



**HOTSPOT FOR MONEY LAUNDERING**  
Macau remains vulnerable to money laundering operations, according to the U.S. Department of State

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**GENDER INEQUALITY PERSISTS**  
In 2015 the female-to-male earnings ratio was around 80pct, a study coordinated by Agnes Lam indicates

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**AD**

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# New Macau asks CCAC to probe Coloane project

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**WORLD BRIEFS**

**CHINA** has no plans to allow couples to have as many kids as they want after changing the one-child policy rule, a health official said yesterday. China's population reached 1.375 billion last year and it had to bear in mind its large population and stress on resources when making decisions, said Li Bin, director of the National Health and Family Planning Commission.



**KOREAS** South Korea said yesterday it is imposing unilateral sanctions on the North over its recent nuclear test and rocket launch, including a ban on financial dealings with 40 individuals and 30 entities. The announcement came after North Korea warned of pre-emptive nuclear strikes in response to the start of U.S.-South Korean military drills it views as an invasion rehearsal.

More on backpage

# China's exports plunge 25.4 percent year-on-year in February

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## REPORT

# Junkets basis of Macau 'vulnerability for money laundering'

**T**HE U.S. Department of State has issued its annual report on money laundering, financial crimes and drug and chemical control activities entitled, 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report. In the report, the department concludes that the prevalence and nature of junket operators in Macau continues to pose a potential "vulnerability for money laundering."

As in earlier years the report includes a segment on Macau, listed under a heading that reads "Countries/Jurisdictions of Primary Concern." While describing the MSAR as "not a significant regional financial center," it warns that the anonymity of junkets facilitating the circumvention of China's currency movement restriction represents a "vulnerability for money laundering, encourages Chinese capital flight and fosters underground financial systems."

The Department of State's annual report welcomed the work of Macau's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), saying that it regards the unit as "an essential component in coordinating efforts to develop long term [...] infrastructure and in developing close collaboration with other FIUs, including the signing of memoranda of understanding and collaboration agreements with foreign counterparts."



## Triads are active in the gaming services and are engaged in loan-sharking [and] prostitution services.

US DEPARTMENT OF STATE REPORT

However, the report noted that "important deficiencies remain." The failure of lawmakers to pass legislation aiming to strengthen Macau's customer due diligence requirements and to seek to improve the cross-border currency con-

trols have been pending for over three years, the report claims. Unsurprisingly it adds that Macau is yet to implement an effective cross-border cash declaration system.

The 2016 edition of the report reads, "The primary sources of laundered funds, derived from local and overseas criminal activity, are gaming-related crimes, property offenses and fraud."

"Organized crime, including triads, are active in the gaming services and are engaged in loan-sharking [and] prostitution services," the report said, complementing a report recently released in the British Journal of Criminology which claimed that Macau VIP rooms "remain to this day dominated by triads."

Gaming-related crimes continue to account for a significant portion of reported crime in Macau. The Times reported last month that gaming-related cases

surged by 38 percent to 1,553 cases last year, which law enforcement agencies attribute to heightened police attentiveness to gaming operators as the industry undergoes an "adjustment period."

According to the report, while Macau's law does not require currency transaction reporting, gaming entities are obliged to report transactions over MOP500,000 to the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau. The report recommends that Macau lowers this threshold to USD3,000 thereby bringing the amount in line with international standards.

It further recommends that the government "take[s] action on its long-pending legislation regarding customer due diligence and cross-border currency controls. Macau should also enhance its ability to support international [...] investigations."

In the first half of last year, there was just one criminal prosecution for money laundering, while there were no convictions.

In international cooperation terms, Macau is a member of the Asia-Pacific Group of Money Laundering (APG), a FATF-style regional body.

As Macau is not a sovereign state it is unable to sign certain conventions independent of China. Nevertheless, the conventions extended from China to Macau include the United Nations (UN) Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2003), the UN Convention against Corruption (2006), and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (2006). **DB**

## DSAT launches illegal parking detection system

**A** new illegal parking detection system will commence operations today at the "Estrada C. Amaral/Horta e Costa" bus stop in central Macau, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) and the Transport Bureau (DSAT) announced in a joint statement.

The cameras will reportedly obtain images that can be used as supporting evidence for the police to mete out tickets to vehicle owners or drivers caught infringing traffic regulations.

DSAT said they expect the new system will improve traffic flow. They believe that stopping and parking irregularities in the area are preventing buses from picking up and dropping



off passengers at designated stops.

This will be one of 19 similar systems that DSAT has already installed across the territory, which target areas such as bus stops, "yellow continuous lines" and entrances and exits of parking lots. According to the bureau, these areas have a higher rate of traffic irregularities.

The fines for stopping and parking illegally range between MOP300 and 600.

## Beijing's anti-graft watch over HK Macau Affairs office

**A**n anti-graft inspector for China's Communist Party, Liu Qiufang, revealed in Beijing that she is in charge of overseeing that mainland officials in the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office are not involved in corrupt practices, a RTHK report indicates.

Li, a member of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the party's department in charge of anti-graft campaigns for the country, said she was sent to the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office in Beijing earlier this year to oversee all their staff.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Beijing,

she did not comment on any specific case.

Since 2014, when Beijing launched its anti-corruption campaign, the local casino industry has been hit by a decline mostly due to the lack of VIP gamblers who have been responsible for about two-thirds of the gross gaming revenue that has seen sharp declines over 2015.

More recently with the investigation of high ranking officials, which includes the former Public Prosecutor General, Ho Chio Meng, who is currently in preventive custody, the MSAR has been reported as having started its own anti-graft drive following in the footsteps of the mainland's almost two-year program.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## 'The loss of a bank hugely affects the whole community'

Dear Sir,

Eileen Stow's letter published in Monday's Macau Daily Times was so wonderfully evocative and descriptively poetic of customers using Coloane Village's only bank.

It reminded me very much of a similar last-minute attempt to save the Lloyds Bank branch at the

top of the very long and vertiginous Fore Street in Totnes, Devon UK. Sadly it did not succeed, and the local community, with a very high proportion of elderly and young families, was expected to use the other Lloyds Bank Branch at the bottom of the very steep hill.

This was many years ago now, and so regrettably villages and small towns in the UK have

since suffered the same fate. The loss of a bank - oft times a Post Office as well - hugely affects the whole community, and leaves the vulnerable exposed, isolated and lonely without vital business and social lifelines.

Yours faithfully  
Patricia Thompson

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**T**HE European Union Academic Program in Macau (EUAP-M) marked International Women's Day yesterday with a seminar on "Women and Gender Politics: The Contemporary Situations in Europe and Macau," held at the University of Macau (UM).

Chaired by Rui Flores, Executive Program Manager of EUAP-M, the seminar featured presentations by UM professors from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Agnes Lam, Tony Schirato and Brian Hall.

Lam believes that there is a gender pay issue in Macau which she demonstrated by presenting a study on gender inequality. According to that study, the gap between rich and poor continues to grow and in 2015 "almost 30 percent of women earned less than MOP6,000 per month and only over 12 percent earned over MOP30,000. The female-to-male earnings ratio was around 80 percent, although the scholar admits that there is no absolute accuracy in these figures, as the government has not published related data.

The study also indicates that 40 percent of women believe that men have stronger competencies and 20 percent still believe that women should avoid doing better than their partners.

"When the woman earns more than her partner, she does household chores, as a way to compensate for the man's ego," she explained.

Agnes Lam emphasized that the traditional ideology in China in regards to women is still present nowadays. She claimed that stereotyping in the city is a serious problem, mentioning that local newspapers continually print stories about women doing household chores, modeling women only in the home.

"We don't have enough diversification in presenting women," she said. "All of the independent women in HK drama

# Gender inequality remains a pressing issue

**All independent women in HK drama series have unfortunate endings**

AGNES LAM

series come to an unfortunate end, if not a culprit [...] You can still hear these stories in the 21st century," she added.

Lam also emphasized that Macau's associations should stop empowering women to become a better wives and mothers, instead, [encourage them to become] better individuals.

Meanwhile Tony Schirato highlighted the issue of women's performance in China, which is still predicated on the ability to give birth to a boy, and the expectations women get in regards to being a wife, a mother and at the same time, an employee.

"It's a tough gig to be a woman in contemporary greater China," he said. Though he claimed that a lot has changed over the past 60 years, there is still much to be done to achieve gender equality.

Moreover, Brian Hall presented a "Macau depression study" that shows that women were 50 percent more likely to be depressed than men in almost all groups surveyed. While Hong Kong only shows a figure of 3.54 percent of women who are depressed.

Meanwhile in mainland China, a study shows that 43 percent of women experience do-



From left; Tony Schirato, Rui Flores, Agnes Lam and Brian Hall

mestic violence from their partners, associated with patriarchy and poor conflict resolution.

In terms of global violence

against women, 35 percent of women have experienced intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. In ad-

dition women who are victims of violence are more than twice as likely to experience depression or anxiety. **Staff reporter**

## Paula Ling and other NPC delegates call for longer maternity leave

**L**OCAL lawyer Paula Ling Hsiao Yun and three other female delegates from Macau to the National People's Congress (NPC) have expressed their concerns about women's entitlement to holidays in addition to the 56 days of maternity leave, Macao Daily News reported.

According to the Labor Relations Law, women, in general, are granted a period of 56 days of maternity leave, whereas, in particular, female civil servants are granted a full three months, which is similar to the mainland entitlement (98 days). Ling complained that "56 days are definitely not enough. Female workers should be entitled to the same maternity leave as civil servants."

Four out of the 12 NPC delegates from Macau are female. According to Iong Weng Ian, leader of Macau Women's General Association, the number of female members of local organizations and committees has been increasing but the ratio between men and women is still disproportionate. In her words, "I hope that

the government creates more opportunities for women."

Currently, local residents enjoy 10 mandatory holidays of paid leave, against seven in the mainland. Ho Sut Heng, chairwoman of the Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), considered that the maternity leave issue is "not up to pace with social development" and thinks women need more time for themselves.

Besides maternity leave, Leong Iok Wa, leader of FAOM, suggested that employed women, especially those on frequent rotational shift work, could be offered better organized working schedules.

Regarding women's status in society, the four delegates informed the media, while in Beijing, that female employees normally take responsibility both at home and at work, and that the pressure on local working-class women is quickly increasing. They suggested that extended maternity leave, as well as providing better services to the elderly and infants would bring improvements to the community.

### ARTS

## 'Triplets of Belleville' cine-concert to be performed tonight

A screening of the award-winning animation, "The Triplets of Belleville," will be held at the Macau Cultural Centre (CCM) tonight accompanied by a live orchestral performance led by the original film score composer, Benoît Charest.

The cine-concert combines what is usually considered animator Sylvain Chomet's most high-profile film, nominated for two Oscars in 2003, and Cha-



rest's diverse musical cast including trumpet, trombone, accordion players

and percussionists.

"In animation you need to have a very precise idea

of the timing," Charest said yesterday during a press conference. "I created a lot of the music without the animation after having the scene described." Later the animation would be created to synchronize with the soundtrack.

"I think every film is a special event. You need to adapt to the needs of the director; that is what makes a good [score composer], along with mee-

ting the right tone for the movie," Charest argued.

The award-winning animation tells the bizarre story of a young and fat Tour de France cyclist who is kidnapped by mysterious square-shouldered mafia henchmen and taken to a brimming metropolis. His near-sighted grandmother and faithful dog give chase to the kidnappers and along the way get taken in by a trio of eccentric jazz divas.

