., its allies and China on exactly what sanctions should be adopted.

Pak Song Il, deputy director of the America department at the North Korean Foreign Ministry, greeted Wu in the VIP area of Pyongyang's airport.

North Korean authorities have not confirmed any details about Wu's visit, including how long he will be in Pyongyang or who he will meet. That is normal in North Korea when foreign officials visit for sensitive talks.



Wu Dawei, center, China's special representative for Korean Peninsula Affairs, talks with Pak Song Il (right) deputy director of the America department at the North Korean Foreign Ministry

Wu Dawei met the U.S. State Department's special representative for North Korea policy, Sung Kim, in Beijing last week.

Rod McGuirk, Canberra

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA'S prime minister told government colleagues yesterday that an early general election within weeks was "a live option," an official said.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull alone decides the timing of the next election. He has maintained that he plans for his government to run a full three-year term which would make the election due around September.

But he told his colleagues at their first meeting at Parliament House for the year that the election could be called much sooner, a government minister said.

Turnbull said he could call a double dissolution election, so-called because both the House of Representatives and the Senate are dissolved.

Turnbull told his colleagues "we can reasonably expect an election to be at the normal time, in the

August-to-October period, but that is not set in stone," the minister told reporters on condition of anonymity because he was speaking as a spokesman for the meeting rather than as himself.

"He said a double dissolution was a live option, which would have to be weighed up," the minister said.

An ordinary election in which the entire House of Representatives and half the Senate go to the polls can be held any time from Aug. 6 until Jan. 14 next year.

A double dissolution election can be called earlier to break a legislative dead lock after the Senate has twice rejected a



Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull

bill passed by the House of Representatives. After the early election, the rejected bill goes to a vote in a joint sitting of both chambers.

The Senate has already twice rejected a minor bill on improving governance of organizations, meaning Turnbull could call an election as early as

March 12.

He can also use the threat of an early election to pressure a hostile Senate into passing legislation, for example, a

bill to create a new construction industry watchdog that the Senate has already rejected once. A second rejection would give Turnbull the option of fighting an early election on the need to stamp out what a government commission says is trade union corruption in the construction industry.

Early elections are rare in federal politics and unpopular with voters. The last double dissolution election was in 1987.

But since Turnbull replaced Prime Minister Tony Abbott in September, the ruling center-right coalition has overtaken the center-left opposition Labor Party in opinion polls. **AP**

MALAYSIA

Ex-minister challenges move not to charge Najib

A former Malaysian law minister filed a legal suit yesterday challenging a decision by the country's attorney general not to prosecute Prime Minister Najib Razak over a financial scandal involving more than USD700 million channeled into his private bank accounts.

Zaid Ibrahim said statements by the anti-corruption organization and other agencies investigating indebted state investment fund 1MDB, which is linked to Najib, indicated "strong evidence of wrongdoing" by the prime minister.

He said the possible offenses included money laundering and criminal breach of trust.

Zaid said Attorney General Mohamed Apandi Ali's decision last week not to prosecute Najib was "unreasonable and constituted an improper exercise of discretion."

He said he is seeking a judicial review of Apandi's decision. He also wants the court to rule that Apandi's order to the anti-corruption agency to close its files on the investigation was beyond his scope of power.

The agency has separately appealed to an independent government panel against Apandi's decision.

Zaid dismissed a Cabinet minister's warning that the attor-



Malaysia's former Law Minister Zaid Ibrahim

ney general's decision is final and cannot be challenged.

"I am rightfully concerned about the dire consequences to the rule of law in this country if the decision of one man cannot be questioned regardless of the facts and the circumstances of the case," Zaid said in a statement.

Government officials couldn't be reached immediately for comment.

1MDB is mired in 42 billion ringgit (\$10.1 billion) in debt and has been selling its assets to clear its books. Najib, who formed 1MDB in 2009, became embroiled in the scandal after documents were leaked last year suggesting that money deposited into his accounts may

have come from entities linked to 1MDB.

Apandi said much of the money was a private donation from the Saudi royal family and that Najib had returned most of it.

However, external investigations into 1MDB indicated that \$4 billion earmarked for investment in economic and social development projects in Malaysia may have been misappropriated from state-owned companies.

Switzerland's top prosecutor has sought Malaysia's help after a Swiss investigation confirmed some money was transferred into accounts held in Switzerland by various former Malaysian public officials and former and current public officials from the United Arab Emirates.

The Swiss office said last week that criminal proceedings were opened last August against two former 1MDB officials and unknown individuals on suspicion of bribery of foreign public officials, misconduct in public office, money laundering and criminal mismanagement.

Singapore also announced this week that it has seized a large number of bank accounts in a probe into "possible money laundering and other offenses" related to 1MDB. **AP**

THAILAND

Elephant gores Scottish tourist to death on trek

A Scottish tourist has been gored to death by an elephant that he and his 16-year-old stepdaughter were riding on the resort island of Samui, Thai authorities said yesterday.

Police Lt. Rotjanart Kiewjan said the animal threw Gareth Crowe and Eilidh Hughes to the ground during a trek on Monday. The elephant then gored Crowe with his tusk and stomped on him.

Thai news reports said the elephant became enraged after its trainer, known as a mahout, climbed off to take a picture of the tourists. Police think hot weather may have disturbed the 13-year-old elephant.

The mahout, who is from Myanmar, was also gored and Hughes was injured from her fall. Both were hospitalized.

There was speculation that the elephant might have been in a state of musth, when it becomes more aggressive during its mating cycle, but Cherdchai Jaroenwech of the Office of Livestock Development said that was not the case.

Cherdchai, who shot the elephant with a tranquilizer dart Monday evening, said it had been taken back to the corral of its trekking company owners, Island Safari, where it was attended to by its usual



caretakers and showered constantly to cool off while remaining chained.

He said the elephant, dubbed Rambo but also called by the nickname Golf, will take a 15-day break from work and then be moved to another branch of the trekking company in either Krabi or Phang Nga.

Elephants are Thailand's de facto national animal and were once featured on the country's flag. Their numbers have declined in recent decades as expanding human settlements have reduced their natural habitats. Thailand now has fewer than 3,000 wild elephants and about 4,000 domesticated elephants, according to the National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department.

The beasts once were used for logging, but deforestation and a subsequent ban on most logging has led to many elephants now being used as tourist attractions. **AP**

TED Cruz, a fiery, conservative Texas senator loathed by his own party's leaders, swept to victory in Iowa's Republican caucuses, overcoming billionaire Donald Trump and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio. Among Democrats, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders rode a wave of voter enthusiasm to a virtual tie with Hillary Clinton, long considered her party's front-runner.

Cruz's victory in yesterday's caucuses was a harsh blow to Trump, the supremely confident real estate mogul who has roiled the Republican field for months with controversial statements about women and minorities.

The victory in the first Republican nominating contest ensures that Cruz will be a force in the presidential race for weeks to come — if not longer. The first-term Texas senator now heads to next week's New Hampshire primary as an undisputed favorite of the furthest right voters, a position of strength for drawing in evangelical voters and others who prioritize an abrupt break with President Barack Obama's policies. Cruz's victory was a testament to the massive get-out-the-vote operation that he built up in Iowa.

Perhaps most importantly, Cruz's win denied Trump a huge opportunity to gain momentum heading into New Hampshire. Trump parlayed his fame as a real estate mogul and reality television star into large rallies, extensive media coverage and national poll numbers that before yesterday had established him as the Republican front-runner.

"Iowa has sent notice that the Republican nominee and next president of the United States will not be chosen by the media, will not be chosen by the Washington establishment," Cruz told supporters.

Trump came in second, only slightly ahead of Rubio, who achieved a credible showing by nearly besting Trump. Rubio's stronger-than-expected finish could help cement his status as the favorite of mainstream Republican voters who worry that Cruz and Trump are too caustic to win the November general election.

The Iowa caucuses kicked off voting in the 2016 presidential race, a tumultuous contest with unexpected candidates challenging both the Republican and Democratic establishments.

Candidates faced an electorate deeply frustrated with Washington. While the economy has improved under Obama, the recovery has eluded many Americans. New terror threats at home and abroad have increased national security concerns.

In the Democratic race, nearly complete tabulations showed Clinton and Sanders in



Sen. Ted Cruz (R)



Sen. Bernie Sanders (D)

USA ELECTIONS

Cruz defeats Trump in Iowa; Clinton, Sanders in tight race

■ For Clinton's supporters, the tight race with Sanders was sure to bring back painful memories of her loss to Obama

a virtual tie.