According to Charest, the performance of the cine-concert in Macau is the first in Asia. They will next perform in Taipei, before heading to the U.S. in April, and possibly Australia in autumn.

Charest adds that a part of the reason that he joined the orchestra for the cine-concert tour "is [to get] a chance to get out of the studio. Why not? I wrote it, so let's try it."

The performance will be held tonight at 8 p.m. in the Grand Auditorium at CCM, and will run for about 75 minutes without intermission. **DB**

**TAIWANESE** lawmakers passed a resolution on Monday to withdraw the new section of legislation that prevents pro-Taiwanese independence activists from having "Republic of Taiwan" stickers on their Republic of China passports.

The Legislature's National Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee passed the non-binding resolution which was proposed by several opposition lawmakers in order to revoke Article Three of the Enforcement Rules of the Passport Act, according to a China Post report.

The article prohibits Taiwanese citizens from placing "Repu-

# Taiwanese lawmakers propose revoking passport act

blic of Taiwan" stickers on the cover of their passports. Failing to observe this law may result in a passport revocation by government authorities.

New Power Party lawmaker, Freddy Lim, said that Article Five of the Passport Act only specifies that passport holders cannot make changes on the inner pages of their passport, however, the foreign minister

modified the law to further specify that no alterations should be made on the front cover of a passport.

Lim, the proponent of the resolution, then criticized the move saying it had already violated the original act itself, thus should not be effective in the first place.

Lim also argues that many nationals place the stickers on

their passports so as to prevent Taiwanese citizens to be wrongly identified as a Chinese national.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister David Lin clarified that the regulation is only meant to protect the rights of Taiwanese citizens traveling overseas since the use of the stickers could undermine the credibility of the country's passport.

Lin mentioned the concerns of many countries over the use of such stickers, which could lead to visa denials by foreign authorities, including those in the U.S., but promises to review Lim's proposal.

At least 15 Taiwanese citizens holding passports with the "Republic of Taiwan" stickers have been refused entry into Macau since the beginning of this year.

## REAL ESTATE

# Guangzhou lacks sales strategies in reaching out to Macau, HK

**GUANGZHOU** may be the first of the mainland's four tier-one cities to lift restrictions on homebuyers from Hong Kong and Macau, but industry experts doubt the move will boost property sales in the region.

Industry experts are skeptical that Guangdong will clear its target of 160 million square meters of



The glass facade of a real estate agency in the Zhujiang New Town district of Guangzhou

empty housing stock by 2018.

The Times earlier repor-

ted that Guangdong's provincial government may lift home-purchase restrictions

for buyers from Hong Kong and Macau, and will be entitled to the same benefits as locals in "eligible cities."

However, the new measure is not expected to draw buyers from Hong Kong, where prices have fallen nearly 11 percent after peaking last September.

"The relaxation, if it materializes, will create potential demand from Hong Kong but not in a big way,"

Joseph Tsang, managing director at JLL Hong Kong, told the South China Morning Post.

Meanwhile Thomas Lam, head of Valuation and Consultancy at Knight Frank, said Hong Kong was still a favorable investment among local investors, and added that investors are mainly concerned with the mainland's slowing economy.

According to mainland data provider Real Estate Information, prices for new flats in Guangzhou – which dominated total residential transactions – rose just over 36 percent since 2010, compared to Hong Kong's 88 percent rise over the same period.

Prices for new homes in Guangzhou had a month-on-month increase of 0.64 percent in February.

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# New Macau complains to CCAC on Coloane tower

Renato Marques

**T**HE New Macau Association found “suspicious traces” that government departments may have contributed to expedite the bureaucratic procedures for the construction company regarding the proposed 100-meter skyscraper planned for Coloane’s hill (Estrada do Campo). The association delivered a complaint to the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) yesterday, showing several documents that raise suspicions of favoritism from government departments.

The complaint is based on several decisions taken by the administration over a four year period (2009-2013) that converged to help this specific development project, the leader of New Macau Association, Scott Chiang, told journalists when delivering the documents to Macau’s corruption watchdog.

Chiang explained, “back in 2007 there was a plan clearly stating that the construction



height for that entire area could not exceed 12 meters but in 2009 an updated version of the same plan excluded precisely the area in question without further explanation or reason,” adding that “a few years later in 2012 the developer had already applied for the development and with very suspicious efficiency the government issued a temporary project license, which preceded the environmental impact assessment.”

According to Chiang, back in 2012 when the govern-

ment issued the first temporary license for the project, it was only valid for 12 months. “Although we are now in 2016 it seems that condition is still valid and we have to question why. (...) It seems like the government rushed the process so it could give an assurance to the development before the enforcement of the new Urban Development Plan of 2014.”

Questioned by reporters about what the worst impact of the building could be (should it be built), Scott Chiang said that there are serious

worries at two different levels: “First, this project will dig up half of the hill which will have a terrible impact on the environment in Coloane, the last piece of natural environment we can find in Macau.” More importantly, according to him, is what he deems as the ‘B2 effect’: “Once you allow a project of such height in this location, all the surrounding landowners will say ‘why can’t I do the same thing?’ so all of Coloane Island would be effectively gone.”

This development has been “in the line of fire” over the last week with several people and organizations expressing their discontent.

The government issued assurances that the project has not yet been granted a construction permit by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DS-SOPT). A statement from the Government Information Bureau reiterated that starting construction on any project without a building permit is against the law.

## HK ‘performed poorly in accomplishing tasks’

Beijing’s 13th five-year plan revealed its concerns about the Hong Kong government’s inability to accomplish what is expected of it, according to a local delegate of China’s top advisory body. Professor Lau Siu-kai – the government’s former think tank chief who helped formulate the previous five-year plan in 2011 – said the lack of any new items indicated that the government had fallen short. “The 12th five-year plan mentioned six new industries for Hong Kong and about 10 infrastructural items [for cross-border cooperation], but they were not delivered upon [...] So this year there was no actual item at all,” he told the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong. “This implies that we performed poorly in accomplishing tasks.” The chapter devoted to Hong Kong and Macau listed seven projects, including three new development zones in Guangdong and infrastructure projects such as the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge. None of those projects have so far been completed.

## ‘Temple culture’ promoted in Macau

The Macau Temple Civilization Promotion Committee aimed to raise awareness of local temple culture through a two-day set of Taoist musical performances that delighted local audiences, Macao Daily News reported. The cultural event, which ended on Sunday, was supported by the Macau Taoist Association and more than ten temples. Exhibitions of traditional handcraft and of other folk culture were on display for both tourists and local residents to enjoy. The Taoist musical group played eight pieces of music.

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## HUMAN RESOURCES

## Sands launches career development program for team members

**S**ANDS China has launched “My Way,” a new career development program for its team members.

The first 1,000 team members who join the program will train to work in one of several non-gaming areas, including food and beverage, security, business development, wardrobe, guest relations, housekeeping, and facilities. They will work in their new roles for a period of two years with the possibility of another year’s extension. Participants can return to their original gaming roles at any time or can choose to stay in their new non-gaming roles.

According to a press release issued by Sands China, “My Way’ is the first career development program of its kind in Macau to be implemented on such a large scale. It is the result of a systematic, cross-departmental effort to provide opportunities for team members – the program encourages them to try new fields and positions for a set period of time.”

“Our team members are our greatest assets, and our success would not be possible without their dedication and professionalism. This is our latest effort to invest further in them,” said Antonio Ramirez, senior vice president of human resources for Sands China.

# Lui Che-Woo plans Avatar-like theme park for Galaxy

Daniela Wei and Jill Mao

**M**ACAUS’ decade-long gambling boom made Lui Che-Woo a multi-billionaire and his casino company number three in the world’s largest gambling hub. The Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. chairman is now venturing into something more family-friendly: theme parks.

The next two phases of the HKD86 billion (USD11 billion) Galaxy Macau project will include “something special and high-tech” similar to the movie “Avatar,” said Lui. Compared with larger theme parks such as Walt Disney Co.’s \$5.5 billion Shanghai park that’s due to open in June, “our park will be smaller but unique,” he said in an interview in Hong Kong.

“Nowadays you already see that all these theme parks all have different special ideas,” said 86-year-old Lui, who made his first fortune in construction before entering the casino industry in his 70s. “So we’re thinking of how to compete against them.”

Casino owners in Macau are under pressure to come up with ways to attract tourists two years after President Xi Jinping ordered the city to diversify from gambling. As China’s campaign against graft continues to scare off many of Macau’s high-stakes customers, Lui isn’t the only one looking for new ideas, with Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd.’s Hollywood-themed Studio City opening last October.

“Theme parks are a great idea



BLOOMBERG

and Macau is desperate for more non-gaming attractions,” said CLSA Ltd. analyst Aaron Fischer. “These investments are in line with government demands so this will further strengthen relations and reduce the risk of the license not being renewed.”

Returns on theme parks are “quite low” however, Fischer said, adding he would also like to see Galaxy add another 6,000 hotel rooms and convention space to help improve its mid-week occupancy rates.

Competition for the mass-market segment, referring to gamblers who don’t play in VIP rooms normally reserved for high-stakes players, is heating up as Las Vegas tycoons Steve Wynn and Sheldon Adelson get ready to open new resorts in the second half of this year.

Casino shares fell in Hong Kong trading, with Adelson’s Sands China Ltd. and Wynn Macau Ltd. down as much as 4.7 percent and 4.6 percent respectively and Galaxy fell as much as 3.9 percent. Bloomberg Intelligence’s index of Macau gaming stocks fell as much as 3 percent, while the Hang Seng Index lost as much as 1.2 percent.

The move to attract more Chinese tourists comes as rising average wages over three decades have spawned a working and middle-class with more discretionary cash that’s more willing to spend on leisure and fun. Going head-to-head with Disneyland, China’s richest person Wang Jianlin opened Dalian Wanda Group Co.’s first theme park in southern China last September and is spending 50 billion yuan (\$7.7 billion) on a movie-plus-theme park in China’s eastern city of Qingdao.

The Galaxy Macau Phase Two and Broadway Macau projects started operations last May incorporating a 3,000-seat theater that’s meant to broaden its appeal to families and tourists.

“Theme parks are a great idea and Macau is desperate for more non-gaming attractions.”

AARON FISCHER

The two properties boosted Galaxy’s market share in the mass-market segment, helping its fourth-quarter earnings beat analysts’ estimates.

Construction of the third and fourth phases of Galaxy Ma-

cau, which will cost as much as HKD50 billion to build, were originally planned to start by end-2013, according to the company’s 2012 annual report. The expansions were delayed as Galaxy re-evaluated the plans amid Macau’s casino downturn, deputy chairman Francis Lui, son of the chairman, said in a briefing last month. Site investigation on the new phases is expected to start this year, the younger Lui said.

Galaxy makes up three-quarters of the elder Lui’s \$7.3 billion wealth according to Bloomberg Billionaires Index, making him Hong Kong’s 10th-richest. As Macau’s gambling business tumbled, Lui’s wealth more than halved since the peak in 2014, when he was at one point Asia’s second-richest person. Wynn and Adelson’s fortunes both declined about 30 percent as their Macau units struggled.

Lui, who has transferred \$1 billion worth of his companies’ shares to charitable foundations last September and set up a “Lui Che Woo Prize” for contributions to areas such as food safety and medicines, said he’s circumspect about the current state of Macau’s gambling market, calling the recent decline “reasonable” after a decade of rapid growth.

“We continue to invest in Macau,” he said. Another of Galaxy’s non-gaming resort will include water sports facilities located on Hengqin island, neighboring Macau, with details to be announced in the second half of this year, Lui said.

Bloomberg

## corporate bits

### MGM TO CELEBRATE EASTER WITH FESTIVE EVENTS



MGM MACAU is set to launch a variety of festive promotional dining and entertainment events in celebration of Easter.

Selections include the Chef’s Special Easter Menu at Aux Beaux Arts, a buffet at Rossio, and a wide range of festive sweets at Pastry Bar and Grande Praça Café.

Aux Beaux Arts will present special Easter a-la-carte menus on March 27 only, including a special ‘Organic Egg-citing Live Station’ available during brunch hours.

Meanwhile in Rossio, Boston lobsters, Alaskan king crab legs and freshly shucked oysters are just some of the highlights available.

Between March 11 and 27, Pastry Bar and Grande Praça Café will offer a selection of treats such as traditional Easter hot cross buns or Pinza buns, pastries, macaroons, and cookies.

Also, MGM Macau will launch two Easter challenges for kids during brunch hours on March 27, with the champions winning an Easter chocolate surprise. In addition, the games and drawing station are complimentary for Aux Beaux Arts and Rossio’s brunch guests, subject to availability.

### VISTAJET ANNOUNCES GROWTH

VistaJet has announced its flight and passenger statistics for 2015, showing both the number of passengers flying with VistaJet and its overall increase in flight traffic across all of its core markets, making last year the company’s strongest to date.

Worldwide flight traffic increased by more than 21 percent year-on-year compared to 2014 and the total number of passengers flying with VistaJet increased by more than

23 percent, according to a statement.

The company continued to build on its strong track record when entering new markets by launching in-country services in China. As well as a notable growth in flights to China, the business also recorded increased performance in the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea, and registered significant growth in customers from Singapore.



### SHERATON MARKS EASTER HOLIDAY

Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel, Cotai Central is offering a range of international cuisines at its signature restaurants to celebrate the Easter holiday. Guests will be offered both traditional and contemporary Easter fare, from handpicked Italian delights, to exquisite seafood, to chocolates or dim sum, at Bene, Feast, Palms, and Xin.

“Guests looking to indulge their sweet tooth can dive into chocolate heaven at Palms with the ‘Chocoholic Afternoon Tea Set’ and ‘Chocoholic Dessert Buffet,’ while foodies seeking exquisite Chinese cuisine should head to the ‘All You Can Eat Dim Sum Brunch’ at Xin,” reads a statement.

Sheraton is also offering a



‘Spring Escapes’ package; a room, dining and entertainment package that allows guests to experience the hotel’s best offerings and also lets kids ‘Eat and Stay for Free.’ Moreover, the resort is set to re-launch its Junior Hotelier – a program that teaches children how to run a hotel, with a special expanded culinary focus.

## ENTERTAINMENT

# How Matt Damon may kickstart China's global movie ambitions

Ryan Nakashima, Los Angeles

**C**HINA has a new ally in its campaign to turn itself into a global cultural superpower: Matt Damon. And, behind him, a good chunk of Hollywood as well.

Chinese leaders have long sought international cultural influence, aka "soft power," commensurate with the nation's economic might. That's brought us official Confucian institutes scattered across the world, billions of dollars in development aid and awe-inspiring Olympic ceremonies. But China's own film industry remains a mere flicker on the global screen.

Which is where Damon comes in. Early next year, the star of "The Martian" will headline "The Great Wall," a historical epic filmed in China with Chinese and American stars, a famous Chinese director, a cast and crew of roughly 1,300, a USD150 million budget and some nasty monsters. (Not to mention the support of the Chinese government.) If all goes according to plan, the film could be China's first international blockbuster — one that might presage a wave of similar films intended to present a new face of China to the world.

That's a lot to expect from a decidedly unusual action flick. In "The Great Wall," Damon plays a wandering European mercenary in the pre-gunpowder era who stumbles across the titular structure and learns what it's really for. (Hint: Those monsters might be involved.)

But film-industry types on both sides of the Pacific believe this kind of joint venture could open huge new opportunities for all sides. For Hollywood, it's about expan-

AP PHOTO



Movie director Zhang Yimou (right), speaks next to actor Matt Damon during a news conference of their latest movie "The Great Wall" held at a hotel in Beijing

ding markets and investment; for the Chinese government and private companies alike, it's about harnessing American stars and storytelling to help movies based on Chinese history, myths and cultural icons break out onto a global stage.

Chinese authorities "have not made any secret of their desire to spread and to encourage and to develop soft power," says Rance Pow, president of Artisan Gateway, a Shanghai-based research firm that tracks the Chinese box office. Regaling the world with made-in-China blockbusters, he says, is one way to do so.

Hollywood naturally welcomes Chinese investment to help fuel its voracious movie-making machine. One Chinese company — conglomerate Dalian Wanda

Group — snapped up an entire Hollywood studio, Legendary Entertainment, for \$3.5 billion. Legendary just happens to be the studio behind "The Great Wall."

Working with Chinese partners also offers a shortcut past rules that limit the distribution of foreign movies in China's booming film market. That could open up a vast new territory to U.S. studios — at least so long as they play by China's rules.

"For U.S. industry, these concessions are really about market access," says Thilo Hanemann, an economist with Rhodium Group, a research firm focused on global trade flows and government policies.

Of course, plenty could still go wrong. There's no guarantee that either "The Great Wall" or another half-dozen or so would-be Chinese blockbusters will wow either Chinese or global audiences. Some previous efforts along these lines have been global flops.

This time, both Chinese and American movie executives think they've got the formula right. The most successful attempt so far is "Kung Fu Panda 3," which has pulled in \$314 million, including an outsized \$149 million in China. Unlike its predecessors, the third movie in the series was produced by a joint venture between the series' original

■ The star of 'The Martian' will headline 'The Great Wall,' a historical epic filmed in China with Chinese and American stars, and a famous Chinese director

studio, DreamWorks Animation and Chinese investors, including state-backed China Media Capital.

The biggest draw for Tinseltown is China's huge and expanding film market. Cinema attendance in the U.S. and Canada has been flat for a decade, but Chinese moviegoers are on a tear, snapping up tickets worth \$6.8 billion in 2015, up nearly 50 percent from a year earlier. At that pace, China could eclipse the U.S. as the world's largest film market as early as next year.

But tapping that market has been a challenge. Chinese regulators allow no more than 34 foreign films to screen in China every year — far fewer

than filmmakers release in the U.S. every month — and impose multiple "blackout" periods during which none at all can be shown. Regulators vary the length of the blackouts so that Chinese-made films eke out a majority of the market every year, Artisan Gateway's Pow says.

Films like "Kung Fu Panda 3" and "The Great Wall," however, get ushered to the front of the line. Because of their Chinese backers, the films qualify for prime release dates. Their backers also get to keep a bigger share of the box office than they ordinarily would.

So Hollywood has eagerly welcomed Chinese partners. From 2000 to 2015, Chinese direct investment in U.S. entertainment firms amounted to \$4 billion, according to Rhodium Group. That pace then skyrocketed in January with Wanda's purchase of Legendary, which almost doubled that total by itself.

Chinese studios and investors have pledged another several hundred million dollars for Hollywood film slates. Warner Bros., DreamWorks Animation and Universal have linked up with state-owned enterprises and private companies such as electronics maker LeEco and Internet giants Alibaba and Tencent.

That flood of Chinese cash makes possible epic films like "The Great Wall," helmed by internationally acclaimed director Zhang Yimou and filmed at a multi-billion-dollar production facility still under construction in Qingdao on China's eastern seaboard. Legendary plans eight more Chinese-themed projects with similar budgets, says Peter Loehr, CEO of Legendary's wholly owned subsidiary Legendary East.

"We're hoping this is a model that works and that we can recreate it often," he says.

But the Western appetite for China-centric films remains uncertain. Consider "The Flowers of War," a 2011 film about the Japanese army's vicious 1937 sack of Nanking. Despite star Christian Bale and a \$94 million budget, the movie pulled in less than \$500,000 in the U.S., according to Box Office Mojo.

The brutality portrayed in the film turned off foreign audiences as a "kind of propaganda," says Peter Li, managing director of CMC Capital Partners, a unit of China Media Capital.

Foreign co-productions could suffer a similar fate if they grow too heavy handed in an attempt to satisfy Chinese censors, who oversee all films released domestically. "If you promote socialist core values, you're not going to succeed overseas," says Stan Rosen, a University of Southern California political scientist. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Po (left), voiced by Jack Black, and his long-lost panda father Li, voiced by Bryan Cranston, posing for a portrait in DreamWorks Animation's "Kung Fu Panda 3"



Joe McDonald, Beijing

# US sanctions Chinese tech supplier over Iran ties

WASHINGTON has restricted the access of one of China's biggest telecoms equipment makers, ZTE Corp., to American components after concluding the state-owned company improperly exported U.S. technology to Iran.

The sanctions took effect yesterday after ZTE was found to be "acting contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests" of the United States, the U.S. Commerce Department said. The department released documents it said showed ZTE set up front companies to evade U.S. controls on high-tech exports to Iran.

The Chinese government said it opposes the U.S. sanctions. ZTE's technology purchases support thousands of U.S. jobs that might be in jeopardy, the Commerce Ministry said.

"This approach will only hurt others without necessarily benefiting oneself," said China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, at a news conference during the meeting of the national legislature.

ZTE said it was "fully committed" to obeying the law wherever it operates.

"ZTE has been cooperating, will continue to cooperate and communicate with all U.S. agencies as required," said a company statement. "The company is working expeditiously toward resolution of this issue."

The conflict reflects the complex ties between U.S. and Chinese technology companies despite Washington's concerns about sharing advanced know-how with China.

Most of the world's smartphones and personal computers are assembled in China. ZTE and other Chinese companies are developing their own technology but rely on Western chipsets and other components.

The sanctions could prompt Chinese leaders to push for faster development of their

AP PHOTO



A man, seen on the screen of a smart phone, takes photographs of a miniature city set at the Chinese ZTE stand during the Mobile World Congress Wireless show in Barcelona, Spain

own fledgling technology suppliers, said Nikhil Batra, research manager for Asia-Pacific telecoms for IDC.

"It might be a boon" to officials who want to reduce reliance on foreign sources, said Batra.

"It's not likely to be their chief concern that one of their companies has been sanctioned when it can lead to better development of China as a technology marketplace," he said.

American companies also might be vulnerable to retaliation, Batra said. He noted Beijing fined American chip

supplier Qualcomm Technologies Inc. and investigated software giant Microsoft Corp. on anti-monopoly charges after Huawei Technologies Ltd. was forced out of the U.S. server market following complaints it might be a security risk.

Founded in 1985 as Zhongxing Semiconductor Co. Ltd., ZTE is a major supplier of network switching gear and other telecoms products. It assembles smartphones for other companies and has launched its own brand.

ZTE and three other entities, including one in Iran, "were identified in the scheme deve-

loped by ZTE Corp. to re-export controlled items to Iran contrary to United States law," said a Commerce Department announcement.

It said they will face additional requirements to apply for export licenses and gave no indication whether they would be granted.

Two documents released by the department described a "detached (business) model" and "detached (shell) companies" set up to handle sales to Iran of products covered by U.S. trade embargoes. The documents were marked "Top Secret Highly Confidential."

The Commerce Department did not say how it obtained them.

The sanctions threaten to disrupt sales by U.S. technology suppliers such as Intel Corp. and Qualcomm. They earn billions of dollars a year from chip sales, license payments and other revenue from Chinese customers.

ZTE spends about USD450 million every quarter on U.S. technology, according to Batra. In addition to Qualcomm and Intel, he said suppliers include Avnet Inc., which makes electronics used in routers.