Democratic caucus-goers were choosing between Clinton's pledge to use her wealth of experience in government to bring about steady progress on Democratic ideals and Sanders' call for radical change in a system rigged against ordinary Americans. Young voters overwhelmingly backed Sanders.

Clinton, the former secretary of state, U.S. senator and first lady, entered the Democratic race as the heavily favored front-runner. She was hoping to banish the possibility of dual losses in Iowa and in New Hampshire, the nation's first primary, where she trails Sanders, who is from the neighboring state of Vermont. Two straight defeats could set off alarms within the par-

ty and throw into question her ability to defeat the Republican nominee.

For Clinton's supporters, the tight race with Sanders was sure to bring back painful memories of her loss to Obama in the 2008 Iowa caucuses.

Clinton appeared before supporters to declare she was "breathing a big sigh of relief." But she stopped short of claiming victory and declared herself ready to press forward in "a real contest of ideas."

Sanders had hoped to replicate Obama's pathway to the presidency by using a victory in Iowa to catapult his passion and ideals of "democratic socialism" deep into the primaries.

"It is too late for establishment politics and establishment economics," said Sanders, who declared the Democratic contest in Iowa "a virtual tie."

With the race too close to call, Sanders' aides said they had been told by the Iowa Democratic Party that it did not have results from several precincts and had asked the campaigns to help get the missing information. The party said it was awaiting results from a "small number of outstanding precincts" and had reached out to the campaigns for help contacting the chairs from those sites.

Despite Sanders' strong showing, he still faces an uphill

battle against Clinton, who has deep ties throughout the party's establishment and a strong following among a more diverse electorate that plays a larger role in primary contests in February and March.

Iowa has long led off the state-by-state contests to choose delegates for the parties' national conventions. Historically, a victory has hardly assured the nomination, but a win there, or even an unexpectedly strong showing, can give a candidate momentum and media attention, while a poor showing can end a candidacy.

Trump sounded humble in defeat, saying he was "honored" by the support of Iowans. And he vowed to keep up his fight for the Republican nomination.

"We will go on to easily beat

Hillary or Bernie or whoever the hell they throw up," Trump told cheering supporters.

Rubio cast his stronger-than-expected finish as a victory.

"We have taken the first step, but an important step, to winning the nomination," the Florida senator said at a campaign rally in Des Moines.

Some of the establishment Republican candidates have been focusing more on New Hampshire than Iowa, including former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, Ohio Gov. John Kasich and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie.

The caucuses marked the end of at least two candidates' White House hopes. Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley ended his longshot bid for the Democratic nomination and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee dropped out of the Republican race.

The state's 30 Republican delegates to the national convention are awarded proportionally based on the vote, with at least eight delegates going to Cruz, seven to Trump and six to Rubio. Even without a declared winner, The Associated Press awarded all but one of the 44 Democratic convention delegates. Clinton led Sanders 22 to 21, with the remaining delegate to be awarded to the statewide winner. AP

■ Cruz's win denied Trump a huge opportunity to gain momentum heading into New Hampshire



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what's ON



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 TIME: 10am-7pm
 (Closed on Monday, no admission after 6:30 pm)
 UNTIL: April 3, 2016
 VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,
 Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
 ADMISSION: Adult MOP5
 (Free admission on Sundays and public holidays)
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

"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

**INK WASH OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY
 – PAINTINGS BY CHARLES CHAUDELROT**
 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)
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Offbeat

COLLEGE STUDENT FINDS GLITCH TO OWN GOOGLE SITE, GETS USD12K

A Massachusetts graduate student who pointed out a glitch that allowed him to briefly "own" the world's most heavily trafficked website has been awarded more than USD12,000 from Google.

The Boston Globe (bit.ly/1nzBRQD) reports that Babson College MBA candidate Sanmay Ved believed he bought the Internet domain Google.com for \$12 when he was using the Google Domains website registration service last fall.

The former Google employee documented his improbable path to purchasing the domain name. His order was verified, his credit card was charged and he received email confirmation.

A minute later, however, Ved received word that his order was canceled.

Google revealed that the company gave Ved \$6,006.13 – "Google" spelled numerically – for discovering the bug. Google doubled it after learning Ved had donated his reward to charity.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
17:30	Castle S.5
18:10	Trail of Lies (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Entreview (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

28 JAN - 04 FEB



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



THE LAST WOMEN STANDING_

ROOM 2

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Luo Lu

Starring: Shu Qi, Eddie Peng Yuyan, Hao Leie

Language: Mandarin (English/Cantonese)

Duration: 100min

THE BIG SHORT_

ROOM 3

2.30, 4.45, 9.30 pm

Director: Adam McKay

Starring: Christian Bale, Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 130min

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



1986 POPE AND MOTHER TERESA FEED THE SICK

The Pope has met Mother Teresa, head of the Missionaries of Charities order, in Calcutta and visited her refuge for the sick and dying.

When the pontiff arrived at the two-storey building in the heart of the city's slums, Mother Teresa climbed into the famous white Popemobile and bent down to kiss his hand.

He kissed the top of her head and she took him into the home she founded in 1950 called Nirmal Hriday, or Sacred Heart.

The building is housed in a wing of the Temple of Kali, the Goddess of Destruction and tends to the needs of those suffering from cancer, tuberculosis or malnutrition.

During his half-hour visit, the Pope who was visibly moved by what he saw, helped the nuns to feed the sick and dying.

He gave plates of food to those strong enough to feed themselves and handed out more plates to the nuns to spoon-feed the weakest.

He kissed and embraced some of the patients and called on God to "bless those who will soon meet you face-to-face".

He also blessed the corpses of four people including a child.

A Vatican spokesman told reporters the Pope was so disturbed by what he saw on several occasions he couldn't respond to Mother Teresa as she spoke to him.

There are currently 42 men and 44 women of different faiths being tended to by Mother Teresa's nuns.

Mother Teresa, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 and is regarded as a living saint, said the Pope's visit was "the happiest day of my life".

She added: "It is a wonderful thing for the people, for his touch is the touch of Christ."

Outside the building, the Pope delivered a short sermon saying: "Nirmil Hriday is a place of hope, a home built on courage and faith, a home where love reigns, a home filled with love."

Earlier excited crowds of around 100,000 people greeted the Pope as he arrived in the city from New Delhi where he spent the first two days of his tour of India.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Mother Teresa, originally from Albania, died on 5 September 1997 aged 87.

Her Missionaries of Charity order, launched in 1950 with only 12 nuns, has grown to 4,500 sisters in 133 countries. They run homes, schools and hospices for the poor and dying.

The Pope was said to have been "deeply hurt" by news of Mother Teresa's death.

He so admired Mother Teresa that he granted a dispensation so the procedure for establishing Mother Teresa's case for sainthood could start just two years after her death.

Usually five years must pass between the death of the person proposed for beatification and the start of the process.

She was beatified just six years after her death in October 2003 at a ceremony in the Vatican.

The Pope himself died at 2137 (1937 GMT) on Saturday 2 April 2005 after he failed to recover from a throat operation.

YOUR STARS

Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Avoid the temptation to do your own thing today — even if it's the hottest thing ever! Your friends or family (or maybe coworkers) need you more than you realize, and that karma is irreplaceable.

Taurus

April 20-May 20

Your health may need some adjustment — so get to a gym, see a nutritionist or find a way to think positive thoughts even during that dreaded performance review. It all helps in the long run!

Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

Is romance in your future — or your present? If today's energy is any indication, the answer is yes! Just look around if you're single, as someone right for you is tantalizingly close.

Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Today is all about partnership — but that can be hard to deal with. You should find out if you can get your mate or your business associates to see things your way, but the road is long and hard for now.

Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Today is all about activity, and you need to make sure that you're not just sitting around. Your social energy is lively and vibrant, so make the most of it and meet some new people or go on a date.

Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

You are having a hard time figuring out what you want to do next — but you're not the only one! Make sure that your people know your quandary, as you and a friend can help each other in a big way.

Libra

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Your energy levels are super-high today, and you may find that your friends and family are riding your draft and enjoying every second of it. It's a good day to get out there and mix it up with new people!