Intel is "still assessing the possible impact," a company spokesman, Will Moss, said in an email.

Potential non-U.S. suppliers include MediaTek Inc., a Taiwanese maker of chipsets used by Chinese smartphone brands Huawei and Xiaomi, and South Korea's Samsung, said Batra. But he said for components in network routers and other advanced products, there is no alternative to Intel or rival Advanced Micro Devices Inc.

"It's going to be a big impact for both sides — for ZTE as well as the U.S. companies," he said.

ZTE, headquartered in the southern city of Shenzhen, said it earned 2.6 billion yuan (\$400 million) on revenue of 81.5 billion yuan (\$12.5 billion) in 2014, the most recent year for which it has reported results.

U.S. authorities earlier cited ZTE as a possible security risk. In 2012, a congressional panel said the company and rival Huawei were potential threats and Americans should avoid doing business with them. AP

AD

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Relatives of passengers aboard Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 talk at a restaurant near Beijing Capital International Airport after meeting with Malaysia Airlines representatives in Beijing

## MH370

# Families' painful choice: Demand answers or move on?

Peng Peng & Tim Sullivan, Beijing

**N**EARLY every day, the retired factory worker goes to the airline office, riding a series of buses across Beijing to hand-deliver a letter. And nearly every day, the letter says the same thing.

"Tell us the truth, and get our loved ones back to us."

Once she hands over the letter, Dai Shuqin gets back on the bus and goes home, back to a small apartment where boxes hold copies of hundreds of letters she has delivered over the past two years, all begging for news on her sister and four other relatives who vanished when Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 disappeared on March 8, 2014. There were 239 people on board.

Most of the passengers on the plane, which was en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, were Chinese. So across China, dozens of families are still wrestling with how — or if — to accept that their relatives are dead. Investigators believe the Boeing 777 crashed in a remote stretch of the southern Indian Ocean, killing everyone on board after flying far off course and running out of fuel. But they have only theories to explain exactly what happened, or why. Only one confirmed piece of plane wreckage has been found, a battered, rowboat-sized

wing part that washed up on an Indian Ocean island about eight months ago.

What can you do when you don't know what happened to people you loved?

Some of the grieving families have filed lawsuits, including 12 families who did this week. Some have accepted cash settlements with Malaysia Airlines in exchange for agreeing not to file suit. Many are still debating what to do.

And some, like Dai, find their only solace comes in believing that their relatives are still alive. Somewhere. Somehow. As a result, their lives are now consumed by demanding answers from an airline that has few answers at all.

"People say we are nuts," said Dai, a 62-year-old woman who-

**Going to Malaysia Airlines every day gives me a bit of relief, and I feel I am doing something for my sister.**

RELATIVE

se younger sister was on the flight, along with her sister's husband, son, daughter-in-law and grandson. "But for us, we have the feeling that our loved ones are still alive."

Officials "just tell us all the passengers are dead. We don't accept that. If they tell us the truth, or give us a convincing explanation, then we'll stop coming here every day."

She does not care if her quest looks impossible.

"I can't sleep and I can't get over this," Dai said.

Her apartment has few decorations beyond a large world map stuck to one wall. A folding metal table is covered with copies of letters sent to the airline.

"I have no other ways to handle this. [...] Going to Malaysia Airlines every day gives me a bit of relief, and I feel I am doing something for my sister."

Many relatives believe the real story of MH370 has been hidden from them. They disagree on what may have happened, debating theories and trading facts and rumors. But few believe they know the entire truth.

That suspicion is heightened in China, where widespread censorship and the official control of access to information has led to a general sense among Chinese that what they see in the media, or hear from the government, is not to be trusted. This widespread cynicism

foments a quiet if deep-seated anger, and a willingness to accept conspiracy theories.

Kelly Wen, who runs a furniture store, is desperate to move on, to find a way to start her life again after her husband disappeared with the plane.

But she remains overwhelmed by the loss.

"My family is still in the shadow of the MH370 accident," said Wen, a 31-year-old Beijing resident with a five-year-old son now left without a father. "I can't work like I did before because there are too many issues I need to handle in my family. But I do hope I can gradually walk out of the accident and go

back to work."

With the second anniversary approaching, Wen increasingly believes she needs to make up her mind about what to do.

"I need to decide whether to accept compensation and reach agreement with Malaysian Airlines or file suit in court," she said.

She and some 80 other relatives of MH370 passengers went together to meet Malaysia Airlines staff in late February to get updates on the situation. From the start, it did not go well. Outside the airline office were nearly two dozen policemen in case there was trouble.

When they left, few of the relatives were satisfied.

They had come with detailed questions about the status of the search and the investigation. Wen wanted to see security video of passengers boarding the aircraft. The search is expected to end in June, plane or no plane, and they wanted more details on that decision.

But no security video was released, she said, and little new information emerged. Few of the relatives have faith in the official investigation, which was set up by Malaysia and includes experts from Malaysia, Australia, China, Britain, the U.S. and France.

"We hope we can have a third-party, independent investigation when they stop search-and-rescue in June," she said.

After the meeting, about 10 members of the group ate lunch together in a nearby restaurant.

"This kind of gathering is very important for us," said Wen. "We are already so helpless. If we don't gather among other relatives, we will feel even more lonely," she said.

Dai, however, doesn't think much about moving on. For the foreseeable future, her life is about delivering the letters that she and other relatives have signed.

A year ago, her only daughter had a baby, her only grandchild. Now, her daughter wants Dai to look after the little boy.

But Dai says that won't happen. Going to the airline office takes up too much of her time. **AP**

## MALAYSIAN PM SAYS HOPEFUL THAT MISSING PLANE WILL BE FOUND

**MALAYSIAN PRIME** Minister Najib Razak said yesterday he is hopeful that missing Flight 370 will still be found as lawmakers observed a moment of silence in Parliament to mark the second anniversary of the plane's disappearance. Najib said the wing part found on France's Reunion Island last July was evidence the flight tragically ended in the southern Indian Ocean. An ongoing search is expected to be completed later this year

and he said Malaysia "remains hopeful" that the plane will be found. If the search turns up nothing, he said, Malaysia, Australia and China will hold a meeting to determine the way forward. "The search has been the most challenging in aviation history," Najib said in a statement. "We remain committed to doing everything within our means to solving what is an agonizing mystery for the loved ones of those who were lost."

**T**HE order came down from the highest levels of China's government, in a handwritten message from President Xi Jinping to officials charged with fixing the country's crashing stock market: Make sure to protect the interests of small and mid-level investors.

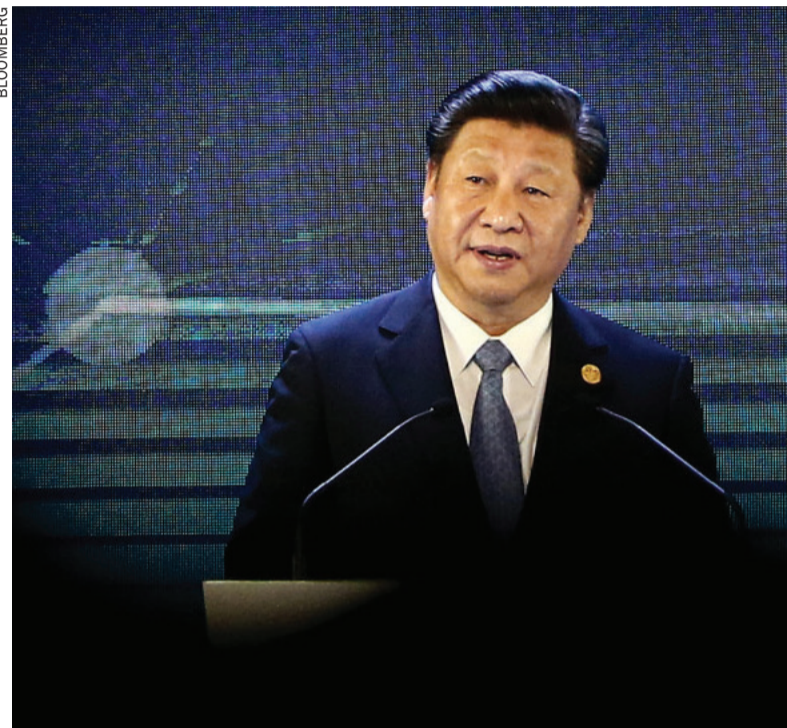
Xi's command - scribbled across a report on probes into short sellers and other "malicious" traders - was shared at a July meeting between regulators and law enforcement officials, according to a person with knowledge of the matter, who asked not to be named because the meeting was private. In the ensuing months, policy makers would escalate an unprecedented campaign to prop up shares and punish speculators accused of exacerbating the rout.

It's safe to say that the results aren't what Xi envisioned. Not only have Chinese stocks lost USD728 billion since July, but the government's handling of the crash has undermined its credibility among both international money managers and the individual investors it sought to protect. The intervention shows how Xi's brand of populism clashes with his pledge to create a market-based economy, risking more policy misfires as he tackles challenges from reforming state-owned enterprises to allowing the yuan to trade more freely.

"If they can't get stocks right, how are they going to get the trickier puzzle of SOE reform right?" said Michael Every, the head of financial markets research at Rabobank Group in Hong Kong, who correctly predicted the tumble in Chinese equities. "The government's attempts have been a total failure, leading to a huge drop in confidence among investors."

Questions over the ruling Communist Party's policies have taken on renewed urgency this week as leaders huddle for the National People's Congress, an annual parliamentary session where lawmakers will sign off on China's five-year econo-

# Xi's handwriting betrays paradox at core policy



mic plan. Nine months after the stock-market rout began, the aftershocks are still a focus of NPC delegates gathered in Beijing.

The market rout is "destroying the middle class," Fan Yun, a businesswoman from Shanghai, said during a meeting of her municipality's NPC delegation on Sunday, an unusually outspoken assessment of government policies. "The 10 years of stock-market development since 2007 is a decade of tears."

The second half of 2015 was especially painful. The average Chinese investor who entered the stock market in May - when new account openings surged to record highs - suffered losses of 27 percent through December, according to figures compiled by Hithink RoyalFlush Information Network Co., one of the nation's biggest providers of financial data.

Corwin Huang, a 26-year-old

financial professional in Beijing, is among those disillusioned by policy makers' response to the selloff, particularly that of the China Securities Regulatory Commission.

"I used to appreciate the CSRC's efforts to support the market," said Huang, who liquidated his stock holdings in late January after recording a 50 percent loss. "Eventually, I decided I was wrong. I overvalued the government's capabilities."

It's easy to see why protecting China's small investors was such a priority for Xi, who has also spearheaded a crackdown on official corruption and pledged to lift 50 million people from poverty by the end of the decade.

For one, stock investors are a huge constituency: About 90 million individuals had registered as investors by the height of the boom in June, more than

the 88 million-strong Communist Party. Keeping the wealth of China's middle class intact also furthered an official goal of creating a consumer-led economy, while the government's credibility was on the line after senior officials joined state-run media in promoting equities before prices collapsed.

There are signs that regulators have learned from mistakes. They scrapped a controversial market circuit breaker just four days after it was introduced in January, a rare admission of policy error after the mechanism was blamed for exacerbating investor panic. Last month, the government dismissed CSRC Chairman Xiao Gang, who had overseen both the stock-market bubble and bust.

Authorities are "still learning by doing," said Wai Ho Leong, a Singapore-based senior regional economist at Barclays Plc, who cited recent remarks by Premier Li Keqiang and central bank Governor Zhou Xiaochuan as signs of an effort to improve communication with the market. "They will get it right in the end."