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

It's a good day to hang out on your own and try to do things quietly. Loud parties and raucous meetings just aren't your style now, so try solitary activities and see what new ideas you can come up with.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Your great social energy guarantees fun almost all day long — or at least a better mood than you think you deserve. It's a great time to reach out to friends who are going through hard times.

Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Try not to worry too much when your plans are challenged today — that's just nature's way of testing your willpower. If you can meet this stress with good humor, you are sure to do well all year!

Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Try something different today — routines don't work for you, at least not right now. Your great mental energy makes you more prone to boredom, and that's something you just can't tolerate!

Pisces

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Are you having cash flow issues? Now is the time to deal with them — before they deal with you! Your great energy is perfect for handling all kinds of financial burdens, so get on it ASAP!

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 Sudoku grid for Easy level with some numbers filled in.

Easy+

9x9 Sudoku grid for Easy+ level with some numbers filled in.

Medium

9x9 Sudoku grid for Medium level with some numbers filled in.

Hard

9x9 Sudoku grid for Hard level with some numbers filled in.

WEATHER

CHINA

Table of weather conditions for various Chinese cities including Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.

WORLD

Table of weather conditions for various world cities including Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, etc.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Fashionable; 5- Laugh loudly; 9- Trading center; 13- Continental cash; 15- View from Catania; 16- Fulda tributary; 17- Headgear of a monarch; 18- Mozart's "___ fan tutte"; 19- Sensible; 20- And so on: Abbr.; 21- Affirmative votes; 23- Petrol units; 25- Feathered creature; 26- Obscure; 27- Sudden inclination to act; 30- Dove's sound; 31- Low cards; 32- Conduct, as business; 37- Zaire's Mobutu ___ Seko; 38- Seeped; 40- Converse competitor; 41- Awww! Cute!; 43- Dull sound of impact; 44- Fail to tell the truth; 45- Equilibrium; 47- Misgivings; 50- ___ Three Lives; 51- Capital of the Bahamas; 52- Related by blood; 53- Satisfied sound; 56- Harper's Bazaar illustrator; 57- Word that can precede war, biotic and climax; 59- Recurring series; 61- Swerve; 62- Shower; 63- The Hilton, e.g.; 64- Greek god of love; 65- Himalayan legend; 66- Previously owned;

DOWN: 1- Gospel singer Winans; 2- On the disabled list; 3- High-performance Camaro; 4- Female bovine; 5- Ebb; 6- Western Indians; 7- Ques. response; 8- Locomotive track; 9- Hostess Perle; 10- I don't give ___; 11- Actress Taylor; 12- Very, in Versailles; 14- Slowpokes; 22- Decade div.; 24- Screen image; 25- Purchaser; 26- Land unit; 27- ___ girl; 28- TV horse; 29- Cancun coin; 32- Chinese philosopher Mo___; 33- Dish of raw vegetables; 34- Bard's river; 35- Pres., militarily; 36- Grab hold of; 38- Death notice; 39- Corrida cheers; 42- Jessica of "Dark Angel"; 43- Grip; 45- Two-piece bathing suit; 46- "Rope-a-dope" boxer; 47- Challenger; 48- Bony prefix; 49- Consumers; 51- Campbell of "Scream"; 52- Bickering; 53- Performs; 54- Toward the sheltered side; 55- Grippped; 58- Not for a Scot; 60- "___ don't say!";



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Eddie Pells, San Jose (Calif.)

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Panthers, Broncos meet reporters at Super Bowl media circus

WHAT happens when you put Peyton Manning, Miss Universe, an orange-and-blue leprechaun and 200 TV cameras into the same room?

Answer: Super Bowl Opening Night.

The NFL took a good idea gone surreal — what used to be known as “Media Day” — gave it a new name, added a live cover band and moved the whole thing to prime time to kick off Super Bowl week between the Denver Broncos and Carolina Panthers.

This new and amped-up interview-fest came complete with a guy walking around inside an inflatable football and a newly choreographed players’ introduction that involved all 60 players from each team walking out onto a four-story-high catwalk.

“I had no idea that was a bridge we were standing on,” said Manning, getting ready for his fourth Super Bowl.

And yet, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

“Will you kiss my wife?” one questioner shouted to Panthers QB Cam Newton, who answered his hour’s worth of questions with a sports-drink-themed towel wrapped around his head.

“I don’t think I can do that,” Newton said.

Suffice to say, Manning and Newton — one a five-time MVP, the other a strong favorite to win his first later this week — couldn’t have seen a lot of this coming, no matter how hard they prepared.

Who would play you in a movie? “Maybe a young Robert Redford,” Manning said.

Another reporter — or make that, person with a credential — asked Manning to lend into the camera and wish a Happy Chinese New Year to all his friends



Carolina Panthers' Ryan Delaire and Ben Benwikere dance with Miss Universe Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach during Opening Night for the NFL Super Bowl 50 football game

in that part of the world.

At one point, a reporter from a Spanish-language station cranked up some bass-heavy music and pleaded with Newton to dance.

He passed. “Got to be feeling it,” he explained.

All of this thoughtfully brought to prime time by the NFL for the first time in the 50-year history of the Super Bowl.

For decades, Media Day was a Tuesday-at-noonish affair — scheduled so as not to interrupt the teams’ schedules and to give writers the rest of the week to craft the stories.

But this year, the NFL moved it to Monday night, where minor details like dress code, off-color banter and 8-year-olds asking football players ques-

tions after bedtime barely raise an eyebrow.

NFL spokesman Michael Signora described the scheduling change as one that allows “more fans [to] experience what has grown to become a very unique, popular Super Bowl event.”

Conveniently, the NFL-owned NFL Network captured all the action live.

Surprising they didn’t do this earlier. It’s a nod to the reality that “Media Day” has long been a “journalism-free zone” — one in which fans have willingly, for the last five years, paid money for tickets that allow them to sit in the stands and watch the madness unfold.

Speaking of which ...

Late in the Broncos session,

Rocky the Leprechaun — a regular at Broncos games over the years — laid a dollar bill out on the blue carpeting of SAP Center and waited to see if someone would pick it up. Several minutes passed. Nobody did.

“Crazy to see that,” he said.

What makes this week so great?

“There’s a lot of happiness,” said the gnome-turned-sociologist. “This world needs all the happiness it can get.”

Only one team will be happy come Sunday night. The Panthers are favored. Manning is a sentimental favorite; at 39, many people expect he’ll retire after this one.

That was one of the few actual news angles being worked on during Denver’s hour of fun

behind the mic.

“I haven’t made up my mind and I don’t see myself knowing until the season’s over,” Manning said.

Also, the Broncos were involved in a minor bus crash after practice. There were no injuries. “Just adds to the intrigue of what we’ve had all year,” Manning said.

Back to the important stuff.

Miss Universe, one of the 5,500 “reporters” with credentials for Super Bowl-week festivities, answered more questions than she asked. Most had to do with Steve Harvey. “Yes, I am the real Miss Universe,” she said, referencing Harvey’s embarrassing gaffe a few weeks back.

Harvey was a no-show at this one.

No one missed him.

From the costumes, to the beauty queens, to the guys dressed up like the Swedish Chef from the Muppets, this prime-time special had pretty much everything — except for Donald Trump, who was waiting on caucus results in Iowa.

Manning was asked to recollect a meeting with Trump a few years back. Maybe someday, Newton will meet The Donald, too.

“I tell kids, that oval-shaped pigskin can take you a lot of places,” said the Panthers quarterback, who won the national college championship with Auburn a few years back. “It’s taken me to the White House.”

And to this place. Kickoff is less than a week away. **AP**

FOOTBALL

Five-year-old Afghan boy could get to meet Lionel Messi

Rahim Faiez, Kabul

A five-year-old Afghan boy who made a splash on the Internet by wearing a homemade Lionel Messi jersey might get the chance to meet the Barcelona great.

The Afghan Football Federation said it is planning to set up a meeting between Messi and Murtaza Ahmadi, who was pictured wearing an Argentina jersey made from a plastic bag with Messi’s name and number on the back.

Afghan federation spokesman Sayed Ali



Murtaza Ahmadi

Kazemi said yesterday officials hope Messi can come to Afghanistan to visit the boy, but otherwise they will arrange to send him to Spain, where Messi plays with Barcelona, or arrange a meeting in a third country.

Pictures of Murtaza playing soccer near his home in eastern Ghazni province showed him wearing the plastic bag — in blue and white stripes like the Argentina national team shirt — with Messi and 10 written in black marker.