Still, policy makers seem to be prioritizing a rising market over long-term reform. The government's plan to reduce intervention in initial public offerings, which had fueled fears of an oversupply of new shares, is unlikely to be implemented this year, a person familiar with the situation said this week. State-backed funds stepped in to support the stock market on Friday, according to two people with direct knowledge of the situation, in an effort to boost investor sentiment during the NPC. The Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.1 percent yesterday amid speculation of state

buying.

Instead of meddling with market prices, China's leadership should focus their efforts on educating individual investors and ensuring that market information is accurate and openly available, said Zhu Ning, deputy dean of Shanghai Jiao Tong University's Shanghai Advanced Institute of Finance.

"The CSRC took an unnecessary and improper role of guaranteeing the equity market will rise," Zhu said. "In the long run, instead of facilitating growth of the stock market and investors, this role actually limits and hurts the market."

Xi, who gave himself control over China's financial policies and long-term economic planning, will need to win back the confidence of local and foreign investors if he wants to steer the world's second-largest economy through its deepest slowdown in a quarter century.

Plans presented at the NPC call for closing dirty and inefficient mills and mines, filling millions of vacant homes and letting capital flow more freely across China's borders without a major yuan devaluation. The Communist Party wants to do it all while avoiding a surge in unemployment that could threaten social stability and damage its claim as the nation's best option for economic prosperity.

Fang Tao, a 28-year-old employee at a sportswear company in Shanghai, has yet to be convinced China's leaders can pull it off.

"It's like the government is using our real money to try out their immature reform," said Fang, who lost 30 percent of his investment in stocks last year.

**Bloomberg**

## Trade falls sharply in February

**C**HINA'S trade plunged in February as weak global demand and a business shutdown during the Lunar New Year holiday combined to depress sales.

Exports fell 25.4 percent from a year ago to USD126.1 billion, worsening from January's 11.2 percent contraction, customs data showed yesterday. Imports shrank 13.8 percent to \$93.5 billion, an improvement over Ja-

nuary's 18.8 percent decline.

The trade slump has complicated the ruling Communist Party's efforts to overhaul its state-dominated economy by adding the risk of politically dangerous job losses. The ruling party's plans call for keeping trade steady to protect millions of export-related jobs.

At the annual meeting of China's national legislature this week, the lea-

dership refrained from announcing a trade growth target after last year's exports contracted by 2.8 percent, falling embarrassingly short of the official goal of 6 percent growth.

Chinese economic growth fell last year to a 25-year low of 6.9 percent. The government has set a target of 6.5 to 7 percent this year but the International Monetary Fund and private sector forecasters expect growth to

fall as low as 6.3 percent.

The slowdown has hurt demand for industrial raw materials and other imports. February's numbers also were depressed by a two-week shutdown by factories and many other employers for the Lunar New Year holiday.

China's politically sensitive global trade surplus was \$32.6 billion in February.

The trade surplus with the United States, China's



biggest trading partner last month, narrowed by one-quarter from a year earlier to \$14.5 billion as American purchases

of Chinese goods fell 15 percent. The surplus with the 27-nation European Union contracted by one-third to \$10 billion. **AP**

## SOUTH CHINA SEA

# US general: Air Force to keep flying over region

Rod McGuirk, Canberra

**T**HE U.S. Air Force will continue to fly daily missions over the South China Sea despite a buildup of Chinese surface-to-air missiles and fighter jets in the contested region, with both nations' militaries in discussions to avoid any miscalculations, a top U.S. general said yesterday.

Gen. Lori Robinson, the commander of the Pacific Air Forces, also urged other nations to exercise their freedom to fly and sail in international airspace and waters claimed by China in the South China Sea "or risk losing it throughout the region."

"We've watched the increased military capability on those islands, whether it's the fighters, whether it's the missiles or the 10,000-foot runways. We will continue to do as we've always done, and that is fly and sail in international airspace in accordance to international rules and norms," Robinson told reporters in Australia's capital, Canberra, where she will address the Royal Australian Air Force's biennial Air Power Conference next week.

Robinson declined to say how the United States would retaliate if a U.S. plane was shot down by the Chinese.

Several governments have conflicting claims in the South China Sea, a major conduit for world trade. The U.S. lays no claims to the waters, but says it has an interest in ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight and non-use of force and coercion to assert claims.

Robinson conceded there was "a possibility of a miscalculation" leading to conflict in the increasingly militarized region.

But she said that the United States and China had signed an agreement on air-to-air rules of behavior in international airspace in September and would continue discussions on the subject this year.

"That has allowed us to have continuous dialogue with the Chinese about how to conduct safe intercepts and intercepts in accordance with international rules and norms," Robinson said.

She said Russian long-range aircraft were also increasingly active in the Pacific, flying

around Japan and Guam.

As part of U.S. plans to increase its military presence in the Pacific, Robinson said discussions were underway with the Australian military to rotate U.S. bombers through the northern Australian air force bases at Darwin and Tindal.

"It gives us the opportunity to train our pilots to understand the theater and to strengthen our ties with our great allies, the Royal Australian Air Force," Robinson said.

U.S. Marines already rotate through Darwin in a sign of an increasingly close military bilateral alliance that riles China, Australia's most important trade partner. **AP**



Gen. Lori Robinson

## Beijing says it won't budge on South China Sea sovereignty



Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi

**C**HINA'S foreign minister took a hard line yesterday on the country's claims to virtually all the South China Sea, saying Beijing won't per-

mit other nations to infringe on what it considers its sovereign rights in the strategically vital area.

Wang Yi, speaking to reporters at an annual news conference in Beijing, said that another nation's claim to freedom of navigation in the region doesn't give it the right to do whatever it wants — an apparent reference to the U.S., which has sent naval ships past reefs where China has engaged in island-building.

Wang sought to deflect allegations China is militarizing the region by building military facilities on the artificial islands. He said China's development there was defensive and that other nations were being militaristic — not China.

"China cannot be labeled as the most militaristic. This label is more suited

to other countries," Wang said.

In addition to reaffirming that South China Sea islands were an "integral" part of China's territory that "every Chinese is obligated to defend," he reiterated Beijing's refusal to cooperate with an International Court of Arbitration case brought by the Philippines over disputed claims in the area.

China has conducted a massive program in the South China Sea over the past two years of land reclamation, piling sand atop reefs then adding airstrips and military facilities.

Neighbors have complained that the work has raised tensions by changing the status quo in the area, where six Asian governments have overlapping claims and which include some of the world's busiest sea lanes.

When asked whether China would allow foreign journalists to visit those islands, Wang stressed that they also were intended for civilian uses and that once they are completed, foreign journalists would be invited. **AP**

## CAMBODIA

## Iranian couple in resettlement deal return home

**A**N Iranian couple who resettled in Cambodia under an expensive program funded by Australia to keep asylum-seekers from its soil returned to their homeland, Cambodian and Australian officials said yesterday.

Gen. Tan Sovichea, head of the refugee office in Cambodia's Interior Ministry, said the couple, who arrived from a refugee camp on the South Pacific island nation of Nauru last June,

departed for Iran on Feb. 12.

He said five people had resettled in Cambodia from Nauru under a four-year, 55 million Australian dollar (USD41 million) program financed by Australia, which also pays for the South Pacific camp housing more than 600 refugees. Human rights activists claim conditions there are unhealthy.

"The Iranian couple told us that they decided

to go back to Iran after they felt homesick," Tan Sovichea said. "We respected their rights to leave and we welcome their decision."

Last October, one of two ethnic Rohingya men resettled under the deal went home to Myanmar, leaving only an Iranian and another Rohingya in Cambodia. Tan Sovichea said they appeared to be happy with their new lives.

A statement released

by a spokeswoman for Australian Immigration Minister Peter Dutton confirmed the Iranians' return home but declined to discuss related details.

It said the Australian government remained committed to supporting Cambodia's government in resettling refugees. "The Government holds firm on our policy that you if arrive by boat [to Australia] then you can either return to your

country of origin or be resettled in a third country."

Australia refuses to accept any refugees who attempt to reach its shores by boat. It pays Nauru and Papua New Guinea, which has a detention center on Manus Island, to hold them instead. The deal with Cambodia, finalized in September 2014, was criticized out of concern that Cambodia was too impoverished to handle

the new residents and that its poor human rights record would put them at risk.

Critics also suggested that after the volunteers were sent to Phnom Penh, the program was poorly implemented, although the International Organization for Migration and other groups in Cambodia were providing housing, jobs, transport and education in addition to initial orientation. **AP**

Mari Yamaguchi, Namie

JAPAN

# For rancher near Fukushima, tending herd is act of defiance

**S**INCE the 2011 melt-downs ended their future as prized black "wagyu" beef, a rancher near the Fukushima nuclear power plant has given his cattle a new mission: They've become protesters.

Defying both government evacuation and slaughter orders, 62-year-old Masami Yoshizawa returned to his ranch 14 kilometers from the plant to keep his cattle alive as living proof of the disaster.

He and his cattle are no doubt a nuisance for the government as Japan gears up to showcase Fukushima's recovery ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

"An effort to eliminate a negative reputation is nothing but a cover-up," he said. "This is a farm that chronicles and tells the story of Fukushima's radiation contamination disaster. We'll stay here at the Ranch of Hope, and keep sending our message."

The March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami swamped the Fukushima plant, knocking out power to vital cooling systems. When Yoshizawa heard explosions at the plant, he feared the ranch he inherited from his father was finished.

Within weeks, thousands of cattle in the evacuation zone around the plant died of starvation, including 200 of the 330 Yoshizawa had left at his ranch. Memories of the rows of dead cows at abandoned farms, collapsed after being reduced to skin and bones while waiting for food, still haunt him.

Surviving cows that escaped their ranches were roaming for food, damaging houses and dis-

rupting traffic. Two months after the accident, the agriculture ministry ordered their slaughter, to keep their meat from secretly entering the market. Neighborhood ranchers were divided.

"I said I was not going to let any more cows die on my ranch," said Yoshizawa.

His mostly lone resistance hasn't been easy. Authorities tried to block his feed transport, and kept trying to persuade him to kill his cows.

The location of his ranch, on the border between two towns — Namie and neighboring Minamisoma — may have worked in his favor. Both towns have looked the other way and virtually given up.

A prefabricated hut on a driveway to the Ranch of Hope — which Yoshizawa renamed after the accident with the hope of

AP PHOTO



Rancher Masami Yoshizawa shows the Ranch of Hope in Namie, Fukushima Prefecture

establishing a nuclear-free society — serves as a tiny office for what he calls his "nuclear rebellion." Skulls of cattle that died early in the crisis decorate the exterior. His cows keep him company, mooing and grazing.

Radiation levels at the ranch measure about 10 times the safe benchmark. Yoshizawa has taken DNA tests twice and had his exposure level checked 20 times. So far, no major health problems have been detected. Yoshizawa is not married

and his relatives now live near Tokyo.

The cattle population at Yoshizawa's ranch has grown back to 330, as he took in homeless cows from the neighborhood and other farms. They live on contaminated feed donated from towns in the area, which he said is the most ecological way to get rid of radioactive waste.

Over the past year, some of the cattle have developed tiny white spots on their bodies, which Yoshizawa believes is linked to

radiation from eating contaminated grass and feed. Scientists he works with, however, say the livestock have a good appetite and that the spots could be stress-related. The cattle undergo health checks once a month.