Murtaza is reportedly

the son of a poor family living in remote Joghori district.

Arif Ahmadi, Murtaza’s father, said he and his family have only solar power and the boy has seen Messi on TV.

“He [Murtaza] asked me many times to buy a Messi shirt,” Arif Ahmadi said. “I couldn’t provide for him. Later, his brother made him this plastic shirt and posted his photo on Facebook.”

Messi has met with children in special circumstances in the past. In 2011, he met and ki-

cked around a ball with a 10-year-old boy who had had both legs amputated because of Laurin-Sandrow syndrome. He did the same a year later with a Brazilian boy who was born without feet.

Murtaza was in Kabul yesterday, wearing some Barcelona gear under his homemade shirt while running through some soccer drills at the national stadium.

“The Spanish embassy is ready to issue visas for them,” said Keramuddin Karim, the president of the Afghanistan Football Federation. “We are trying to make contact directly with Barcelona to arrange the meeting, where, when and which date.” **AP**

opinion

Macau Matters

Richard Whitfield



CARING FOR THE ELDERLY - I

Along with many other parts of the world, Macau has to cope with a growing elderly population. Continuing improvements in healthcare and food availability mean that people are living longer, while living cost and social pressures mean that younger people are having smaller families, later in life. The net effect is a rapidly rising proportion of older people in the community.

This changing demographic profile is putting additional and increasing pressure on healthcare and social support services.

Personally, my increased need for medical services and drugs (for heart and other issues) and my future needs for surgical "repair" work (hip replacement) as I age is very noticeable. I have also begun noticing the problems in Macau's healthcare system and can already see that these problems will increase. Medical support in Macau seems to trail world best practice by a significant margin and the quality and quantity of local medical professionals is often sub-par. Many seem to have limited English, for example, which is a significant concern because it is the global language for science and most medical research results are published in English. Given Macau's wealth, I believe that the government needs to greatly expand the healthcare budget and make it much easier for internationally qualified healthcare professionals to practice here.

A related issue here is for the government and the healthcare system to be much more open and transparent so that much more information about the overall health of the community and the performance of the system and the people working within it is available. This is the only way that residents can make informed and reasonable healthcare decisions. Generally, I believe that the Macau government is far too secretive, a common symptom of bad government.

Social services, and especially those for the elderly, are mostly provided by charitable organizations in Macau. In many cases the services provided are not professionally managed, are poor and very limited. Again, there seems to be a "cone of silence" surrounding these services so that very limited information is available - most Macau charities do not publish annual reports, for example.

The government's social welfare department does provide significant funding to local charities but only seems to be interested in ensuring that photographs of charity recipients do not show identifiable faces, and has no interest in ensuring that the community gets good value for the funding provided or that services improve over time. This is a very stark contrast with the quality of the oversight of charitable organizations in Hong Kong, where their government does a much better job.

The provident fund system in Hong Kong for providing retirement benefits also seems much, much better than what we have here in Macau. My combined employer/employee retirement fund contributions in Hong Kong were several thousand per month, but only a few hundred per month in Macau, for very similar work situations. They have been talking about improving the local situation for years, but it seems to be yet another case of endless talk and no action. In Macau we deserve better.

As a Macau resident I get the annual government handout but this is a very poor substitute for a good public provident fund system for retirement benefits. Given the lack of reasonable retirement support, unless you are a public servant in which case the retirement benefits are very good, the old age pensions in Macau are particularly miserly. The government seems to be very happy to look after retired civil servants at the expense of the rest of the community, which does not seem fair or reasonable to me.

THE US CONCERNED OVER DISAPPEARANCE OF 5 HONG KONG RESIDENTS

The U.S. says the disappearance of five Hong Kong residents associated with a publisher specializing in books banned in mainland China raises serious questions about Beijing's commitments to the territory's autonomy.

State Department spokesman John Kirby urged China yesterday to clarify the status of all five individuals and let them return home.

The five residents are associated with Mi-

ghty Current Media and the Causeway Bay Bookstore. They have disappeared since October from mainland China or Thailand. They include British citizen and chief editor Lee Bo. The circumstances of Lee's case have fueled suspicions Chinese security agents crossed into Hong Kong to abduct him in breach of the "one country, two systems" principle.