Tohoku University pathologist Manabu Fukumoto, who has been monitoring the cattle, said the animals' internal organs and reproductive functions showed no significant abnormality linked to their radiation exposures, and that other studies, including the impact of radiated feed, are underway. He urged further monitoring and dose evaluation, citing a spike in thyroid cancer cases in Chernobyl few years after the 1986 accident.

Within one year, the government plans to open part of his town of Namie for residents to return.

The town predicts only one-quarter of its current population of 19,000 would come back, most of them senior citizens, as has been the case in other reopened towns. Families with children face a higher radiation risk, and surveys show about half of the remaining 100,000 Fukushima evacuees have decided to resettle elsewhere.

Yoshizawa plans to stay at least another five years — or as long as his herd lives. **AP**

**An effort to eliminate a negative reputation is nothing but a cover-up.**

MASAMI YOSHIZAWA

PHILIPPINES

# Court rules Sen. Grace Poe can run for president

**T**HE Philippine Supreme Court ruled yesterday that Sen. Grace Poe is eligible to run for president in May 9 elections, overturning an elections commission decision to disqualify her and removing a long-hanging legal question over a tightly fought race to lead the Southeast Asian nation.

The justices voted 9-6 to favor Poe's petitions against the Commission on Elections decision last December to disqualify her on the grounds that she was not a natural-born citizen and did not have the required 10-year Philippine residency required of presidential candidates, Supreme Court spokesman Theodore Te said at a news conference, adding that the ruling can be appealed.

"This victory isn't only mine," a triumphant Poe told hundreds of people who joined an International Women's Day rally by a left-wing group in a downtown Manila square. "This is a victory for all of us."

The decision will provide a major boost to the campaign of Poe, who has already been leading in popularity polls, and re-



Sen. Grace Poe, a presidential hopeful, waves as she is mobbed by supporters

moves a cloud of uncertainty over what has been shaping as a closely contested four-way race to succeed President Benigno Aquino III, whose six-year term ends June 30.

"She will now be the candidate to beat," political analyst Ramon Casiple said, adding that fence sitters and supporters who were concerned that Poe may be taken out of the race because of her legal troubles would now have a clear choice.

"She can now run away from the pack," Casiple said.

Pulse Asia, an independent polling

body, placed Poe in the lead with 26 percent in a survey conducted last month of 1,800 respondents nationwide, followed by Vice President Jejomar Binay, who got 25 percent. Former Interior Secretary Mar Roxas, whose candidacy has been endorsed by Aquino, and tough-talking Mayor Rodrigo Duterte of southern Davao city each got 21 percent.

The survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percent. Poe had a wider lead in a Pulse Asia poll in January.

Although a political neophyte, the 47-year-old Poe carries a popular family name and has a heart-rending life story in a country where many are swayed more by personalities than policy positions.

The U.S.-educated Poe is the adopted daughter of one of the Philippines' most famous movie couples. Her late father, Fernando Poe Jr., was a movie action star who mostly played roles as a defender of the poor and downtrodden in a country still plagued by widespread poverty and corruption.

But the Commission on Elections ruled

in December that Poe was not a natural-born Filipino as required by the constitution because she was abandoned as a baby by her unknown parents at a Roman Catholic church.

Poe, who renounced her Philippine citizenship for about five years to live with her own family in America, also lacked the required 10-year Philippine residency ahead of the May 9 vote, the commission said. That prompted Poe to bring her case to the Supreme Court, which she asked to thrash her disqualification. Appearing often in campaign sorties in a white shirt and blue denim pants that many Filipinos identify with her father, Poe has run on the same pro-poor platform that her father carried, pledging that under her presidency, "nobody will be left behind."

Aquino's successor will need to grapple with poverty, corruption and Marxist and Muslim insurgencies in the south — persistent problems facing a country that three decades ago toppled the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos through a "people power" movement. **AP**

## MIGRANT CRISIS

# Palestinian Syrian relives parents' fate in becoming refugee

Elena Becatoros, Idomeni

**N**EARLY 70 years after Abeer al Hosary's parents fled Palestine, she is reliving their fate, forced to leave home with nearly nothing and start again from scratch in a foreign land.

She grew up in the apartment upstairs from the bakery they built in Syria, part of the new life they created for themselves after they met in the Yarmouk refugee camp for Palestinians fleeing the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. She heard about Palestine from her parents but has never seen it, and she considers Syria her homeland. More than anything, she yearns to return and to see her family whole again.

"Syria is the country that has fed us with its blessings," said al Hosary, 48, tears of homesickness and despair welling in her eyes. "I'm a Palestinian by name only, and by my roots. But the air, the sun, the breath — it's Syrian. [...] To me, Syria was paradise on earth. We never expected this to happen."

Now she's one of an estimated five million Syrians in a terrible exodus from a country torn apart by war. She and her husband and daughter are stuck with about 14,000 others at the Greece-Macedonia border, where sharp stones poke up through the thin bottom of a small tent donated by the Red Cross that is their temporary home.

Al Hosary's family is scattered across the continents. Her youngest son Emad is in Sweden — he made it there three years ago when he was just 17, after boarding a boat in Egypt bound for Italy and then making his way north. Smugglers paved the way, but the price — 6,500 dollars in all — was too high for the family to afford sending more than one person.

Now all she, her husband and daughter want is to be reunited with him.



Israa Abud al Hosary holds family cat Taboush in the baby pouch used to smuggle it across borders during their trip from Syria to Greece inside the tent in Idomeni, Greece, near the border with Macedonia

She sent him away right after her eldest son, who would now be 28, was arrested by the police in Syria while checking on the home they had fled in an area that came under rebel control. They haven't heard from him since.

Emad was well-built and of military age, and al Hosary was terrified he would be next, or that soldiers would forcibly recruit him into the army.

She herself didn't want to leave Syria, a country she loves passionately. But after a while, staying just wasn't an option.

"My fear was for my husband and my daughter," al Hosary said. "For me, I can sit at home and wait for my death. But they have to go to work." And going to work meant risking their lives.

"The shelling, the shelling, the shelling. War, war, war. We just couldn't take it," al Hosary said.

On Feb. 20, she, her husband Ali Mohammed Aboud and their 22-year-old daughter Israa Aboud packed up a few belongings and their large white and ginger tomcat and fled.

They tucked Taboush — which means fatty in Arabic — into a baby car-

rier and hid him under blankets for the terrifying escape from Syria.

"We smuggled him out," she says of the cat, who romps around inside the tent, leaping at the shadows passers-by cast on the tent walls. "It's amazing, when we went through the roadblocks, he was so quiet and wouldn't even poke his head out. It's as if the cat knew."

They made their way through Turkey and then onto a boat bound for the Greek island of Chios. From there they took a ferry to the mainland, and then headed north until they reached the Greek-Macedonian border a week ago.

And here, in an increasingly fetid field of tents near the railway tracks near the village of Idomeni, they were forced to stop — along with up to 14,000 others. The Macedonians were restricting the flow of refugees through their border to barely a trickle, and on Monday, nobody crossed. After a European Union-Turkey summit in Brussels, it appeared increasingly likely their route forward would be blocked for good.

"At this rate, I don't

think we'll get through. We leave it up to God to decide," al Hosary said. Although the journey to get here was fraught with danger, sitting in a field day after day, with scant opportunity to wash and hope draining away by the hour, is no easier.

"These conditions are also very difficult," she said. "We're not used to this. [...] Today I'm so pessimistic. I've reached my limit."

The family has no home to go back to. The only future they can see is to move forward, and above all to be reunited with Emad in Sweden.

But European leaders have balked at the immensity of the problem they face: dealing with the seemingly endless flood of men, women and children desperate for safer, better lives in their countries. One by one, the border restrictions have grown along the western Balkan route.

"Going back is impossible. Sitting here is impossible. Crossing is impossible. Where is this Germany that told us to come?" al Hosary asked. "The Arabs shut the doors in our faces, and the Europeans opened them. Where are they now?" AP

## Russia, West differ on UN report on Iran's nuclear program

**R**USSIA and the West overcame differences to strike a landmark nuclear deal with Iran but are now divided on how well the U.N. atomic agency is reporting on whether Tehran is meeting its commitments. Western nations want more details while Moscow opposes their push.

Because all six want to avoid conflicts that could complicate Iranian compliance of a deal that was years in the making, their differences are mostly playing out behind the scenes.

Vladimir Voronkov, Moscow's chief delegate to the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency, which is monitoring the deal, acknowledges there is a dispute that could affect the amount of information made public about Iran's nuclear program in the future.

"In our view it's an absolutely balanced document," Voronkov said ahead of a discussion of the latest IAEA report on Iran by the agency's 35-nation board yesterday. "But some of our colleagues would like to have more details."

The United States, Britain, France and Germany negotiated the deal with Iran along with Russia and China, and all six countries will continue to have much deeper insight into whether Iran is upholding its side of the agreement than what the IAEA reports to other nations on its board.

But Voronkov told The Associated Press that diplomats from some of those Western countries believe the Feb. 26 IAEA report was too superficial to provide the broader view they feel is needed to show Iran that the world was watching.

China shares the Russian view. Iran complains that the report is too detailed, leaving IAEA chief Yukiya Amano caught in the middle.

He feels he has struck the right balance, considering Iran is no longer in violation of U.N. and agency demands to curb its nuclear program and opposes pressure from member countries.

His February report was much less detailed than pre-nuclear deal summaries of Iran's atomic activities. It was restricted essentially to ticking off the major obligations that Iran agreed to when the deal took hold Jan. 16 and stating that most were met or minor deviations quickly remedied.

Asked about the new IAEA approach, U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby said yesterday: "I'm not aware of reporting requirements that changed."

Under the deal, Iran agreed to restrict the number of centrifuges used to make enriched uranium, material that can power reactors or be used for the core of a nuclear weapon, depending on its level of enrichment. It also pledged to crimp work on advanced centrifuges and get rid of most of its enriched uranium stockpile.

Critics say that the report falls short on particulars on these issues.

"The report does not list inventories of nuclear materials and equipment or the status of key sites and facilities," says former IAEA Deputy Director General Olli Heinonen. "Without detailed reporting, the international community cannot be sure that Iran is upholding its commitments under the nuclear deal."

Amano pushed back afterwards, telling the AP his reporting on Iran will continue to be "factual, impartial and include the information which the agency considers necessary." AP

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## what's ON



## THEATER 'FEBRUARY 29TH'

TIME: 8pm  
DATE: March 9-13, 2016  
VENUE: Old Court Building,  
Avenida da Praia Grande, Macao  
ADMISSION: MOP150  
LANGUAGE: Cantonese  
TICKETING: (853) 2855 5555

## THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE – CINE-CONCERT

TIME: 8pm  
VENUE: Macao Cultural Centre,  
Avenida Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE  
ADMISSION: MOP100, MOP150, MOP200, MOP250  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2870 0699

EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY LAM KIN CHEONG – MOUNTAIN'S SOUL

TIME: 10am-7pm  
UNTIL: March 13, 2016  
ADMISSION: free  
VENUE: The UNESCO Centre of Macau,  
Alameda Dr. Carlos d'Assumpção  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2872 7066

## "GETTING INTO SALON"

– EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKS  
BY KONG IU LAM AND HIS STUDENTS  
TIME: 9am-10pm (Institute for Tourism Studies,  
Colina de Mong-Ha); 12pm-10pm (Educational  
restaurant, Institute for Tourism Studies, Colina de  
Mong-Ha)  
UNTIL: April 30, 2016  
ADMISSION: free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2856 1252

## 'WONDERFUL TIME'

– CHEONG SOU MAN ART EXHIBITION  
TIME: 10:30am-6:30pm  
(Closed on Mondays and public holidays)  
UNTIL: May 29, 2015  
ADMISSION: Free  
VENUE: 10, Calçada da Igreja de S.Lázaro, Macao  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 4582

## ONE CENTURY OF AUSTRIAN ART 1860-1960

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

## Offbeat

LOST GOLDFISH CASE IN NORWAY  
CLOSER TO BEING SOLVED

Norwegian police have bigger fish to fry so they've allowed a fellow officer to take home a goldfish that had been waiting for its rightful owner in a jam jar at the local police station.

Bodo Police spokesman Tommy Bech says investigators "were very close to solving" the case of the

lost goldfish, found abandoned Saturday in a shopping bag at a soccer stadium in the northwestern town.

Officers had felt it their duty to look after the fish until the owner was found, Bech said this week. He said the fish had been "well looked after."

Bech said that Bodo police were now focusing on other issues and declined to give further details about the goldfish.

## TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
18:00	Trail of Lies (Repeated)
18:50	TDM Entrevista (Repeated)
19:20	Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Montra do Lilau
21:30	Criminal Minds Sr.9
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Champions League Highlights
23:50	Drama
00:55	Champions League: Zenit St Petersburg - Benfica (Live)

## cinema

## CINETEATRO

03 MAR - 09 MAR



## GODS OF EGYPT\_

ROOM 1  
2.30, 4.45, 9.30 pm  
Director: Alex Proyas  
Starring: Brenton Thwaites, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau,  
Gerard Butler  
Language: English (Cantonese)  
Duration: 127min

## MERMAID\_

ROOM 1  
7v.30 pm  
Director: Stephen Chau  
Starring: Deng Chao, Show Lo, Zhang Yu Qi  
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)  
Duration: 92min

## THE ROOM\_

ROOM 2  
2.30, 7.15, 9.30 pm  
Director: Lenny Abrahamson  
Starring: Brie Larson, Jacob Tremblay, Sean Bridgers  
Language: English (Cantonese)  
Duration: 118min

## THE FINEST HOURS\_

ROOM 2  
4.45 pm  
ROOM 3  
7.30 pm  
Director: Craig Gillespie  
Starring: Chris Pine, Casey Affleck, Ben Foster,  
Eric Bana  
Language: English (Cantonese)  
Duration: 117min

## LONDON HAS FALLING\_

ROOM 3  
2.15, 4.00, 5.45, 9.45 pm  
Director: Babak Najafi  
Starring: Gerard Butler, Aaron Eckhart,  
Morgan Freeman  
Language: English (Cantonese)  
Duration: 99min

## MACAU TOWER

03 MAR - 23 MAR

## GODS OF EGYPT\_

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm  
Director: Alex Proyas  
Starring: Brenton Thwaites, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau,  
Gerard Butler  
Language: English (Cantonese)  
Duration: 127min

## this day in history

1967 STALIN'S DAUGHTER  
DEFECTS TO THE WEST

The daughter of the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin has requested political asylum at the United States Embassy in India.

The American Mutual Radio network broke the news but the American State Department has so far refused to comment.

Since her father's death in 1953, little has been heard of 42-year-old Svetlana Alliluyeva - who prefers to be known by her mother's maiden name.

She has been living in a flat in Moscow near the British Embassy working as a researcher and translator.

Svetlana is the only daughter of Joseph Stalin by his second wife Nadezhda Alliluyeva who committed suicide in 1932 when Svetlana was nine years old.

When she was just 18, Svetlana, married a Jewish fellow student at Moscow University against her father's wishes.

She had a son by him but the marriage was dissolved and her ex-husband sent to his death in a Siberian labour camp.

Her second husband was Yuri Zhdanov, the son of Andrei, a close ally of Stalin.

This marriage was also dissolved.

In 1964 she married Brajesh Singh, an Indian communist.

He died last November and Svetlana came to India on 20 December last year to bury his ashes.

She is believed to be planning to go to Geneva, Switzerland, after the Indian authorities refused her permission to stay in the country for fear of marring relations with the Soviet Union.

She leaves behind a grown-up son and daughter in Moscow.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Svetlana Alliluyeva was allowed to stay in Switzerland for three months.

She went to the United States in April 1967.

On arrival at New York, she held a press conference and astonished the world by denouncing her father's regime - much to the irritation of the Soviet leader of the time, Alexei Kosygin, who said she was a "sick person".

Later that year, she published her memoirs, Twenty Letters to a Friend, and another autobiography in 1969 called Only One Year.

Svetlana became a US citizen and changed her name to Lana Peters when she married American architect, William Peters in 1970. But they separated after their daughter, Olga, was born.

She returned to the Soviet Union in 1984 and settled in Tbilisi, Georgia - her father's homeland.

In 1986 she left the USSR for the second time to live in the US and then during the 1990s settled in England. Svetlana died on November 22, 2011, aged 85.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You should have listened to your mother and planned for a rainy day, it's true. But even if you had, this is more like a typhoon. Kicking yourself is only adding to your pain. Give yourself an emotional break instead.

Taurus April 20-May 20 No matter how conservative you are with spending, your budget is still in trouble. It's time for radical cost cutting measures. Think Edward Scissorhands if you need a reference, then let yourself go to town.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Circumstances may look dire, but conditions are actually ideal for some things. Giving is not off the table, for example. Just look at it in the radically changed light and you'll see you still have plenty to offer.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Your panic is drowning out your thoughts. Try to take a more intellectual approach to your own personal rescue plan instead of being so emotional. At this rate, money is just the half of it.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You may think you're still clinging tightly to your money but, all jokes aside, it left the building long ago. Once you realize that all you're holding onto is a security blanket, letting go will be that much easier.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Be open minded about the new life you find yourself living. It's not by choice, but you can still choose to make the most of it or be miserable. Experiment a little. You may find much to be thankful for.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 It feels like your synapses are just not connecting properly. That's not the case, though. For now, put your need to understand aside and focus on having a simple, old fashioned kind of good day.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 It's not that harmony at home is upset, exactly. The discord is caused by a shift in the balance of power. You may be forced to agree to terms you would have objected to in fatter times.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You relate well to everyone you meet today. Since you're in the business of impressing others, you might as well take your show straight to the bank. You can't afford to waste a single opportunity.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Everyone is wary of new schemes. There's just no convincing anyone that you have what they need. Changing your approach isn't the issue. Don't stop short of changing your product.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 People are in need of some inspiration. Double check your ambitions. As long as you're not selling the Brooklyn Bridge, then share your visions. People with money in their wallets will be affected.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Maintaining the status quo is unrealistic. But change isn't as bad as you're making it out to be, either. Once all the inner chatter dies down, you'll be able to focus on the present and plan for the future.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- For \_\_\_ Jolly Good Fellow; 5- Minute Maid Park player; 10- Enlivens, with "up"; 14- Airline to Israel; 15- Rest atop; 16- Mixture; 17- Property; 19- Dorothy's dog; 20- Rub vigorously; 21- High-spirited horse; 23- Slugger's stat; 25- "Who's there?" response; 26- Joint with a cap; 29- Fill completely; 31- Actress Woodard; 35- Loser to DDE; 36- Fast jets, for short; 37- Unlade; 38- Dance solo; 40- Eternal; 41- Caper; 42- Bhutan's continent; 43- \_\_\_-Foy, Quebec; 44- Start of a Shakespeare title; 45- Nair rival; 46- Pontiac muscle cars; 47- Prickly plant; 49- Biblical verb ending; 51- Vervain; 54- MetLife competitor; 58- That's \_\_\_; 59- Change from one state to another; 63- Cauterize; 64- Noted Civil War biography; 65- Student's hurdle; 66- Not difficult; 67- Cream-filled cookies; 68- Minerals;

DOWN: 1- "His and \_\_\_"; 2- Util. bill; 3- German river; 4- Attract; 5- Pacino and Gore; 6- Join a poker game; 7- Some like it hot; 8- Revolve; 9- Lulus; 10- Feature of many a sumo wrestler; 11- "The Time Machine" people; 12- Middle Eastern bread; 13- In a minute; 18- Outward flow; 22- Actress Plummer; 24- Point in question; 25- T.G.I.F. part; 26- Tenth letter of the Greek alphabet; 27- Approaches; 28- Blue book filler; 30- City in GA; 32- Force upon; 33- Totaled, as a bill; 34- Perimeters; 36- Safe; 37- Join forces; 39- Snobbish conduct; 40- Employ; 42- \_\_\_ Lingus; 45- Closer; 46- Slum area inhabited by a minority group; 48- Emcee's job; 50- Mai \_\_\_; 51- Mantel piece; 52- Zeno of \_\_\_; 53- Narrow inlets; 55- Wedding cake feature; 56- It runs in the cold; 57- Hill dwellers; 60- Beer; 61- Prefix with classical; 62- His, to Henri

Yesterday's solution crossword grid with filled-in words.

Large crossword puzzle grid with some numbers and letters filled in.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



FOR SALE FOR RENT advertisement with contact information for JML Property.

Real estate listings for various properties in Macau and Coloane, including details on size, price, and features.

JML Property logo and branding with the text '卓雅物業 since 1994'.



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# FOLLOWING THE MAP ISN'T YOUR STYLE

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Hands-free power backdoor



2-3-2 (7 seaters) arrangement



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Nesha Starcevic, Frankfurt

WORLD CUP 2006

# More questions are raised about Beckenbauer's role

FROM his days as the backbone of the defense to his days roaming the sidelines, Franz Beckenbauer has been synonymous with the best of German soccer.

"Der Kaiser" won the World Cup as a player and a coach, and then brought soccer's marquee tournament back to his homeland as leader of the 2006 bid committee.

It's in that role, in which Beckenbauer worked with FIFA and other corrupt world soccer officials, that the former Bayern Munich great's image could be stained.

A recent inquiry into bribery allegations surrounding Germany's successful bid has raised more uncomfortable questions for the 70-year-old Beckenbauer and his role in complex financial deals before the tournament.

Der Spiegel magazine published allegations in October that tournament organizers used a slush fund to buy four Asian votes to land the World Cup. To the relief of the soccer establishment and ordinary Germans, the inquiry found no evidence of vote buying ahead of the tournament, although the probe could not rule it out either.

At the same time, the report by the Freshfields law firm noted Beckenbauer's involvement in dubious money transfers before the tournament was deeper than previously known, and includes speculation that it is linked to funding Sepp Blatter's re-election as FIFA president in 2002. Now, the public is demanding answers from its best known soccer personality, who holds no official position.

Beckenbauer, who led the bid and then became the president of the organizing committee when



2006 Soccer World Cup organizing committee president Franz Beckenbauer

Germany won the hosting rights in 2000, has denied any wrongdoing or vote-buying.

"We did not buy votes. It was about providing [financial] security," said Beckenbauer, a former teammate of Pele when both played for the New York Cosmos. "In order to get a financial contribution from FIFA. Otherwise, we would not have had a World Cup in Germany."

Beckenbauer said he knew nothing about a joint bank account with his then manager Robert Schwan, from which a multi-million dollar transfer went to the now disgraced Mohamed Bin Hammam, a former high-ranking FIFA official from Qatar. Schwan died in 2002.

"Robert took care of everything, from changing light bulbs to im-

portant contracts. I only learned on Wednesday [last week] that the money went to Qatar," Beckenbauer told the newspaper Bild. "Looking back, maybe I made mistakes. You are always smarter in hindsight. But the World Cup was not bought."

Such nonchalance, on and off the field, had endeared Beckenbauer to his countrymen. But the easy-going manner is getting old with the public, which wants explanations.