A visitor passes by an image that shows Ai Weiwei lying face down on a beach photographed by Indian photographer Rohit Chawla at the India Art Fair in New Delhi

INDIA ART FAIR

Ai Weiwei artist imitates photo of Syrian toddler on the beach

CHINESE artist and activist Ai Weiwei has recreated the famous image of a three-year-old Syrian child who drowned in Turkey last year by staging a photo of himself lying face down on a beach in Greece.

The photograph last year of the child lying on a Turkish beach triggered international outrage as people saw the helpless toddler as the devastating human face of the refugee crisis in Europe.

Ai posed last week on a pebbly beach on Lesbos is-

land for the picture for one of India's largest English-language news magazines, India Today.

Rohit Chawla, the magazine's photographer and visual director, traveled to Lesbos to take the picture.

The photograph was displayed at an art fair in New Delhi over the weekend and many visitors took pictures of it.

Ai has set up a studio on Lesbos where he is working on several projects with refugee-related themes. Les-

bos is the main entry point for refugees seeking a better life in Europe.

Ai said last week that he had decided to withdraw his works from two Danish museums out of deep anger at a new law allowing Denmark to seize valuables from migrants.

The Chinese artist is famous for works addressing human rights abuses, official corruption and the collision between Chinese culture and Western consumerism. AP

European chief releases proposals to keep Britain in EU

EUROPEAN Council President Donald Tusk yesterday unveiled proposals that he hopes will keep Britain in the 28-nation European Union.

The draft deal was made public in a letter to EU leaders. It must be endorsed by Britain's EU partners and is set to be thrashed out at a summit in Brussels on Feb. 18.

"To my mind it goes really far in addressing all the concerns raised by Prime Minister [David] Cameron," Tusk wrote. "The line I did not cross, however, were the principles on which the European project is founded."

Tusk proposed that more power be given to national parliaments to potentially block legislation. The plan would not bind Britain to deeper EU integration, which is written into the EU's Lisbon Treaty.

On the contentious issue of benefits for EU migrant workers, Tusk says that EU

treaties must be respected, but he suggests there is room for maneuver by saying that current rules on the free movement of people could be clarified.

The EU's executive Commission has drawn up a "safeguard mechanism" which could be used for Britain to respond to "exceptional situations of inflow of workers" from other EU countries.

The plan aims to balance the concerns of Britain about its membership terms and perceived loss of sovereignty to Brussels without requiring time-consuming changes to the EU's legal treaties.

Cameron wants to hold a referendum by the end of next year on whether Britain should leave the EU, with this June already shaping up as a possible time for the vote.

Experts from EU nations are due to meet Friday for a first joint discussion of the proposals, hoping to pave the way for an agreement at the summit. AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	25-45 Good
High Density Residential Area	20-40 Good
Ambient	25-45 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

AUSTRALIA Lawmakers can now breastfeed in the Australian Parliament after the government changed the rules to make politics more family-friendly. But none of the nursing mothers appeared keen to take up the opportunity.

BANGLADESH A special war crimes tribunal in Dhaka sentences two more men to death after finding them guilty of killing, kidnapping and looting during the country's independence war against Pakistan in 1971.

INDIA's top court has agreed to re-examine a colonial-era law that makes homosexual acts punishable by up to a decade in prison.

PIRACY A global maritime watchdog says ship hijackings worldwide declined in 2015 from a year earlier, with sea piracy incidents mostly consisting of low-level theft.

USA Ted Cruz, a fiery, conservative Texas senator loathed by his own party's leaders, sweeps to victory in Iowa's Republican caucuses, overcoming billionaire Donald Trump and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio. Among Democrats, Hillary Clinton and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders were deadlocked in a tight race. More on p14

IRELAND's unemployment rate has fallen to a seven-year low of 8.6 percent as the country — buoyant again after years of gloom and austerity — faces an election. Unemployment has steadily improved since peaking at 15.1 percent in 2012, months before Ireland exited dependence on European and International Monetary Fund loans.

FRANCE High schools say students should be allowed to smoke on school grounds so that they don't become targets for extremists when they gather for cigarette breaks on the street outside. A leading union of school administrators first made the request five days after the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris. Following a refusal by the Health Ministry, the union last week renewed its call for a loosening of the school smoking ban as long as France remains under a state of emergency.