The national federation, which commissioned the Freshfields inquiry, has been reluctant so far to put more pressure on the man who is a symbol of German soccer. For decades, Beckenbauer was forgiven no matter how grave the faux pas, from adultery and illegitimate children to careless, loose-

**We did not buy votes. It was about providing [financial] security.**

FRANZ BECKENBAUER

mouth statements.

But the kid gloves are coming off. Kicker magazine has called him the "teller of fairytales." Beckenbauer's explanation that the payment at the center of the affair was in return for a financial grant from FIFA "looks like an attempt to repeat the story as often as necessary until the public starts believing it."

Freshfields also criticized his claim of ignorance.

"We can hardly believe that someone does not notice such transfers on his own account," the firm said.

Beckenbauer's name appears 564 times in the 361-page Freshfields report following a four-month inquiry, according to Kicker's count.

At the heart of the affair is series of payments that appear to have landed Bin Hammam 10 million Swiss francs, roughly USD7.3 million or 6.7 million euros.

According to Freshfields, six million Swiss francs went through a Swiss law firm in 2002 from Beckenbauer to a Qatar company solely owned by Bin Hammam. Later that year, in September 2002, former Adidas boss Robert Louis-Dreyfus paid Beckenbauer six million Swiss francs and Bin Hammam four million francs, both via the same Swiss law firm's account.

Then, in April 2005, the German soccer federation paid 6.7 million euros to a FIFA account in Zurich, from where the money went to Louis-Dreyfus. The payment was falsely declared as the federation's contribution to a FIFA cultural gala that never took place. The Freshfields report said the money was clearly intended as repayment to Louis-Dreyfus, who is no longer alive.

Why the money went to Bin Hammam, who has denied receiving it, remains a mystery. One theory is that it was used to finance Blatter's re-election campaign. The now suspended Blatter declined to talk to Freshfields, which said the former FIFA president had been aware of the 2005 payment to Louis-Dreyfus.

The purpose of the payment may not become clearer until German and Swiss authorities conclude their separate investigations, along with FIFA. AP

TENNIS

# Three sponsors cut ties with Sharapova after positive drug test

THREE of Maria Sharapova's major sponsors are cutting ties with the Russian tennis star after she acknowledged failing a doping test at the Australian Open.

Sportswear giant Nike, Swiss watch brand Tag Heuer and German luxury car company Porsche moved quickly to distance themselves from the five-time Grand Slam winner after she announced the positive test at a news conference in Los Angeles yesterday [Macau time].

"We are saddened and surprised by the news about Maria Sharapova," Nike said in a statement. "We have decided to suspend our relationship with Maria while the investigation continues. We

will continue to monitor the situation."

TAG Heuer said its deal with Sharapova will not be renewed. The sponsorship expired at the end of 2015 and discussions had been taking place on how to extend it.

"In view of the current situation, the Swiss watch brand has suspended negotiations, and has decided not to renew the contract with Ms Sharapova," TAG Heuer said in a statement.

Porsche said in a statement yesterday that it has "chosen to postpone planned activities" with Sharapova "until further details are released and we can analyze the situation."

Sharapova said she fai-

led a doping test at the Australian Open in January for the little-known drug meldonium, which became a banned substance under the World Anti-Doping Agency code this year. The former world No. 1 took full responsibility for her mistake and could face a lengthy ban from the International Tennis Federation, possibly ending her season and preventing her from competing for Russia at the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

"I know that with this, I face consequences," Sharapova said. "I don't want to end my career this way, and I really hope I will be given another chance to play this game."

The 28-year-old Shara-

pova said she has been taking meldonium, a blood flow-promoting drug, for 10 years for numerous health issues. Meldonium was banned because it aids oxygen uptake and endurance, and several athletes across international sports have already been caught using it.

Sharapova and all players were notified of the changes in the WADA banned substances list in December. Sharapova claimed she simply missed the change, neglecting to click on the link.

"I take great responsibility and professionalism in my job, and I made a huge mistake," Sharapova said. "I let my fans down. I let the sport down that I've been playing sin-



Maria Sharapova

ce the age of 4, that I love so deeply."

Sharapova is one of the top female players of her generation, with 35 career singles titles and over USD36 million in career earnings. That earning potential is thought to be easily dwarfed by the earnings she generates from her commercial appeal.

Sharapova is thought to be the world's highest-paid female athlete due to endorsement deals and her extensive business ventures, including a high-profile candy line, Su-

garpova. Forbes estimated her earnings at \$29.5 million for 2015.

"She's a one-woman marketing machine," said Nigel Currie, an independent British-based sponsorship consultant. "There are lots of male stars in the world, but not many female stars."

Currie said it's "unbelievable" how such a mistake could have happened since Sharapova has such a big support network, adding that it's also "amazing" how quickly sponsors react. AP

opinion

Macau Matters

Richard Whitfield



THE EMAIL PIONEER

Ray Tomlinson, the man who created the software to send the first email message between two computers in 1971 died on 5 March 2016 at the age of 74. He was also the person you can thank for defining email addresses as username@computer.domain - he decided that "@" would be a good separator in email addresses.

While some people are starting to argue that email is becoming obsolescent, there are still 2.5 million emails sent every second all round the world. This is far more than the number of Google searches, for example.

He created email while working to develop ARPANET for America's Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) which was a forerunner to today's global Internet. Creating email was not formally part of the project to develop ARPANET and Tomlinson implemented it because he thought it was a "neat idea". Interestingly, ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) the organization that now controls the way that the Internet operates globally is meeting in Marrakech in March to agree on a reform that would turn it into a new kind of international organisation. If this goes ahead, a crucial global resource, the internet's address system, will soon be managed by a body that is largely independent of national governments.

I can remember getting my first Internet email account in the early 1980s while I was studying at Melbourne University, but it was not much use because it was largely an academic system at the time. I can also remember when email addresses started to appear on business cards in Hong Kong in the mid 1990s, and email started to finally become generally useful. I even worked in a company in Hong Kong that helped local businesses set up their own Internet email systems. By 2000 I had stopped mailing letters home to my parents because I had finally convinced my father to get an email account, and we have used email ever since. Nowadays some of my students complain that I do not have a WeChat account and I do not use facebook messaging, but I still prefer email.

For all its problems, email has truly revolutionized global communications. It is nowadays rare for businesses or individuals to "put pen to paper" and send a written document by mail, and the business of mail services around the world is increasingly delivering packages, not letters. Telex has largely disappeared, and even the fax has mostly come and gone. Governments are also using letters less and less to communicate with citizens - I get an SMS from the Macau government when I break a road rule and then check the nature of my infraction through a website. No letter in the mail.

So, one man's "neat idea" included in a US military project to create a packet switched communications network that could survive a nuclear war has evolved to become a huge global network used by billions of people every day. Who would have thought?



An undated photo provided by Raytheon BBN Technologies shows Raymond Tomlinson

THE SWISS ARREST 15 SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF ITALIAN CRIME SYNDICATE

Swiss authorities have arrested 15 people sought by neighboring Italy as suspected members of the 'ndrangheta organized crime syndicate.

The Federal Office of Justice said the Italian citizens were arrested yesterday in three Swiss regions, most of them in the northeastern canton (state) of Thurgau. They are suspected of belonging to a cell in Frauenfeld, in Thurgau,

of the Calabria-based 'ndrangheta.

The suspects are being held pending possible extradition to Italy. Swiss authorities say their arrests were based on Italian extradition requests filed between February last year and January on charges of membership in a criminal organization. A court in Reggio Calabria already has imposed prison sentences on two of them.

GO MASTER

AI will one day prevail but beauty of Go remains



South Korean professional Go player Lee Sedol speaks during a press conference ahead of the Google DeepMind Challenge Match in Seoul

Computers eventually will defeat human players of Go, but the beauty of the ancient Chinese game of strategy that has fascinated people for thousands of years will remain, the Go world champion said yesterday.

South Korean Lee Sedol, a Go master who has won 18 international titles since he became a professional player at age 12, said the risk of human error means he may not win his match this week against Google's artificial intelligence machine, AlphaGo.

"Because humans are human, they make mistakes," the 33-year-old said a day before the first of the five games he is due to play against AlphaGo. "If there are human mistakes, I could lose."

It was Lee's first admission of his weakness against Google's AI machine and also a dialing down of his confidence from two weeks ago, when he had predicted a 5-0 result in his favor.

After watching Google's presentation of how AlphaGo works, Lee said he thought a machine might be able to imitate human intuition, even though the intuition may not be as sharp as a person's.

A loss for Lee would be a historic moment for the AI community.

Human errors are not his only vulnerability.

Lee said that in playing against a machine, the absence of visual cues that human players use to read the reactions and psychology of their opponents puts him in unfamiliar territory.

"In a human versus human game, it is important to read the other person's energy and force. But in this match, it is impossible to read such things. It could feel like I'm playing alone," Lee said.

Because the number of possible Go board positions exceeds the number of atoms in the universe, top players rely heavily on their intuition, said Demis Hassabis who heads Google's DeepMind, the developer of AlphaGo.

This has made Go one of the most complex games ever devised and the ultimate challenge for the AI experts, who had expected that it would take at least another decade for a computer to beat a professional Go player.

That changed last year when AlphaGo defeated a European Go champion in a closed-door match later

published in the journal Nature.

Google's DeepMind team created a system to narrow down a vast search space of near-infinite possible sequences of moves in the game. AlphaGo was first trained to mimic experts' Go moves based on data from about 100,000 Go games available online. Then it was programmed to play against itself and "learn" from its mistakes. The team also designed a system that enabled AlphaGo to anticipate the long-term results of each move and predict the winner.

Using this approach, AlphaGo beat the European Go champion by searching through far fewer positions than those a traditional AI machine like DeepBlue, the famed IBM computer that defeated the world's chess champion in 1997, would have to consider, Hassabis said.

AlphaGo also has other strengths as a machine.

"I think the advantage of AlphaGo is that it will never get tired and it will not get intimidated either," Hassabis said.

Lee said he hopes to hold onto his title, but also wants to remind audiences that the game is not all about victory. AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	40-60 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Moderate
Ambient	40-60 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

**INDIA** A 15-year-old girl was fighting for her life in a New Delhi hospital after being raped and set on fire on the rooftop terrace of her family's home in a village outside the city, police said. The attack is just one of several recently reported cases of rapes of women or children in India - underlining the persistence of such violence despite stronger laws against sexual assault that were implemented.

**THAILAND** The gov't has dropped a case against Hong Kong photojournalist Hok Chun Anthony Kwan who was arrested last year for possessing a bulletproof vest and a helmet, which are considered weapons in Thailand, two court officials said yesterday. The Foreign Correspondent of Thailand welcomed the decision, stating "[those] who need to work in dangerous areas, [must] be able to use appropriate protective equipment legally in Thailand."

**AFGHANISTAN** Six months after fleeing a Taliban assault on her city, Zarghona Hassan, the owner of an Afghan radio station devoted to women's rights is back home and returning to the airwaves.

**AUSTRALIA's** prime minister leaves open the possibility of a national election as early July as a new opinion poll suggested his leadership honeymoon with voters has ended. Malcolm Turnbull has until May 11 to announce a rare early election on July 2, July 9 or July 16.



**UK** Bank of England Governor Mark Carney says the bank won't make a recommendation on whether Britain should remain in the European Union. In testy exchanges before a House of Commons committee, Carney stressed that the bank would remain focused on safeguarding financial and monetary stability and that it wouldn't be drawn into taking a stand on EU membership.